

It's the end of the Church year and time for our annual celebration of Christ our King. We know that this king is very different from the kings that rule peoples in earthly kingdoms. Some churches though, feature Jesus in stained glass windows with a crown on his head. A thing which sits on your head with jewels is probably the least likely thing that Jesus would want to wear. He's not that kind of king.

Are there any stories about Jesus which show him parading around in soft robes and royal colors? Are there any stories about him riding a great stallion with a sword in his hand? Are there any stories about the large armies he controlled? Of course not! He's not like any human king we've ever seen.

So of course Pilate would have known all that before he was face to face with Jesus. Of course others told Pilate about Jesus. You better believe that Pilate would have made all inquiries possible about this mysterious man who the Jewish authorities turned over to him. Why? Because Pilate is nothing if not pragmatic. Pilate is only worried about the politics of this situation. A more direct question Pilate could have asked Jesus is, "Are you threatening my job, and my status as governor?"

Jesus said to Pilate as he said to us that his kingdom is very different. What is God's kingdom like? **It's a place of truth and a place of peace.** It's a place where people don't shout in anger because there is nothing to be angry about.

It's a place where we don't need weapons of any sort. There is nothing in God's kingdom that will threaten or attack you. Each one of us, when we do something to help people instead of hurt them is working as a disciple of Jesus to bring about the Kingdom of Heaven right here on earth. One person who is trying to make a little more of that kingdom here on earth is Bishop Jim Curry.

*"The Rt. Rev. Jim Curry, a retired bishop from own diocese of Connecticut, has been trying to do his part to get guns out of our society in a very small, but symbolic way. Last week he travelled with his team down to Capitol Hill in Washington DC. with two colleagues. Their vehicle was towing a trailer loaded with essential cargo: a traditional blacksmithing forge.*

*Bishop Curry is a founding member of [Bishops United Against Gun Violence](#), and his Connecticut-based crew were on their way to demonstrate how they melt down guns and turn them into gardening tools. The nonprofit he co-founded in 2017, [Swords to Plowshares Northeast](#), is centered on the process. The organization takes its name from a [passage from Isaiah 2:4](#) – "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." Swords to Plowshares promotes gun safety with a visual, tangible ministry that Curry says is both practical and symbolic.*

*"When we started evangelizing and talking to police departments and communities around the country and we could show them the actual transformation, these weapons of death into instruments of life, it's just been an amazing process," Curry told Episcopal News Service. "People really get it."*

Jesus realizes, as he stands in front of Pilate, that there is no sense trying to explain to Pilate what the Kingdom of Heaven is. Pilate has no interest in having faith in God who loves us and wants us to live in peace and in truth. Pilate is his own God and he wants to keep it that way. He thinks he must hold on to his power whatever the cost.

So, Pilate does not ask Jesus what the Kingdom of God is like. Instead, he keeps harping on what intentions Jesus has; “So, you are a king?”

Jesus sidesteps the question and answers with his own statement. **I came here to show people the Kingdom of God, a place of truth and peace.**

What is truth, Pilate asks?” For many rulers of the earth, the truth is whatever they say it is. But for Jesus, son of God, the truth is what God has promised to us, forgiveness, salvation, reconciliation. These are big concepts but they boil down to this; **the truth is what builds people up and not breaks people down.** God does not want us to wage war. Wars are deadly. That is truth. God will forgive us our sins and give us peace in our hearts. That is truth. God created us to be people who are happy and healthy. That is truth.

And in the Kingdom of God you find truth...all the time. That’s what Jesus came to us to tell us. **I came here to show people the Kingdom of God, a place of truth and peace.**

Some children who come to our 8 o’clock service have submitted to me some big questions that they have about God. I was very pleased that they wanted to ask big questions. And so I want to tell the truth when I answer them. But I’m realizing that only God can tell the truth about some of these questions. One of them is, What do you feel when you go to heaven?

I have to tell the truth...I have no idea.

But I can say what God has promised us through scripture. Heaven is the Kingdom of God. And because of Jesus we have had a glimpse of what that kingdom is like. Through the stories Jesus tells us we can imagine that heaven is a place where people don’t get sick, or hungry or sad. It’s where everyone tells the truth, respects every person and Love is in charge.

*REVELATION 22: 1-5 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; <sup>4</sup> they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.*

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<sup>i</sup> *Episcopal News Service*, “Bishop, blacksmithing crew melts guns...”, November 16, 2021.