



Christian Crusaders

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When the King Moves In

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TEXT: Revelation 3:15-20 (NASB)

'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Dear friends:

Who would you say you most admire in this world? And if that person you admire so much were a person of power and influence, what would you do if they came to your home today and knocked on the door asking "can I come in? Can I move in with you and stay a while? Can I share the rhythms of your life and get to know you in a relationship of love?" Imagine how that would be if the person you love and admire so much began to share daily life with you.

Let me say that love never forces entrance, nor can love be forced. Love always invites, offers, waits, and gives. The Bible says that Jesus is the King of kings who is the "persistent suitor", coming to us again and again to knock on the door of our hearts,

seeking access to our lives in order that he might bless us with His power. Save us, forgive us, and reconcile us to His Father. King Jesus has another name, it is Emmanuel, which means "God with us". Think about Jesus as King, coming to us as God as He really is to live with us as we really are. God comes to stay, to live in our neighborhood. That's totally different than a visiting guest who comes for a few hours on a special occasion. Sometimes we think about Jesus as a repairman: we hope he leaves soon, and we hope he doesn't cost us too much. Pause a minute now and think: Jesus is the King of the cosmos who will save us from our sins. The One who had all power emptied Himself of all power and glory as God in order to take on the weakness of human flesh. In the incarnation God was everywhere present, now becomes human living in a particular place. The God who was eternal now comes to live within time and history. It's an interesting thought, but we who are human beings are relatively puny compared to the size and power and scope of an infinite, almighty God.

However God's Spirit, though everywhere, will not dwell in one place uninvited. That's within the heart of every person that He has created. When Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River in Mark 1, He says "the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the good news." Well the Kingdom of God was at hand because Jesus the King had come to live with people He had created. The King moved into the neighborhood. And when a king ascends to power, there are only two responses: you either surrender on your knees to swear allegiance to the king or you rebel and run.

I once read a true story of a man was arrested for a crime, convicted, and sentenced to death. He was guilty, but people who loved the man went to the governor of the state, and the governor pardoned the man of his death sentence. But the man said "I will not accept it." Well that took matters of the legal system, and the court ruled that the pardon was not valid unless the one intended to be pardoned accepted the pardon. The legal court system said that the man had the right to refuse mercy and refuse freedom.

When King Jesus comes to pardon us of all our failures and sins and give us new life and freedom, though it seems ridiculous, puny people can limit the almighty power of King Jesus. We can reject His love and reject His pardon.

So does your life have room for a King Jesus? In John 1:11 it says "Jesus came to His own people but His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, to them God gives the power, the authority, to become the people of God." If Jesus came to your house and came in to live, would your ego let Him have the throne? If Jesus came to your house and shared time with you, is there any element of your attitudes

and behaviors or speech, is ready thing within your household that you'd be embarrassed for the King to see?

Well what is the impact when King Jesus moves in? Jesus reigns wherever he is received. He has unlimited power and unlimited resources to bring about positive change, and he brings that change with a heart full of love and a heart-character full of wisdom. He turns our hovel into a home. When the King moves in He turns it into a palace. He transforms our lives into something beautiful, where we become everything that God intended us for to us to be when he created us and gave us life.

I once heard a story of a famous nightclub in an American city. And that nightclub had big-time entertainers and musicians come in to play music before packed houses, night after night. But there was a problem: the piano in the nightclub was out of tune. Terribly out of tune! And the "guts" of the piano were damaged so that notes would be missed when the keyboard player played the song. And so when the famous musicians would leave after playing in that nightclub, they tell the owner of the nightclub "you gotta do something about that piano!" So you know what? Finally the owner of the nightclub did. Do you know we did? He painted the outside of the piano.

When King Jesus comes into the life of a believer, He brings change in a gut-level to remove all that prevents us from playing beautiful music in harmony with the living God. Is King Jesus on the throne of your heart? There's a song by musician Michael Card that attempts to capture the thoughts of Jesus' stepfather Joseph. In the lyric of Card's song he says "Lord, please show me where I fit into this plan of yours." Now that's upside down from how we sometimes think. We might invite Jesus in, but we squeeze Jesus into OUR plan. That's upside down. The truth is if he's the King of kings, and he rules over us and wisdom and love, then we ought to echo Joseph's words in Michael Card's song. "Lord please show me where I fit into YOUR plan." Jesus takes the throne and the central axis of our lives turned around; the presence of Jesus at the very heart of who we are as His people.

So why is it good news when King Jesus moves in? First, because he cleanses away all guilt and shame from our lives. He washes away all the wrongdoing to purify our hearts and renew us forever. Not long ago when our family was together for the holiday one of our grandchildren unfortunately became ill, and he "lost it" all over furniture and floor. There was much to clean up. Isn't it an amazing truth that King Jesus, who has all power, is willing to become our servant and there is no stain that King Jesus cannot remove from our lives. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." So we say with David in Psalm 51 "Create in me a clean heart, oh God"

The second powerful good news because Jesus the King moves in is that King Jesus heals our brokenness. He's the gentle healer, using love to touch us tenderly in our wounded places, and to touch us even in those secret places in our psyche that no one knows about, but that haunt us in our thinking and our behavior. He heals of brokenness of destructive patterns of behavior. He heals of brokenness of stinking attitudes, cynicism, and bitterness, and low self-worth, and fear, and anxiety. He heals our brokenness to dispel the dark clouds of pessimism and depression. He heals our brokenness in relationships where there is conflict and estrangement.

The third reason that is great news when King Jesus moves in is that Jesus restores our hope for a different life. When I was in seminary many years ago at Luther seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, I worked downtown part-time at Metropolitan Medical Center in a geriatric psych ward for depressed people. At that time, to help those depressed people, they used electric shock therapy. The jolt of electricity forced the brain waves to find new patterns of thought. The idea was to "scramble" the brain waves and force the person out of the ruts of depression in their mind's electric stimulus. Well Jesus' spirit comes into us and brings the power surge of love that "reboots" our mind's thinking. He stirs our hope for new possibilities. You see, when Jesus comes in, the future does not have to be a continuation of our past struggles or failures.

The fourth reason that is good news when King Jesus moves there to take the throne of our heart is that he fills our soul with joy. It's not that we become happy all the time, with a plastic, fake smile, pretending to be happy. It's true joy, based on the knowledge that we are deeply loved. That we belong to the King; that we are the children of God. In an old gospel song it says "Joy is the flag flown high from the castle of my heart, for the King is in residence there."

Have you ever taken a moment in prayer and faith to consciously invite Jesus to come into your life and reign as King? Not long ago I had a very strange dream: it was my graduation day from seminary, as I prepared to be a pastor. The other graduates were there with me at Central Lutheran Church in downtown Minneapolis, and all of them had on beautiful robes, blue robes, and they looked elegant as they formed the line to march into the worship space for the graduation ceremony. But I had no robe, I just had a sloppy, peach colored, short-sleeved shirt and Bermuda shorts. And when I entered the auditorium of the church the whole place erupted in laughter! I didn't know that I was naked, and miserable, and clueless, and inadequate. I was exposed! Then Jesus knocks on the door of my heart and says "Can I come in? Can I cleanse you of guilt? Can I heal your broken places? Can I fill you with hope for a new future and a new

beginning? Will you let my spirit give you joy that will bubble up each day as you walk with me in faith? That's the type of God we serve.

I invite you now to pray with me that King Jesus would move in:

Dear Lord Jesus, we welcome you into our lives. We welcome You to take the throne of our heart, and by the power of Your spirit, cleanse us of all doesn't belong. Heal our brokenness. Transform our attitudes. Change our behavior. Fill us with love. Thank you that you promise us that we are Your people forever. Thank you Jesus that all of life is transformed when you move in as King to rule forever. In Your name, Jesus, amen.