

[Psalm 100](#)

[Ephesians 6:10-24](#)

[Matthew 25:31-46](#)

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords: **Mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule;** who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

*Holy, Holy, Holy- though the darkness hide thee,  
though the sinful human eye they glory may not see,  
only thou art holy, there is none beside thee, perfect in power, in love and purity.*

One of the legend stories my family received as children was about how to cut a pie.

I mention this because in the past week, many of you partook in a dinner that concluded with pie. Whether it was apple, pecan, pumpkin or sweet potato pie is a whole other conversation.

The legend we received was that my father and grandfather before him were given the duty of cutting the pie into equal slices. Their role was to divide the pie equally amongst those who wanted pie for dessert. If 5 people wanted to eat pie, the pie was cut into 5 equal pieces. If 8 people wanted pie, 8 equal pieces were cut. One person at the table was given the

job and had to do it well, or the person receiving the not quite equal piece would be upset and there would be much gnashing of teeth.

Pie, into slices.

Fairness.

One person in control of the dividing.

As children, we gave great thanks that this tradition did not trickle into our Thanksgiving meals. Instead, the pie was just plain old cut into equal pieces no matter how many people wanted to eat the pie and then there were pieces left over for snacking and after other meals.

The other place of major division on holiday meals was who sat at the “kiddie table” adjacent to the larger table. (It isn’t until later that we realized these kiddie tables were far more fun.) Divided by age and plate size, we, children, were sat adjacent or even in a different room. As a child, I always wanted to be at the other table, little did I know that right where I was, was the right spot to be.

Shoulder to shoulder with family.

Divisions made for us, demanded of us.

Decisions that included and excluded others.

Our opening collect today reminds us that it is God’s will to restore all things through God’s well beloved Son, that all peoples of the earth might be freed from sin and enslavement and be brought together into one body.

And yet, in today's gospel we hear one more parable ending one more time with eternal punishment. And.

Division.

Or.

Perhaps, this is not the final point of the parable.

Is there something more?

Like every parable before it does, this parable's foreboding punishment means to remind us of the path we should follow. This Eternal punishment is a guidepost along the way to remind us that our goal is not to assume the role of judge nor ignore those in need rather to look with new eyes on the world around us.

The king, in our gospel today, claims all of the nations and is inviting them into seeing each other as one, all within the kingdom of this King.

And as any King might do, he sorts them.

He sorts them not by tribe or nationality, rather- he sorts them by action. He sorts them by the grace, the compassion, the love that each has had for one another and more importantly for not just one another, their people within their peoples, but how they have treated the "other."

The person not familiar to them, treated them with dignity and care.

In this final parable shared with us on the Reign of Christ Sunday, we learn of God's desire that we live so that others might live, that our actions are governed from love rather than scarcity and that we might have eyes to behold family right where we are.

Likewise, the reign of Christ is not one seeking to condemn and sentence people to eternal damnation.

Instead, the reign of Christ is invitational, inviting us to reframe our perspective and see more clearly the opportunity we have to share generously what we have with those around us.

A King can do whatever a King wants to do. (Remember Mel Brooks' "It's nice to be King" which is a clear example of how not to use the powers of being King) and this King invites those listening to realize that in this kingdom, each person matters to the other.

Every single person represents the King, which in turn means each person is set apart, beloved, and royal in the eyes of this King. And this King cares so much for his kingdom that he is willing to pass judgement upon those who do not follow this philosophy.

All, though different, responsible for caring for each other.

All are charged with sharing what they have with those who are immediately before them, right where they are.

Each and every person is to be seen as beloved children of God, regardless of which table they are sitting at or if at some point they have been left off the table completely.

ALL are invited to join in the feast, to be fed, to have their thirst be quenched, and to be invited into the family to which they already belong by being born on this earth.

Our world right now is a multitude of divisions.

Tribes, peoples, political parties. Family tables fraught with unspoken tensions.

Each moment seeming to be in competition, always striving to elevate one over the other.

We see hope breakthrough in moments of cease fires, in moments of leadership and change, in moments where dignity of each human being is restored to wholeness.

This King is inviting us to see that the kingdom is stronger when we realize that we are all a part of this family, each moment is a moment to share what we have with the nearest person- regardless of the chair we are sitting in or at the table we find ourselves.

Each moment is a moment to be present with each other.

when we are hungry for justice,  
when we thirst for peace and  
when we are in desperate need to be clothed with the warm embrace of the  
assurance that no matter the size of our table, we are never alone, never  
less than and never without someone who deeply understands our needs.

Michael Franti puts the concept into words:  
People need, people need, people need people  
No matter where in the world that you go  
Don't you know that you're not alone?  
No matter where in the world that you go  
Don't you know that you're not alone?  
'Cause people need people

Our hymnody and scripture puts it as this:  
This King of Love, my shepherd is.  
This King of sheep and goats  
This King of the lost and the strays.

This is the reign of Christ. A reign that invites each of us and all of us to a  
table that has a chair for each of us with food enough for all.

Listen to the shepherd calling you in to be fed, to be clothed, to be  
transformed by a love that is so deep and broad that divisions dissipate and  
are overrun by the concept of sacred companionship.

## People need People. Each and every one.<sup>1</sup>

God of the losers,  
who inhabits the hungry, the thirsty,  
the naked, those in prison,  
whose kingship is one of love,  
enable us to find a way  
in this world of restrictions and fears,  
to build friendships,  
to find time for each other,  
to lift the phone or make a contact, and,  
in sharing our brokenness and restrictedness  
may we find divinity in that moment with each other.  
Through Christ the King,  
Amen<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.google.com/search?](https://www.google.com/search?q=people+need+people+lyrics+franti&sca_esv=585237898&rlz=1C5CHFA_enUS977US977&sxsrf=AM9HkKjyAdz_GAGj41ldRBzof_axEo3Ww%3A1700914986825&ei=KudhZYz0Md-w5NoPsqWJmAE&ved=0ahUKEwiMsdSMkt-CxVfGFkFhbJSAhMQ4dUDCBA&uact=5&oq=people+need+people+lyrics+franti&gs_lp=Egxnd3Mtd2l6LXNlcniAilHBlb3BsZSBuZWVkiHBlb3BsZSBseXJpY3MgZnJhbnRpSjgeUNYCWpKbcAF4AZABAJgBX6ABsweqAQixNLgBA8gBAPgBAclCChAAGEcy1gQYsAPCAgOQABiABBiKBRIwAxhDwgINEC4YgAQYigUYsAMYQ8ICEBAuGIAEGIoFGNQCLADGEPChAhMQLhiABBiKBRjIAxiwAxhD2AEBwglWEC4YgAQYigUY1AIYyAMYsAMYQ9gBAclCBRAuGIAEwglKEC4YgAQYigUYQ8ICCxAAGIAEGIoFGIYDwgIjEC4YgAQYlwUY3AQY3gQY4AQY9AMY8QMY9gMY9wPYAQLiAwQYACBBiAYBkAYNugYECAEYCLoGBggCEAEYFA&sclient=gws-wiz-serp)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.spiritualityofconflict.com/readings/283/reign-of-christ>