Christ the King – Year A

Sunday, 22nd November 2026

Christ the King: A Kingdom of Love and Service

A sermon based on *Matthew 25.31-46*

Readings: Ezekiel 34.11-16; 34.20-24: Psalm 95.1-7; Ephesians 1.15-23; Matthew 25.31-46

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May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Today we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King, the final Sunday of the Church year. It is a day when we are reminded that, above all the competing voices, powers and priorities of our world, Jesus Christ is Lord. He is the King whose kingdom has no end. But the picture of kingship Jesus gives us in today's Gospel is rather different from what we might expect.

We hear of the Son of Man coming in glory, seated upon his throne, with all the nations gathered before him. He separates people as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. To those on his right, he offers an invitation to inherit the kingdom prepared for them. To those on his left, he speaks words of judgement.
And what is the difference between the two groups?
It is not their wealth, their education, their position in society or even their knowledge of religious teaching. It is what they have done for others.

The king says: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me."
The people are puzzled. When did they see the king hungry or thirsty? When did they visit him in prison or care for him when he was sick?

And Jesus gives us one of the most important teachings in the Gospels: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these... you did it to me."
In other words, Christ is to be found among those who need our care.

We sometimes think that finding God requires something extraordinary: a special experience, a wonderful church service or a moment of great spiritual insight. But Jesus points us towards the ordinary circumstances of everyday life. We meet him in the person who is lonely, the neighbour who is struggling, the stranger who feels unwelcome, the sick person who needs a visit, and the family doing it tough.

For many Australians, particularly in our rural communities, there is a strong tradition of looking after one another. When hardship comes, neighbours often step forward. People share what they have, lend a hand and quietly support those who need help. These acts of kindness may seem quite ordinary, but Jesus tells us they have eternal significance.

There is also a challenge here. It is possible to be very busy with church activities, to know our prayers and attend worship faithfully, yet fail to notice the person in need standing right in front of us. Our faith must be more than words. It must find expression in the way we treat others.
And this is what makes Christ's kingship so remarkable. Unlike earthly rulers who may seek power and privilege, Jesus identifies himself with the vulnerable. His crown is made of thorns, his throne is the cross, and his authority is expressed through love and self-giving service.

As we come to the end of the Church year, perhaps we might ask ourselves a simple question: If Jesus were to walk among us today, where might we find him?

The answer, according to this Gospel, is not difficult. We will find him wherever someone is hungry, lonely, frightened, sick or in need of welcome.
So let us worship Christ our King but let us also recognise him in those we meet each day. And may our lives reflect the love and compassion of the King whose kingdom we pray will come.
Amen.