

Christ the King + Year C

November 20, 2022

Jeremiah's promise of the execution of "justice and righteousness in the land" finds ironic fulfillment in the execution of Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. It appears utterly contradictory that a king should be crucified with a criminal. This victory appears for all the world as humiliating defeat. Yet through the gate of death Jesus opens the door to paradise.

Jeremiah

- The book of Jeremiah is set during a turbulent period when Babylon twice invaded Judah (598 and 587 BCE), destroying Jerusalem and its temple and deporting large numbers of Judeans.
- "The shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture" is reference to the unjust kings of Judah who, according to the prophet, were responsible for its downfall.
- What do you think it means that God will instead serve as a shepherd to the people? Lean into the metaphor.
- Note the use of two important words: justice and righteousness. In the Hebrew scriptures these two words are often used to speak of a social order in which all people have enough access to resource to thrive. These are not individual spiritual realities, they are shared realities for whole groups of people.
 - What sort of societal justice and righteousness are we hoping for these days?
- Why would this scripture be proclaimed on this day?

Psalms

- How does this psalm strike you — how does the tone work with (or against) it? How does the refrain focus us?
- What sort of life experiences might lead to writing a song such as this one?
- Why do you think this song is offered in response to the reading from Jeremiah?
- Why would this scripture be proclaimed on this day?

Colossians

- Colossians is a disputed Pauline letter, perhaps written as late as 90 CE.
- This letter emphasizes a cosmic Christ who is ruler over all things. There is a strong encouragement to live faithfully in similar ways to how Christ lived:
 - 3:12-15 - *As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.*
- There is some criticism that the author didn't fully understand Jesus' work upending abuses of power.
- Why would this scripture be proclaimed on this day?

The Gospel

- What do you notice in this text?
- Note the verbs. What's happening here? List them out.
- Why would this scripture be proclaimed on this day?

Final Questions

- Reflect on the lyrics of the Hymn of the Day and how it brings forth themes from the scriptures of this season.
- Which part of the ordo (Gathering/Word/Meal/Sending) do these texts most deeply connect to? Why?
- What's the Good News?