

Christ the King Sunday

Jeremiah 23:1–6; Colossians 1:11–20; Luke 23:33–43

Today the Church proclaims: **Christ is King.**

And that might feel, at first hearing, like a bold claim in a world that looks anything but orderly. When we look around—whether it’s the news or the anxieties in our own hearts—it can feel as though the world is spinning without a centre. Wars rage in multiple places at once. Political tensions keep rising. What used to feel stable now feels shaky. People seem angrier, more divided, more suspicious of one another. Even our public conversations feel brittle and explosive.

And of course many of us are carrying our own deeper griefs, losses that have shaken our foundations. It can all feel overwhelming—this combination of global chaos and personal sorrow.

And so it is worth asking on Christ the King Sunday:

What kind of king do we actually have?

Because if we expected a king who would magically fix all the chaos of the world, a king who would silence the guns or clean up Parliament or settle every cultural argument, we might think Christ has failed.

But today’s Gospel reminds us:

Christ’s kingship is not the kingship of worldly power.

He does not rule from a throne but from a cross.

His crown is not gold but thorns.

His sceptre is not iron but mercy.

His authority is not enforced by violence but revealed in self-giving love.

This is not weakness.

This is the deepest power there is—because it is the only power that can actually transform the human heart.

Jeremiah: A King Who Sees the Mess Clearly

In Jeremiah, we hear God’s frustration:

“Woe to the shepherds who scatter the sheep.”

It's a lament that feels painfully relevant.

The world is full of leaders—political, cultural, even religious—whose actions seem to tear people apart, not bring them together.

We see nations torn, communities divided, and families fractured.

We see identity politics encouraging people to shrink themselves down into categories, labels, and tribes.

We see a world where people define themselves more by what they are *against* than by what they are *for*.

And into this confusion, God says:

“I will raise up a shepherd who will gather, not scatter.”

A king who will deal wisely, who will bring justice and righteousness.

Not the righteousness of moral superiority.

Not the justice of “my tribe versus your tribe.”

But the righteousness of restored relationships, the justice of lives healed and reconciled.

Christ is that shepherd.

Christ is that king.

And on the cross we see him gathering humanity into the mercy of God—Jew and Gentile, friend and enemy, the righteous and the unrighteous, the broken and the proud. All of us.

Colossians: A King Who Holds All Things Together

Paul takes this even further in Colossians. He gives one of the most sweeping, breathtaking visions of Christ in the entire New Testament:

“He is the image of the invisible God...
in him all things hold together.”

All things.

Not only the church,

not only our spiritual lives,

but the whole trembling world—every atom, every star, every nation, every moment of history.

Even the things that feel like they are falling apart.

This means that Christ does not simply sit above the mess—he holds the mess.

He holds the tensions, the conflicts, the uncertainties.

He holds the griefs we carry and the anxieties we hide.

He holds the parts of our society that we cannot make sense of.

When the world feels like it is unravelling, Christ the King is the thread that will not break.

Even when it doesn't look like it.

Even when we cannot feel it.

Even when the headlines tell us otherwise.

“In him all things hold together.”

That is a promise for restless, fearful hearts.

Luke: The Kingdom Revealed at the Cross

Then we come to Luke's Gospel.

We expect, on Christ the King Sunday, a triumphant scene. Instead, we get Golgotha.

We get Jesus crucified between criminals. And we get someone jeering:

“If you are the king—save yourself.”

This is what the world always says:

“If you are powerful, prove it!”

“If you are right, crush your opponents!”

“If you matter, win!”

But Jesus reveals a different kind of kingship:

Not the power to dominate, but the power to forgive.

Not the triumph of ego, but the triumph of love.

Not the glory of success, but the glory of compassion.

And then comes that beautiful, trembling moment:

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

“Today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Christ's kingship is not about political victory or cultural dominance.

It is about life—eternal, abundant, indestructible life—poured out on the guilty, the broken, the grieving, the confused, and the afraid.

It is about a King whose kingdom begins wherever a heart turns toward him.

A kingdom that cannot be taken by war or undone by bad politics or poisoned by division.

A kingdom that comes quietly

—often painfully—

through the cross.

A Word for Our Time

So what does Christ the King Sunday say to us today?

It says:

Do not be afraid of the world's madness.

Christ is still King.

Do not despair when leaders fail or societies fracture.

Christ is still King.

Do not be drawn into the folly of identity politics—where you are reduced to labels, and where your neighbour becomes either an ally or an enemy.

Your identity is in Christ.

Your neighbour's identity is in Christ.

Every single person bears the image of God.

Do not give up when grief is heavy or when the world feels unsafe.

Christ is still King—and his kingdom is not shaken.

And because Christ is King, we are called to live differently:

Not as frightened people,

but as faithful ones.

Not as divided tribes,

but as one body.

Not as people obsessed with being right,
but as people committed to being loving.

Not as people who cling to power,
but as people who trust in mercy.

A Word of Hope

Christ the King Sunday is not a sentimental day.
It is a clear-eyed, steady, resilient proclamation:

The world may be chaotic, but Christ holds it.
The powers of the world may rage, but Christ reigns.
Death may wound, but Christ overcomes.

And his kingdom—quiet, humble, merciful—keeps breaking into the world:

In acts of kindness.
In moments of reconciliation.
In stories of courage.
In love that refuses to let go.

And one day, that kingdom will be all in all.
The broken will be healed.
The grieving will be comforted.
The nations will be at peace.
And the King who died between two thieves will reign in glory.

Until then, we live as people of hope.
Calm, compassionate, grounded, prayerful.
People who refuse to be drawn into the world's bitterness.
People who follow the Shepherd King who gathers, holds, and restores.

Christ is King.

And because he is King, the world—even in its turmoil—is being held in hands that will never let it go. Amen