

C Proper 16

Isaiah 58: 9b-14.

Psalms 103: 1-8

Hebrews 12: 18-29.

Luke 13: 10-17.

NOT GOOD!

The K of G

God as in Caesar, so Jesus as a subversive revolutionary.

God OT YHWH. God the headmaster that we think needs to be placated.

God the uncle that indulges us.

God as in the ground of our being, the inner light, the divine within. The unfathomable God.

So the K of G is something about making contact with the God within.

Be yourself. But what is yourself?

The Kingdom of God is where we get to when we transcend earthly feelings. What Paul calls flesh. The stuff that is burnt away by the God of fire, or we let it go to the flames, that is.

not of this world, he was NOT saying that his kingdom was of the afterlife, but might have been telling Pilate that his kingdom was an **inner** kingdom—a kingdom of outlook, of attitude, of motive—A recognition that the trappings of the material world ...is **illusion**. It is not like any king or kingdom this world knows.

How to get there? Prayer, trust, be yourself.

Prayer

Unfortunately, in the West, prayer has become something people do to try and get God to do what we want God to do. This is the egocentric self deciding what it needs, and as well as trying to manipulate other people, it tries to manipulate God.

Trust. We are not in control. One of the great themes of the Old Testament is that although the People of Israel are the chosen people, they have this role on trust. They are to act as a beacon to the rest of the nations, to bear witness to the creating love of the one God, and to act as prophets for the day when all people will be united by God himself.

Be yourself. But what is self?

Firstly, and most importantly, only God can achieve this. No self. As the passage from Isaiah makes clear: 'if you honour it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth.' That's about the Sabbath, but **the Christianisation of the 10Cs through the Incarnation means that every moment of every day is holy, not just a particular period once a week. Everything you do.**

Have you ever been in the situation where anger has welled-up in you? You respond. Afterwards you start to regret. You try and justify it. But deep down you still regret. **It was your pride, your ego that responded so.**

You can **recognize** the people at home in the Kingdom, they are the ones who are ready to forgive. They are the people who feed the hungry, who welcome outcasts and strangers, who clothe the naked and visit the sick and imprisoned. They, in short, free people from their pasts, and give them hope for the future. They liberate others from their burdens.

We honour the King

- when we take responsibility for ourselves.
- when we forgive others and let go of resentments.
- when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, when we welcome a stranger, clothe the naked and visit the prisoner.
- when we realise that the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the imprisoned, are all parts of us that we have lost contact with—parts of ourselves that are strangers to us.
- when we do all we can to enable those around us to live with delight.

We do this to refresh and re-empower ourselves in order to do what we say we will do at the end of the **Eucharist.**

We present ourselves

The kingdom is about a better way here on earth. Now, not then. It comes by all of us being generous and gracious.

Christian Aid: we believe in life before death

It comes through togetherness,

Not demanding that we all be alike, that you become like me, but accepting each other's qualities, no matter how much we may be irritated by each other. By accepting each other's mistakes – we all make them.

Being gathered together by God by accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ does not do away with anything that makes us who we are, with all the wonderful variety of human life and culture. Rather, God's grace redeems and raises up all this diversity. We become, both on an individual and communal level, more like that which God has planned us to be, to become more fulfilled. **God's grace takes nothing away from us, but heals and adds to what is already good.**

When I was ordained, the Bishop told us that whatever else we did, we must never stop being ourselves. Doubtless you have many expectations of what the Rector should be like, how he should behave, what he should and should not say and do. I will disappoint every one of you.

The K of G is not about then, it's about now.

fed, comforted, display our common humanity.

It is present in Syria at this moment a

It is here in Portlaoise when we work together, accepting

Stop resisting. Relax. **Christian Aid: life before death**