



CHRIST CANDLE

Mark 1:14-15

Tomorrow is the day that we celebrate God being made Human. The day He came to our home to invite us into His. Often throughout His life Jesus proclaims that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

We can think of the kingdom of God as heaven; as a place that we can inhabit after the end of time. If the Kingdom only refers to his second coming though, it can hardly be called near. Instead, we can see that the Kingdom of God is near whenever Christ is near. When Jesus comes into an area and proclaims that the Kingdom has come near, He also means that the king has come near. The Kingdom of God is anywhere where Jesus is, and Jesus is anywhere His people are.

This Kingdom of God is your home. Not the kingdoms of this world that seek to distract you with worries or accumulation of goods or meeting expectations, but the Kingdom of God - the Kingdom Jesus began 2000 years ago when He came close.

This is good news. This is the heart of the Christian faith. We can focus so much on sins being forgiven and Jesus' death on the cross, that we can forget that these are means to an end. The goal isn't your sins being forgiven, you are forgiven so that you can draw close to God.

Whenever Jesus enters a new place, He proclaims the good news of God. Repent and believe it, God has come close and wants you to draw near to Him.

That's what we celebrate tomorrow. God is coming close to us. He lives as one of us, dwells among us, to draw us home to God. That will happen one day in the future in completeness and finality when the holy city of heaven descends onto the new earth where we will live. But in all the moments between this day and that, we are at home wherever we are because God is here with us.

If you want to, you can come home to His kingdom. Come home to the Father who wants nothing more than to forgive your sins and embrace you. Come home to the Brother who would suffer so that you don't have to. Come home with the Spirit who chooses to live each day with you and will never abandon you.

Tomorrow is the day that we celebrate the monumental step in our relationship with God when Jesus became a human. The question for you is this, "How will you choose to respond?"

You can avail yourself of His power, comfort, peace, or company whenever you wish. Since you are forgiven, the only thing required for you to spend time with God is for you to spend time with Him. Tomorrow is going to be busy, there

will be meals and company and presents and play and hopefully a nap. But in all that busyness, don't miss the reality of the good news, that not only did the God of the universe condescend to become a human, but that each and every day of your life, He is still with you. All you have to do is reach out to Him. In all that will happen tomorrow, do not miss the opportunity to spend time with your Lord.

As you light the final candle, the Christ candle. Remain once again in the presence of God, knowing full well that His Spirit lives in you, that Jesus is near, and that the Father wants nothing more than your company and friendship.

Take a moment to light all 5 candles and let these flames remind you of His presence with you today.

Pray: "Lord, you are here even when I don't see you. In all that happens tomorrow, do not let me forget the gift that your presence is in my life." Then spend a few moments with God praising Him for drawing near to us.