Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe 2026

[Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17; Psalm 23; 1 Corinthians 15:20-26,28; Matthew 25:31-46]

I'm sure I have shared previously about the time when my grandmother took my brothers and I into a Wimpey Burger place when we were young and we saw one of the staff members feeding a 'gentleman of the road'. Her colleague scolded her saying that she would only encourage others to come and look for a free feed. Her answer struck me and has stayed with me to this day. She said that she hopes that if her son ever needed help then she would hope that a stranger would help him, she said that man was someone's son, his mum wasn't here to help, so she would help him. This story came flooding back to me when I was watching a dramatization of the Lockerbie Terrorist Attack recently. Some of the people of Lockerbie realised that the victims of the attack were someone else's sons and daughters and identifying a gap relating to how people were supported, took it upon themselves to help as they would have hoped their children would have been helped under similar circumstances. Some watched over the victims until their remains could be collected, others laundered belongings after they had been excluded as potential evidence; so that they could be returned to grieving relatives; others opened their homes to relatives who travelled to Lockerbie from all around the world to see the place where their loved ones had perished. These people brought a level of *humanity to an extremely inhumane act*, despite the devastation around them and the loss of 11 of their neighbours and 21 homes within their small community.

These are the kind of acts I believe Jesus is talking about in the parable we hear today. I'm certain that these acts by ordinary people will be rewarded on judgement day. I would even suggest that the way the waitress in Wimpey treated the homeless gentleman has influenced my life and the way I think more than I have ever realised before. The women of Lockerbie noticed a gap that needed to be filled and filled it.

Our readings today are very well matched. The prophet Ezekiel announces that God will be like a kindly shepherd looking after his flock, searching for them when they are scattered, bringing them back to the fold, tending the injured, building up the weak. He will also separate and judge them, just like Jesus describes in Matthew's Gospel. This parable of the sheep and the goats is the only scene in the gospels with any detail picturing the last judgement.[1]

This parable is like an instruction manual for us as Christians, if you notice both the sheep and the goats call the Son of Man 'Lord'. The message from Jesus is quite simple, it is not enough to call Him 'Lord', we need to put our faith into action and go out of our way to love.

God, our Creator, wants us to care for everything and everyone that He has created, good intentions are not enough, God wants action. When we hear this parable about how we will be judged, it should prompt us to do a bit of self-reflection. But not as a bit of a tick list. This is not about keeping score, we can't afford to say well I visited so and so in hospital last year, so that is done for now, and I donated to

[1] Arthur E Zannoni, *Tell Me Your Story, The Parables of Jesus,* [Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago IL, 2002]61.

the foodbank last week. No, the message is **that we should never walk by**. Jesus tells us whenever we do this for the least of my brothers then you do this to me and this works both in the times when we show those in need love and in the times when we fail to love them.

This week, may I suggest that we all review how much we actually put our faith into action.

Do we adopt a tick list approach? Marking off in our mind when we help those in need.

Do we reach out to the sick, the lonely, the poor? Do we see them as our brothers and sisters?

Do we ever give up on those who we try to help, who just seem to always be in need?

The times when we feel put upon or exasperated are the times when we need to *decide to love*. It is only through loving our neighbour that we can fully encounter Christ. The more in need our neighbour is, the more we need to love. This week Jesus is pleading with us to see His face when we look at those in need, if we see Jesus and reach out to help, then we have hope of eternal life, but if we fail to see Jesus or choose not to help; then we risk eternal damnation. Put simply, do you want to be a sheep who belongs to the Good Shepherd or a goat who doesn't?

Further Reading

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

Solemnity of Christ the King: Christ the origin and goal of history

> CCC 440, 446-451, 668-672, 783, 786, 908, 2105, 2628: Christ as Lord and King
> CCC 678-679, 1001, 1038-1041: Christ as Judge
> CCC 2816-2821: "Thy Kingdom Come"[2]

Please accompany in your prayers

- All those who are sick, either at home or in hospital, especially those who have very few or no visitors.
- Those who have died and those who grieve for them.
- The success of the Pastoral Area Mission Plan.
- The continued success of the Alpha courses taking place in our Pastoral Area.
- The continued success of the Sycamore Programme taking place in Tadley on Tuesday evenings
- The volunteers and employees of all organisations who support those in need.

[2] Homiletic Directory, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments

- Those children who will be Baptised this weekend: Chikamso, Chidubem, Kamsi & Ugochukwu

Deacon Tony,

20th November 2026