

LIVING GENEROUSLY

a stewardship narrative series presented by TENS

FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING

THE REV. FRANCISCO GARCIA

With the rise of immensely popular TV shows like *Game of Thrones*, it's safe to say that Kings and Kingdoms are back. Millions of people have been captivated by the storyline of competing noble houses vying for ultimate power — to gain control of the monarchy of the Seven Kingdoms represented by the Iron Throne. Wrapped up in the plotline are tales of deceit, lust, corruption, and violence as the means to most ends.

Although I'm not a fan of *Game of Thrones*, I have been following its rise in popularity. While people have critiqued the series for its explicit use of all kinds of violence, I think that if you are going to portray a somewhat realistic depiction of Kingdoms, even ones filled with fantasy tales of dragons and magic, then it would be remiss to gloss over the brutal, violent nature of Kingdom life. One need not look very hard in our own biblical narrative to see that this is the case.

And so, on Christ the King Sunday, we are challenged to follow a radically different kind of King and live into a different notion of Kingdom. Many people, including myself, have had trouble with references to Jesus as the “King of kings and Lord of lords,” for the



patriarchal and oppressive trappings that are embedded in the very language and history of these terms.

However, as I reflect on stewardship and what this means to follow Jesus authentically in our day, I see that there is a redeeming, subversive value in the Kingly references to Jesus. For us, Jesus is the most concrete, palpable, and supreme revelation of God's love in the world. Today's verses from Colossians tell us that “in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.” Jesus entered into the world to serve as the true example of nobility — a divine, countercultural force to challenge the oppressive, violent, and greedy ways of earthly kings and kingdoms. Jesus came to usher in a wave of love, compassion, and justice so powerful that it would challenge and call humanity to live as we were intended to — in community, with radical generosity. Not hoarding wealth, power, resources, and privilege for ourselves — but sharing it with others freely, especially with the least of these among us.

So, we need not only rely on kings or thrones but also on the generous Spirit of God that is pleased to dwell among us even today. This is what it means to be the Church, and to follow Jesus. Living generously is more than a stewardship message — it is indeed the way to the grace and love-filled Kingdom of God.

reflection questions

- How might God be calling you personally, and as a faith community, to challenge systems of power and violence, and to live with radical, open generosity?
- How can we organize our stewardship practices in our congregations and wider church structures to support greater generosity and partnership with our surrounding communities?



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