

Sermon

Saint Peter's Brighton Beach

Easter Day 2023

Lent is not for the faint hearted. We confront the spiritual powers that compete with God the Holy Trinity for attention and allegiance, our Archbishop said. Their tempting but ultimately false doctrines of redemption woo away from the truth about God. Their false allegations against the innocent children of God are there means of getting rid of them.

Jesus is the Christ, the Christus Victor. On Good Friday, he won the decisive victory over the spiritual powers. Stripping them of any ultimate power. It is not yet the day when God will win the final victory. So like Christ we resist them, in our worship and service of God, and of God alone. With all of the spiritual power that God inspires within us, by His Spirit.

Jesus was not the this worldly political messiah the baying crowds were looking for. He did not fulfil their messianic, political ambitions. So they put to death an innocent man.

Today, God raised Jesus from the dead, vindicating him, in the sight of those who falsely accused him. Confirming him, to be the innocent child of God. Who lived his life in worship and service of God alone. Today, God has turned the tables on the world, with its powers.

Today, Jesus Christ now reigns from heaven, with the reign, and the authority of God himself, over the world.

In the words made famous by Handel's Messiah 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever'.

This hidden reign of Jesus Christ from heaven, is the hidden reign of God himself over the world. The reign of God the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The reign of God the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. One God, in three persons. One God. One world. One people.

This kingdom of God is the power of the future. As the future, it is not here, in a final way, in its fulness. It is here, in a provisional way, in advance, in anticipation of the day, when God will become all in all.

The darkness of the world remains. It is still the night. The day is not yet here in all of its fulness. It is the dawning of the new day. In Jesus Christ, his life, death, resurrection and ascension to reign, the new day has drawn near.

By the light of the new day, the whole world is now being summoned by God. To come, to receive the good news of God. That is the fulfilment, not only of Israel, but of the world. That is the meaning, not only of the Old Testament, but of the new. The Messiah of God, he is the Christ of the whole world.

He has come for all. All are called out of darkness into marvellous light. The marvellous light of the kingdom of God has dawned, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near; repent and believe,' was Jesus proclamation. Because all who repent and believe, discover themselves, to their complete surprise, living already now in the future kingdom of God. All of their sins, already now, forgiven. Already now, at peace, with God, with themselves, and with neighbour. Already now, with their feet firmly grounded, on

a distant shore. On the rock, of the future kingdom of God, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

'As the first day of the week was dawning.'

The dawning of the new day in the life of the world, is the dawning of a new age in the life of the world. A new week. A new era. An era, of eternal life. Of eternal life, in an eternal kingdom.

'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth, had passed away, and the sea, the Old Testament symbol for evil, was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

'See the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

They will be his peoples,

And God himself will be with them;

He will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

Mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

For the first things have passed away.

And the One who was seated on the throne said, 'See I am making all things new.'

Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.'

Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.'

This is the Christian vision of God for his world. This, and nothing else. This, and nothing less.

In Jesus Christ, God has begun again. In Jesus Christ, God has created anew. In Jesus Christ, God is making all things new.

It is not yet the day. But the new day has dawned. And all people, in Brighton, and in the world, are called out of darkness into glorious light. The glorious light of Jesus Christ. The light of the world. Not like the lights of the city at night. But like the light of the sun at dawn. Filling the darkness with light.

Christ is risen. He is risen, indeed. Hallelujah.

Have a blessed Easter.

Rev'd Jonathan Chamberlain

Vicar