

Christ the King Sunday and Harvest Thanksgiving, 23 November 2025

“A King Who Brings Us Home”

In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

My friends, today is a joyful mash-up: the Sunday where we crown Jesus as our King, and also where we stare lovingly at the pumpkins we didn't grow and the tins we *definitely* bought at Rema, Xtra, Kiwi on the way here. It's a good day. A hopeful day.

And into this cheerful morning comes...

Luke 23:33–43.

A crucifixion scene.

Not exactly the jolliest passage in the Bible!

But stay with me, because *this* is the moment when the true heart of our King is revealed.

A King Who Reigns From a Cross

When we hear “Christ the King,” we might imagine crowns, trumpets, velvet robes, a celestial fanfare, something grand, something shiny.

But Luke gives us a different picture.

Our King reigns from a **wooden cross**, with a sarcastic sign above his head:

“This is the King of the Jews.”

The soldiers mock Him. One criminal hurls insults.

Yet Jesus, even in agony, is busy doing what He always does:

forgiving, embracing, welcoming, loving.

This is not a King who demands subjects bow down.

This is a King who bends low to lift people up.

The Courage to Hope

Then we meet the second criminal, traditionally called the “penitent thief.”

He can't offer Jesus anything, no good deeds, no clean record, no impressive faith résumé.

But he does one brave, hopeful thing:

He turns to Jesus and says,

“Remember me.”

And Jesus replies with royal authority,

“Today you will be with me in paradise.”

There it is:

In the middle of cruelty, suffering, and injustice, Jesus speaks **hope**.

In the darkest moment, the King lets light shine.

And if He can bring hope *there*, then He can surely bring hope *here*, into our uncertain world, into our communities, into our own hearts.

Christ the King isn't the King of "maybe someday."

He's the King of "**today.**"

Right now.

Right here.

This King brings hope to every valley we face.

A Harvest of Kindness

And so it's perfect that today is also **Harvest Thanksgiving**.

Harvest reminds us that God is always sowing goodness, always giving life, always providing for us through the earth and through each other.

But harvest isn't just about food.

It's about *seeing abundance*, even when the world tells us to see scarcity.

Where Jesus reigns, there is always more than enough:

More mercy than mistakes

More hope than fear

More grace than guilt

More love than loneliness

And God invites us to share this abundance, especially with those who feel forgotten, hungry, or lost.

Harvest thanksgiving isn't just a day to say "Thanks, God!"

It's a day to ask, "How can we share what we've been given?"

Because we belong to a King who feeds crowds, welcomes strangers, forgives enemies, and promises paradise to a dying man.

And when we act with kindness, when we encourage, give, welcome, include, we become part of the **Kingdom harvest**, part of the goodness God plants in the world.

Following the King

So what do we do as people who follow this crucified and risen King?

We live like Him.

We forgive quickly.
We give generously.
We speak kindly.
We look for the person on the edge and draw them in.
We let hope, not fear, be our fuel.
We remember that even on life's hardest days, Jesus whispers,
"Today you will be with me."

Christ the King doesn't rule by power or threat.
He rules by *love*.

And that kind of reign is not only comforting...
it's contagious.

A Kingdom Growing Among Us

So today, as we admire the harvest display and maybe sneak a look at the apple tart cooling at home, let us carry this truth with us:

We have a King who turns death into life, scarcity into abundance, fear into courage, and sinners into saints.

A King who remembers every one of us.
A King who brings us home.
A King who teaches us to hope, and to be kind.

May our lives be a harvest of His love.

In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.