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2 Samuel 23: 1 – 7
 Revelation 1: 4b – 8

Ps. 132: 1 – 13, (14 – 19)
 John 18: 33 – 37 n

Andrew Malcolm, in his book, *The Canadians*, writes about a woman named Cecille Bechard. Ms. Bechard is “a Canadian who visits the US several dozen times a day; when she goes to the refrigerator or to the back door or to make tea for instance. To read and sleep, she stays in Canada. And she eats there, too, as she sits at the north end of her kitchen table. Ms. Bechard’s home is in Quebec and Maine at the same time.” This is because her house was already built on this site in 1842 when diplomats sat down in London to create the official boundary line between the two countries.

Ms. Bechard is a citizen of one country who spends much of her time in another, at the same time not really moving much of anywhere at all. That should sound oddly familiar to us as Christians, because we, too, are citizens of two worlds, or two kingdoms.

We tend to bifurcate ourselves, compartmentalizing our lives into two separate realities. There’s our normal daily life where we eat, sleep, work and play. Where we interact with our friends and families, and all those others with whom we relate in some way or another, even if only virtually. Where we are part of a culture which we both love and contribute to and disparage and distance ourselves from. Where we are all caught up in the politics, the values, and the movement, the urgency, of the secular world around us.

Then there’s our other world. To be a person who professes Jesus Christ as Lord is to participate in another reality besides the one that we experience day in and day out. Like layers of transparencies, the two worlds coexist, but only with the eyes of faith can we see the religious or spiritual one. Where the Church, the Body of Christ, tries to be the visible representation of the Kingdom of God. Where life is about doing good to one another, praying, feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Where everyone has enough and no one has too much. Where time and values and governance are all so very different from those in our normal daily world.

In our Gospel lesson from John today, our two worlds collide. We are plopped down into the middle of Jesus’ trial with Pilate. Pilate is very much of this ordinary, normal world we experience. He is a realist, a pragmatist, ruling by political machinations and calculations. Jesus stands before him, perfectly well aware of his very bleak situation, and the cross which awaits him. Nevertheless, Jesus is also perfectly well aware of another reality in which he dwells – the Kingdom of God. Jesus stands there, with both feet in both kingdoms, as Pilate tries to understand what is completely beyond his grasp.

Pilate is perhaps both entertained and exasperated by having to deal with the man in front of him. He has more important things to worry about than this hick from Galilee with nebulous, seemingly unfounded charges by the Jewish leadership. But he knows that his city is filled to overflowing with Jews from all over the region who are there for the Passover. He also knows that it will not take much to turn the crowds into a rioting mob. And so, Pilate attempts to make sense of Jesus so that he can make a cold, hard decision.

Looking at Jesus very skeptically from head to toe, Pilate asks, “You’re the King of the Jews??” No response. “What have you done?” he asks, a bit more harshly. He is not accustomed to not being

answered. But even when Jesus does answer, it doesn't help. Because Pilate cannot understand him. He can hear the words, but he cannot comprehend what Jesus means by them. It feels perhaps like Jesus is playing a game with him. "So you ARE a king?? Or not?? What in the world are you talking about??" Which is precisely the problem. The world in which Jesus operates is not the world with which Pilate is familiar.

"My kingdom is not of this world," Jesus says, not unlike Ms. Bechard sitting at the northern end of her dining table and looking across to that other country where her refrigerator stands. It is enough to drive a person without the eyes or ears of faith to distraction. We don't get to hear the rest of the story in John today, but we know where it is leading. We know what decision Pilate will make. Because he only knows one world.

If we proclaim to follow the risen Lord, Christ the King, then we are called to live each day with our feet firmly planted in both worlds. We are called to live each day in two realities at once. We are called to live in this world with all of its pain and suffering, its violence and corruption, its wastefulness and shortsightedness, its hunger and poverty. We are called as Christians to put ourselves in the midst of all of that. We are called, not to separate ourselves from it or rise above it, but to live and move and have our being right there in the midst of the muck and the mess. We are called to be active participants in making this world a better place for everyone. Because the reality for us as people of faith is that God is right there in the middle of the muck and the mess as well. And so, we are called to look beyond the tangible and verifiable, what seems to be the real world, to the world of God which is the really real world. We are called to see the invisible in the visible. We are called to look past the temporal to the eternal, past the moment to the mystery, as the Rev. Dr. Delmer L. Chilton writes. We are called to see the Christ in the face of the other.

As we grow in our faith, we learn to see these not as two worlds, not as two compartmentalized realities, but rather as two aspects of God's creation – that which is in need of redeeming and that which has already been redeemed. We live and move and have our being right in the middle of "Yes, but not yet." Chilton says that the trick is to not get so enamored with either one that we lose sight of the other. With Christ the King showing us the way, we look for God at work in the world around us, supporting us 'all the day through' with that divine love, mercy and grace, nudging us in the right direction when we are lost or go astray, and watching over us with divine providence. All the while, God is filling each moment of time as we know it with meaning and purpose.

What will it look like when Christ's Kingship is finally made manifest and visible for all to see? We will have to imagine a radical reversal from the ways of this world and its leadership. Imagine really beating swords into plowshares, or their modern-day equivalents. Imagine liberation and stewardship instead of trafficking and exploitation. Imagine self-emptying rather than self-aggrandizing. Imagine mercy and not vengeance, and care for the vulnerable instead of privilege for the powerful. Imagine grace and generosity instead of greed, and hope and humility rather than hubris, embracing rather than excluding, and faith rather than fear. This is what the shalom of God looks like. This is what Christ's kingship looks like.

So, whenever we pray the prayer that our Lord taught us, may its subversiveness pervade all of human culture. May it disrupt all of our human agendas and allow us to live into the fullness of God's love. May God's Kingdom really come. And may God's will really be done on earth as in heaven.

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