

**John 18:33-37**

**November 25, '18**

**Christ the King "THE END OF THE BEGINNING"**

**JOHNNY VEACH WAS MY BEST FRIEND IN  
CHILDHOOD.**

**WE DID EVERYTHING TOGETHER.**

**OUR PROPERTYS CONNECTED & OUR DADS CUT A  
HOLE IN THE FENCE BETWEEN OUR LOTS & ERECTED  
A GATE FOR EASY PASSAGE TO ONE ANOTHER'S  
YARD.**

**IN THE WINTER, WE MADE AN ICE RINK ON OUR  
BACK LAWN & SET UP BOARDS & A MAKESHIFT  
HOCKEY NET.**

**THE REST OF THE YEAR, OUR GAMES WERE  
PLAYED IN JOHNNY'S DRIVEWAY WITH THE NET  
AGAINST THE GARAGE, WHICH WAS LITTERED WITH  
LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF TINY DENTS FROM SHOTS  
THAT WENT WIDE.**

**JOHNNY DIED A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, AND HIS WIFE GAVE ME A BOX OF SCRAPBOOKS THAT JOHNNY HAD KEPT DURING OUR CHILDHOOD.**

**THEY WERE SCRAPBOOKS JOHNNY FAITHFULLY PUT TOGETHER EVERY YEAR FROM NEWSPAPER ARTICLES & PHOTOS, DETAILING EACH SEASON OF THE DETROIT RED WINGS.**

**I RECENTLY LOOKED THROUGH ONE OF THOSE SCRAPBOOKS.**

**IT WAS FASCINATING TO SEE & REMEMBER.**

**IT STARTED AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE YEAR WITH HIGH HOPES FOR A SUCCESSFUL SEASON.**

**THERE WERE NEW FACES & NEW POSSIBILITIES.**

**AT SOME POINT, AFTER A GREAT START TO THE SEASON WITH THINGS LOOKING AS EXCITING AS THEY COULD POSSIBLY BE, THERE WAS A DISASTROUS STRETCH OF TIME WHEN IT APPEARED**

**AS THOUGH EVERYTHING WAS FALLING APART & ALL HOPE WAS GONE.**

**BUT SOMETHING HAPPENED & THAT HORRIBLE STRETCH ENDED & THEIR SEASON SEEMED TO FIND NEW LIFE ONCE AGAIN.**

**IT WAS A RED WING RESURRECTION & FLIPPING THROUGH THE REST OF THAT SCRAPBOOK OF JOHNNY'S WAS AN ABSOLUTE DELIGHT – READING & REMEMBERING THE GLORIOUS THINGS THAT HAPPENED IN THE LIFE OF THAT TEAM.**

**THE CROWNING MOMENT WAS WHEN THEY MADE IT TO THE STANLEY CUP FINAL.**

**BUT HERE'S WHERE THINGS BECAME EVEN MORE INTERESTING FOR ME IN JOHNNY'S SCRAPBOOK, FOR – AS SOON AS ALL HIS CLIPPINGS FOR THAT GLORIOUS SEASON ENDED - A NEW SECTION BEGAN.**

**HE WAS BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF A NEW YEAR  
WITH HIGH HOPES FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL  
SEASON.**

**THERE WERE NEW FACES & NEW POSSIBILITIES IN  
EVERY PHOTO & ARTICLE.**

**THAT PREVIOUS SEASON HAD SIMPLY BEEN *THE  
END OF THE BEGINNING.***

**THAT ILLUSTRATION ISN'T AS MUCH ABOUT  
HOCKEY & SCRAPBOOKS AS IT IS ABOUT OUR  
CHRISTIAN FAITH & THE BIBLE.**

**IT'S ABOUT THE CHURCH CALENDAR.**

**WE HAVE COME TODAY TO THE FINAL SUNDAY OF  
THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.**

**NEXT SUNDAY IS THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE  
ADVENT SEASON WHICH MARKS THE BEGINNING OF A  
NEW CHURCH YEAR.**

**THINK OF THE PARALLELS TO WHAT YOU JUST HEARD.**

**AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW YEAR – WITH THE SEASON OF ADVENT – WE SEE THE HOPE THAT STANDS BEFORE US WITH NEW POSSIBILITIES & NEW FACES.**

**THERE’S MARY & JOSEPH, ELIZABETH & ZECHARIAH, SIMEON & ANNA, THE SHEPHERDS & WISE MEN, THE INNKEEPER & ANGELS.**

**AND THERE, IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL, IS A POOR, TINY INSIGNIFICANT INFANT IN A FEEDING TROUGH FOR ANIMALS.**

**HE GROWS UP & THE SEASONS OF HIS LIFE BEGIN TO LOOK PROMISING.**

**BUT AFTER THAT INITIAL START TO HIS LIFE & MINISTRY, WITH THINGS LOOKING AS EXCITING AS THEY COULD POSSIBLY BE, THERE’S A DISASTROUS**

**STRETCH OF TIME WHEN IT LOOKS AS THOUGH  
EVERYTHING IS FALLING APART & ALL HOPE IS  
GONE.**

**BUT SOMETHING HAPPENS & THAT HORRIBLE  
STRETCH ENDS & SUDDENLY NEW LIFE EMERGES  
FROM THE DARKNESS OF A TOMB.**

**AS THE WEEKS & MONTHS GO BY, WE FLIP  
THROUGH OUR BIBLE SCRAPBOOK, AND WE READ &  
REMEMBER ONE GLORIOUS STORY AFTER ANOTHER  
AND FINALLY – TODAY - WE COME TO THE END OF  
THE YEAR.**

**THIS IS THE CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT TOWARD  
WHICH EVERYTHING HAS BEEN POINTING – THE  
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CHRIST AS OUR KING.**

**IT IS “THE END OF THE BEGINNING” – BECAUSE  
NEXT WEEK, ANOTHER “SEASON” - SO TO SPEAK –**

**COMMENCES & WE START THE WHOLE PROCESS  
OVER AGAIN.**

**THE LECTIONARY READINGS FOR CHRIST THE  
KING SUNDAY ALWAYS BRING US TO THE  
CRUCIFIXION.**

**IT'S SHOCKING.**

**IT'S JARRING – AND IT'S MEANT TO BE.**

**WE'RE NOWHERE NEAR THE SEASON OF LENT  
WHICH IS WHEN WE EXPECT TO HEAR PASSAGES LIKE  
THIS ONE FROM JOHN'S GOSPEL.**

**WE'RE LOOKING FOR THE BABY JESUS, NOT THE  
CRUCIFIED CHRIST.**

**BUT THIS PASSAGE ABOUT JESUS STANDING  
BEFORE PILATE DROPS US SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF  
GOOD FRIDAY – SQUARELY AT THE SCENE OF  
CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION IN JERUSALEM & NOT AT HIS  
BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM.**

**BEGINNINGS & ENDINGS GET ALL MIXED UP,  
UNTIL WE RECOGNIZE THAT ALL OF OUR BEGINNINGS  
ARE REALLY ENDINGS AND, IN CHRIST, ALL OF OUR  
ENDINGS ARE BEGINNINGS.**

**FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, IT'S GOOD TO  
CONTEMPLATE A PASSAGE SUCH AS THIS ON THE  
LAST SUNDAY OF THE YEAR – THE SUNDAY JUST  
BEFORE WE ENTER THE ADVENT SEASON.**

**FOR ADVENT IS A JOURNEY & IT'S ALWAYS WISE,  
BEFORE YOU TAKE A LONG JOURNEY, TO LOOK  
AHEAD TO WHERE YOU'RE ULTIMATELY GOING.**

**IT'S GOOD TO KNOW WHERE YOUR EXPECTED  
DESTINATION IS.**

**FOR US, OUR DESTINATION AS WE BEGIN ADVENT  
– WITH COUNTLESS STOPS ALONG THE WAY - IS TO  
SEE CHRIST AS OUR KING.**



**THIS SEEMS LIKE SUCH A STRANGE TITLE TO US –  
CHRIST THE KING.**

**IT SEEMS AS IF IT MUST BE A CARRYOVER FROM  
ANCIENT DAYS WHEN MOST OF THE WORLD KNEW &  
EXPERIENCED THE RULE OF MONARCHS.**

**SURPRISINGLY, THOUGH, THIS IS A RELATIVELY  
NEW OBSERVANCE.**

**IT WAS FIRST ESTABLISHED IN 1925.**

**BUT WHY, EVEN THEN, WOULD THE WORLD BEGIN  
OBSERVING A DAY WITH SUCH AN ARCHAIC TITLE  
ATTACHED TO IT?**

**QUITE SIMPLY, BECAUSE THE CHURCH NEEDED  
THE IMAGE OF CHRIST THE KING AT THAT MOMENT  
IN TIME.**

**ON ITS FIRST CELEBRATION, MUSSOLINI HAD  
BEEN THE LEADER OF ITALY FOR 3 YEARS & A**

**RABBLE-ROUSER NAMED HITLER HAD BEEN OUT OF JAIL FOR A YEAR.**

**HIS NAZI PARTY WAS GROWING IN POPULARITY, AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION WAS JUST AROUND THE CORNER.**

**IT WAS A TIME THAT CALLED FOR AN ANSWER TO ONE OF LIFE'S MOST BASIC QUESTIONS – “*WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?*”**

**WHEN WE CONSIDER THAT QUESTION, THE OBSERVANCE OF “CHRIST THE KING” MAKES PERFECT SENSE.**

**IT MADE SENSE WHEN IT WAS ESTABLISHED, AND IT MAKES SENSE TODAY.**

**“*WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?*”**

**WHO RULES OUR LIVES?**

**WHO DOMINATES OUR CULTURE?**

**WHO TELLS US WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO SAY,  
WHAT TO THINK, WHAT TO BELIEVE?**

**I'M AFRAID THERE ARE FORCES OF EVIL AT  
WORK IN DETERMINING HOW WE ANSWER THOSE  
QUESTIONS.**

**GREED, PRIDE, SELFISHNESS & FEAR MOTIVATE &  
DOMINATE MUCH OF THE WORLD TODAY & EVEN  
SEEK TO GRAB A FOOTHOLD IN OUR DAY-TO-DAY  
LIVES.**

**WE FIND IT IN OUR CORPORATE SYSTEMS, IN  
ENTERTAINMENT & THE MEDIA.**

**WE FIND IT IN OUR ECONOMIC & GOVERNMENTAL  
SYSTEMS, WHERE WHAT MATTERS MOST IS NOT  
WHETHER YOU'RE RIGHT, BUT WHOSE SIDE YOU'RE  
ON – WHO YOU VOTED FOR – OR WHO YOU WORK  
FOR.**

**WE FIND IT IN THE HEARTS OF INDIVIDUALS – OF THOSE WHO THINK ONLY OF THEMSELVES & WHAT’S IN IT OR THEM & FOR THOSE THEY LOVE – AND RARELY, IF EVER, ABOUT WHAT’S IN IT FOR THOSE THEY DON’T KNOW – OR THOSE THEY DON’T LIKE.**

**THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS – THE PURSUIT OF SUCCESS – THE PURSUIT OF POWER, POPULARITY & PERSUASION – THE EXALTATION OF OUR OWN FAMILIES, OUR OWN COUNTRY, OUR OWN RELIGIOUS & POLITICAL THINKING AS THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE – IS FRAUGHT WITH DANGER.**

***“WHO’S IN CHARGE HERE?”***

**WE LOOK AROUND US & THE ANSWER SEEMS DEPRESSINGLY OBVIOUS.**

**AND IT FEELS MORE & MORE OBVIOUS ALL THE TIME.**

**IT SEEMS OBVIOUS WHEN WE FOCUS ON ALL THE  
WORLD'S TROUBLES.**

**IT'S OBVIOUS WHEN WE LOOK AT ALL THE  
NEGATIVE STUFF GOING ON IN THE WORLD.**

**IT'S OBVIOUS WHEN WE EXPERIENCE THE BODY  
BLOWS OF TROUBLES WITHIN OUR OWN FAMILIES &  
WHEN WE'RE SLAPPED SILLY BY ILLNESS, PAIN &  
DEATH.**

**ASKING THE QUESTION, "*WHO'S IN CHARGE  
HERE?*" LEAVES US WITH A SEEMINGLY OBVIOUS  
ANSWER THAT IT'S NO ONE WE WOULD LIKE IT TO BE  
& CERTAINLY NO ONE WHO HAS OUR BEST INTEREST  
AT HEART.**

**THAT'S WHY IT'S GOOD TO OBSERVE CHRIST  
THE KING SUNDAY.**

**IT IS GOOD TO CELEBRATE THIS DAY BECAUSE IT  
REMINDS US, THAT NO MATTER HOW MUCH EVIL WE**

**SEE IN THE WORLD – NO MATTER HOW MUCH  
TURMOIL WE EXPERIENCE IN OUR OWN LIVES -  
THERE REALLY IS SOMEONE IN CHARGE WHO CARES  
ABOUT US & WILL NEVER FORSAKE US.**

**THIS GIVES US AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT  
PERSPECTIVE ON THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION,  
*“WHO’S IN CHARGE HERE?”***

**REMEMBER THOSE BUMPER STICKERS THAT  
WERE SO POPULAR A WHILE BACK – THE ONES THAT  
SAID, *“GOD IS MY CO-PILOT?”***

**I THINK THEY FELL OUT OF FAVOR WHEN PEOPLE  
FINALLY BEGAN TO REALIZE THE ABSURDITY OF  
THAT STATEMENT.**

**WHAT THAT REALLY SAYS IS, *“I’M IN CHARGE. I’M  
RUNNING THE SHOW. I MAKE ALL THE DECISIONS. BUT  
IF SOMETHING HAPPENS TO ME, I’LL LET GOD TAKE  
OVER THEN.”***

**UNFORTUNATELY, THAT'S HOW MANY PEOPLE  
RUN THEIR OWN LIVES & IT'S HOW THEY THINK THE  
WORLD SHOULD RUN.**

**JESUS CHRIST IS HERE IN OUR MIDST & HE'S IN  
CHARGE OF IT ALL.**

**HE HASN'T ABANDONED US IN THE MESS OF THE  
WORLD ALL AROUND US.**

**NOW WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN IN  
PRACTICAL TERMS?**

**WHAT DOES IT SAY ABOUT YOUR DAY-TO-DAY  
STRUGGLES & DECISIONS?**

**IF THIS IS WHAT YOU BELIEVE, WHAT CAN YOU  
DO ABOUT IT?**

**FIRST OF ALL, YOU CAN PROCLAIM THE TRUTH –  
JESUS IS THE KING.**

**HE IS THE LORD & RULER OF THE UNIVERSE AND,  
MORE IMPORTANTLY – AT LEAST ON A PRACTICAL**

**LEVEL – YOU CAN PROCLAIM THAT HE IS KING, LORD  
& RULER OF YOUR OWN LIFE.**

**DON'T STICK HIM IN THE CO-PILOT'S SEAT.**

**DON'T MAKE HIM A BACK-UP UNTIL EVERYTHING  
ELSE HAS FAILED.**

**STEP ASIDE & LET HIM TAKE THE CONTROLS.**

**ALLOW HIM TO RESCUE YOU.**

**ALLOW HIM TO TRANSPORT YOU INTO HIS  
KINGDOM.**

**THAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU CAN DO.**

**AND THE SECOND IS THIS – YOU CAN BECOME THE  
LIVING PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE WORLD TODAY.**

**THE KING CALLS UPON YOU TO BEAR WITNESS TO  
HIS NAME & SERVE HIM AS A FAITHFUL SUBJECT.**

**YOU ARE CHRIST IN YOUR OFFICE, IN YOUR  
HOME, IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, IN YOUR**



**CLASSROOM – IN ALL OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS &  
ASSOCIATIONS – PUBLIC & PRIVATE.**

**CHRIST REIGNS IN & THROUGH EACH ONE OF US.**

**AS A CONSEQUENCE, YOU & I ARE CALLED TO BE  
CHRIST TO OTHERS, SEEKING RECONCILIATION  
WHERE THERE IS ALIENATION, HEALING WHERE  
THERE IS BROKENNESS.**

**THIS IS OUR MANDATE FROM THE KING.**

**THOSE WHO DARE TO CLAIM THE NAME OF  
CHRIST ARE CHALLENGED TO HEED HIS CALL TO  
HEAL DIVISIONS, RESTORE LIFE & SEEK PEACE.**

**ON THIS DAY - ON CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY - WE  
HAVE COME TO THE END OF THE CALENDAR - WE  
HAVE COME TO THE END OF CHRISTIAN YEAR.**

**WE HAVE COME TO *THE END OF THE BEGINNING.***

**IT'S SUCH A PERFECT METAPHOR FOR ALL OF  
LIFE.**

**WITH EVERY ENDING, A NEW BEGINNING STANDS  
BEFORE US.**

**FOR A CHILD, THE END OF ONE SCHOOL YEAR  
MARKS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ONE.**

**FOR A YOUNG ADULT, THE END OF THE SINGLE  
LIFE MARKS THE BEGINNING OF LIFE IN MARRIAGE.**

**THE END OF ONE JOB MARKS THE BEGINNING OF  
ANOTHER ONE.**

**THE END OF LIFE IN ONE LOCATION IS THE  
BEGINNING OF LIFE SOMEWHERE ELSE.**

**EVEN THE EVENTS WE DEEM SAD AND TRAGIC  
FOLLOW THE SAME PATTERN.**

**A DIVORCE IS THE END OF SOMETHING - BUT THE  
BEGINNING OF SOMETHING ELSE.**

**THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE WHO HAS BEEN  
WITH YOU FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN REMEMBER IS**

**THE BEGINNING OF YOUR LIFE WITH THAT PERSON  
WALKING SPIRITUALLY BY YOUR SIDE.**

**AND EVEN WHEN WE COME TO THAT TIME IN OUR  
OWN LIFE, THIS SAME TRUTH REMAINS.**

**THE END OF THIS EARTHLY WALK MARKS THE  
BEGINNING OF A HEAVENLY ONE.**

**AT THE END OF THIS PASSAGE IN JOHN'S GOSPEL,  
WE HEAR PILATE ASK A QUESTION FOR THE AGES -  
ONE THAT SEEMS, IN OUR OWN TIME, MORE  
PERTINENT THAN EVER - "*WHAT IS TRUTH?*"**

**THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS NOT A "WHAT" BUT A  
"WHO" & THE "WHO" IS STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT  
OF THE ONE WHO ASKS THE QUESTION.**

**IN THE SCRAPBOOK OF YOUR LIFE, AS ONE  
SEASON ROLLS INTO ANOTHER, MAY THAT "WHO"  
STAND AT THE CENTER OF IT.**

**WITH CHRIST AS KING - WITH HIM AS THE ONE IN  
CHARGE - WITH EVERY ENDING, A NEW BEGINNING  
AWAITS YOU. AMEN.**

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