

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

November 21, 2021

Old Testament Reading; Daniel 7: 9-10,13-14

Responsive Reading; Psalm 93

Epistle Reading; Revelation 1: 4-8

Gospel Reading; John 18: 33-37

Sermon Title:

## **Do You Hear My Voice?**

**By Rev. Jim Gardner**

Summary; He is ruler over all Kings. He has made us all Kings. He bears witness to the truth. If you are of the truth, you hear His voice.

This is the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

Psalm 30: 11&12 Says, "You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent, O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever."

OK, sounds good, but what is the true basis of our thanksgiving? It seems to me that it is a lot more than a turkey

dinner with cranberry sauce and all the fixings. I think it is more than pretty leaves that are about to fall off the trees and a beautiful crisp day that will soon become a biting cold and windswept, snow covered landscape. And maybe, just maybe it is more than family sitting together around a festive table. Maybe it is something deeper, something more permanent, something so spiritual that it totally consumes us.

Maybe it is God and what He is, what He has done, how He relates to us and what that relationship can turn us into and thereby affect everything in our existence.

Today our scriptures combine together to paint a mosaic of pictures that show God's excellence and personified grace.

First, we have Daniel. Daniel is a true prophet as opposed to Revelation where I see John as a visionary poet.

Daniel paints a picture of God the Father, described by Daniel as "the Ancient of Days" and Christ as, "One like the Son of Man", to whom God gives over the kingdom of all the nations of earth. This kingdom is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away. Which shall not be destroyed.

This is really big. All other kingdoms on earth will rise and fall but the kingdom that the "Ancient" gives to the "Son" is forever and is so good that it is deserving of the loyalty and respect of all people and nations on the earth, forever.

Our Psalmist amplifies this. Like Daniel he says that God is clothed with majesty and girded with strength. God is from “everlasting” and the world is established from old. God is no Johnny-come-lately. No group of non-believers can drown Him out. Even the mighty waves of the ocean can’t drown out God. God is the elephant on the couch. We simply cannot possibly ignore Him. With God in charge there might be bumps in the road but there will never be a road block.

In Revelation, the visionary poet John, beautifully puts things into perspective. John describes Jesus as the “first born from the dead” that establishes a path for all of us to join Him in eternal life. John not only says that Jesus rules over all kings but that He makes us all kings too. This means that to God there is no one who has a higher rating with God than you have. You too are a king in God’s eyes.

That being the case now you should live up to that standing. No pressure here.

In Revelation the passage ends with the words of Christ saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

God knew when He inspired the writing of the Bible that people would have a rough time in latching onto His precepts. Those of us who are immersed in the secular world have a hard time

making sense of the value standard of God and often cannot see how it can possibly work in the “real world”.

We are not the first ones to struggle with this concept. Jesus was in constant odds with the religious elite, such as the Scribes and the Pharisees.

Pilate put Jesus into a private interview room, the Praetorium, to question Him. Pilate asked Jesus bluntly if Jesus was the King of the Jews.

To this Jesus says in essence, “Have any of your soldiers or officials reported to you that I was doing anything that appeared to be trying to overthrow you or are you just going by what the Jewish authorities have said about Me?”

Pilate pops off back at Jesus and says, “Am I a Jew? How the heck should I know where in the world they are coming from? Their brass have handed you over to me. What in the heck have you done to tick them off like this?”

You might detect a little paraphrasing here.

When Jesus tells Pilate that His kingdom is not of this world Pilate slips into a more serious attitude and sincerely asks, “Are you a King then?”

I would not have wanted to be in Pilate’s shoes when he started to see some validity in the person of Jesus.

The question for us is, do we believe this message and believe that Jesus is the truth. And if we do, do we hear His voice and are we guided by that voice so that we can be part of it?

If we can, we have an awful lot to be thankful for and we know the reason that all those good things, including eternal life, are available to us.

So, as we are thankful for all the things that God has given us let us be most thankful that God gave us Jesus to be our provider, savior and friend.

Thank you, God for your Son! Hallelujah and Amen.