

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

January 5, 2020

Christmas 2

INTRODUCTION

1. End of last year = "Kingdom of God" = 3 kingdoms = Glory, heaven; Power, creation
 - Kingdom of Grace on earth -- traced development from Abram through his family tree
 - Includes King David, descendants until Jesus = son of David, Abraham = King of kings

 2. Jesus' message: "Repent; God's kingdom = at hand" -- what = kingdom of God?
 - "The kingdom of God is the redemptive presence and activity of God in human lives"
 - **It's God interacting with people to save, redeem, restore** -- using circumstances, people

 3. Over time, we have cluttered God's kingdom with the baggage of "church" = traditions
 - Many customs = no meaning for many people, especially guests, unbelievers
 - Church people = not explain why we do what we do -- "Always done it" = "Lutheran"

 4. In effort to explain some "baggage", give it meaning, talked about Christmas Crismons
 - For next few weeks, continue to explain traditions, customs = give them meaning
 - **Need help to understand why we do what we do** = connect kingdom of God to baggage
- A. 1. Before beginning, tie up loose end -- on Christmas, briefly referred to paraments
- Since they = change today, review: Pulpit -- Lectern -- Altar -- see again for Easter
- A. 2. A big piece of baggage that has hidden God's kingdom is divisions in the Church
- God = 1 kingdom -- Church = many forms, versions = denominations, interpretations
 - 2 broad traditions: **Church is also divided into "liturgical" and "non-liturgical" traditions**
- A. 3. "Liturgy" comes from Greek "Leitourgia" comes from "laos" + "ergon" = people + work
- **Liturgy is the "work of the people", or the "public service" of Christians** = worship Service
 - Liturgical churches: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican/Episcopalian, Lutheran
 - Non-liturgical churches: Baptist, Pentecostal, Fundamentalist, Non-denominational
- B. 1. Liturgical churches differ from non-liturgical in two ways: Sunday Service and architecture
- Sunday Service = later -- architecture = today -- liturgical follow floor plan of OT Temple
 - Non-liturgical do not = "auditorium" -- Em, picture of temple floor plan -- EXPLAIN
 - This = visually portrayed on bulletin cover -- EXPLAIN
- B. 2. Corresponding to this, liturgical churches = similar 3 part floor plan
- Nave: where people make their sacrifices = praise, listen, offerings, participate
 - **Chancel: where pastor serves people with God's Word** = readings, sermon
 - **Sanctuary: from where people receive Christ's body and blood** = God's real presence

- B. 3. In temple, altar = courtyard for sacrifices -- in church, altar = sanctuary for God's presence
- In temple, veil separating Most Holy Place = torn in two when Jesus died = access to God
 - In church, altar = visible, not veiled = symbol of God's presence, direct access to God
 - In church, altar = symbolic connection between God, people -- He serves, we sacrifice

CONCLUSION

1. In church, the altar symbolically replaces the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat
 - Like Ark, Seat: **It reminds us that God is among us and present with each of us** = focal point
 - When He = in temple at 12, did Jesus know all this = happen? -- did He like it? -- don't know
 - Did He know we = keep so much OT stuff, modify it? -- did He approve? -- don't know
2. What He did know: He had to be in the temple, "My Father's house" -- talking with elders
 - Broader answer: **"I have to be about My Father's business"** = suffer, die, rise again = to bridge gap, tear veil between God, people -- probably = some indication of that at age 12
 - What we = know: When you come to church and see the Altar, you have access to God
3. **Nothing stands between you and God** -- no curtain, person, rules -- **Jesus opened the way**
 - When you come up to the altar for Communion, you are in His presence -- **He is in our midst**
 - **He is feeding us with heavenly, divine food** -- **You may depart in His peace, strength, joy**
 - That = meaning of floor plan, architecture = why we what we do