

Lenten Luncheon Reflections 2009

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Jesus as Lord and Master

Welcome to our Third Lenten Luncheon for 2009.

Today I would like to do a few different things than we have done the past two weeks. The first of these is to honor the day which I see many of you have honored by wearing green today. My cousin, Jennifer, and I were disappointed on Sunday, March 1 that most people did not honor St. David, our patron saint of Wales, by wearing daffodils or leeks. Some of you may have noticed that I was wearing my Welsh tie that Sunday! Maybe it is the green beer that makes St. Patrick more popular in this country than St. David, or the fact that there may be more people in this country from Ireland than from Wales. Whatever the reason, I would invite you today as our opening prayer to share with me in part of what is traditionally called, St. Patrick's Breastplate as printed on the sheet.

St. Patrick's Breastplate is contained in the ancient Book of Armagh, from the early ninth century. along with Patrick's authentic "Confession." St. Patrick is said to have written this prayer to strengthen himself with God's protection as he prepared to confront and convert Loegaire, high king of Ireland.

I bind to myself today the strong virtue of the Invocation of the Trinity:
I believe the Trinity in the Unity, The Creator of the Universe.

I bind to myself today the power of Heaven, the light of the sun,
The brightness of the moon, the splendour of fire,
The flashing of lightning, the swiftness of wind, the depth of sea,
The stability of earth, the compactness of rocks.

I bind to myself today God's Power to guide me, God's Might to uphold me,
God's Wisdom to teach me, God's Eye to watch over me, God's Ear to hear me,
God's Word to give me speech, God's Hand to guide me, God's Way to lie before me,
God's Shield to shelter me, God's Host to secure me.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ within me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ at my right, Christ at my left,

Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks to me,
Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me.

I bind to myself today the strong virtue of an invocation of the Trinity,
I believe the Trinity in the Unity, the Creator of the Universe.

The second different thing I would like to do today is to take advantage of the fact that today is the last Lenten luncheon for this year at least that my cousin, Jennifer Collins, will be with us. Last Wednesday night at our covered dish supper she introduced us to some of the songs and hymns she has written. You will find copies of them on the blue sheets on the table. I will let her introduce the first one which speaks to us of Jesus as our Lord.

I bring you Jesus, I bring my Lord.....

From heaven`s high throne He came
Jesus, name above all names.
Came to such a lowly birth came to save the sons of earth.
I bring you Jesus, I bring my Lord.....

Come see His majesty gaze on His beauty
See His great humility and see the scars He bore for me.
I bring you Jesus, I bring my Lord

He walks the streets of gold in heav`n, where none grow old
He trod the dusty road below That all men His love might know
I bring you Jesus, I bring my Lord.....

As we listen to that song all of us have been prompted to think what would our lives be like today if no one had brought Jesus to us to become our Lord. Most of all, of course, we are prompted to think what our lives would be like if God had not given us Jesus to be the Lord of our lives.

The title, Lord, appears 717 times in the New Testament. (*Praying the Names of Jesus* by Anne Spangler, page 202. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006) The Greek word is “Kyrios.” This is the word that is still used today even in the English speaking world. Last Sunday the tune used

as we sung, “Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy” (The Presbyterian Hymnal No. 572) was *Kyrie*. The name is derived from the Greek, “Kyrie eleison, Christe elsison, Kyrie eleison.” This is the Greek translation of the prayer for God’s mercy.

The Greek word, “Kyrios” is used in the New Testament to refer to an owner, an emperor, a king, a father, a husband or a master. The word, “kyrios” is also used to translate into Greek the three Hebrew names and titles for God: Yahweh, Adonai, and Elohim. It would appear, though, that when people addressed Jesus as “Kyrios” or “Lord” in the Gospels, they were often simply showing respect to him as a rabbi or teacher, addressing him as “sir” rather than acknowledging him as God. It is only after his death and resurrection that the title, “Lord,” began to be widely used of Jesus amongst his followers. In part Thomas may have been the one who initiated such a use when Jesus appeared to him after the resurrection and showed him his hands and his side and Thomas cried out, “My Lord and my God.” In the Acts of the Apostles and in Paul’s writings the title, “Lord,” comes almost to take on the characteristics of another name for Jesus. In using this title, “Lord,” for Jesus, the early Christians were clearly identifying Jesus with Yahweh, the covenant name of God in the Old Testament. Such an identification, of course, prepares the way for the development of the doctrine of the Trinity of which St. Patrick made reference in our opening prayer. In so many of our own prayers I am sure that we use the title, “Lord” and we are not always conscious of whether we are addressing God the Father or addressing Jesus as Lord.

When St. Jerome translated the New Testament from Greek into the Latin Vulgate he used the word, “dominus” for the Greek word, “Kyrios” It is, of course, from that Latin word, “dominus” that we see many of the characteristics that we associate with lordship, namely dominance and domineering. For those who would like to do some research I also read that it is from this same Latin word, “dominus” that we get the name for the game, “dominoes.” (*He Shall Be Called* by Robert J. Morgan, page 48. Warner Faith, 2005)

The descriptions dominant or domineering that we so often associate with lordship means that we have always to ask what does it mean to us to say that Jesus is Lord. Jesus himself seemed to have needed to clarify this for his disciples. I would invite you to read with me the story as it is found in Mark 10:35-45:

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." [36] And he said to them, "What is it you want me to

do for you?" [37] And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." [38] But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" [39] They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; [40] but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

[41] When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. [42] So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. [43] But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, [44] and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. [45] For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

As we listen to his words we may say that Jesus is the Lord who reinvented or re-focused what lordship really means. We cannot confess that, "Jesus is Lord," without hearing his words, "for the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Such a way of looking at lordship in this new light that Jesus has given not simply by his teaching but by his way of life, and ultimately by his way of sacrificial death appears to have had a very strong influence upon the life of the early church. As he writes to the Christians in Philippi Paul appears to be quoting a hymn with which they may already have been familiar. This early hymn about Jesus clearly recognized how he was worthy of the name of Lord because of his role as servant, or slave. What is interesting, though, is to see how Paul uses this hymn. He is not so much wanting to give praise to Jesus as Lord as he is wanting to remind the people there in Philippi of what it really should mean in their lives and in their relationships with one another to confess that Jesus is Lord. I would invite you to read his words with me: (Philippians 2:1-11)

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death--even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

His words prompt us again to think what does it mean to me to confess that “Jesus Christ is Lord” How is his style of lordship becoming evident in our lifestyles and in our ways of relating to and with other people.?

The second song in which Jennifer will lead us prompts us to think about what it means to us that day by day our Lord understands our needs. He is after all the Lord who has walked this earth before us.

Day by Day the Lord understands your needs
Day by Day His Holy Spirit leads
Day by Day He hears your every prayer
and Day by Day He keeps you in His care

Every Day He gives you a brand new start
Every Day He comes to touch your heart
Every Day He frees you from your sin
and Every Day He breathes new life within

Come What May, He`ll hold you in His palm
Come What May He`ll rescue you from harm
Come What May He`ll walk along your way
and Come What May He`ll love you Day by Day

As we hear the words of that song we are invited not only to think what our Lord means to us each day but also how our Lord would have us to show to others his lordship in our lives day by day.

Unison Prayer by Jennifer Collins

**Peace of the azure sky to you
Peace of the gentle breeze to you
Peace of the flowing wave to you
and the peace of the Prince of Peace to you.**

(Written by Jennifer Collins on a beautiful day in January, bright sunshine, not a cloud in sight and a gentle breeze just about moving the branches of trees. Written for a friend who was going for an EEG that afternoon. She`d had a heart attack and was concerned about the outcome. Not a Christian but always let me pray for her when necessary.)

More information on Jennifer Collins and her writings through RoJen Christian Ministry is available by e-mail from rojen_collins@btinternet.com or from the website at www.rojencollins.co.uk.