

Weekly Bible Study group – November 11, 2009

This week's reading assignment: John 16-17
Reflection by Bob Zurinsky (bob@spu.edu)

Last week, we heard the shocking twist in the plotline – that this kingdom Jesus was initiating was a kingdom that looked like suffering and weakness in the eyes of the world. But nevertheless, God has decided that this is the way we must follow him. Our glory comes later, when Christ returns. For now, we follow the way of the *humble* king.

So this week, after the disciples' hopes of glory have just been exploded, we read Jesus' encouragement and promises to his followers. First of all, he promises that he will send the Holy Spirit to be with them on the journey, to comfort them and teach them "all things." (Surprisingly, he tells them that the Holy Spirit will actually teach them even *more* than he himself was able to teach in his time on earth – what? Have you ever thought about that?) And second, he commissions them to go out and *be* the light of the world in his absence, carrying on his mission, carrying on his kingdom.

As we've been thinking this week about what the "big picture idea" of the gospel of John is, I've been using this little drawing to talk about what I see as the main point. The message of Jesus is all about the clash of two kingdoms, two governments, two systems. One of these kingdoms, the "world's way," says that power and victory comes from strength and domination and taking. But Jesus came on the scene and said just the opposite – that the only way to ever see God's perfect world, God's kingdom, is to take the foolish path of powerlessness and giving all.

And he asks us to take his word for it – to *trust* the promise that it's this upside-down kingdom that wins in the end...

