

For Christ the King Sunday, November 23, 2025

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Once upon a time, there was a king. But this king was a different kind of king:

You might expect a king to be born in a castle, surrounded by servants and midwives, an event full of pomp and circumstance. **But Jesus is a different kind of king.** He was born of humble beginnings. Because there was no room in the inn, he was born in a barn. He was born surrounded by sheep and donkeys, the smells of animals and feed. His first visitors were lowly shepherds.

You might expect a king to surround themselves with extraordinary people of renown and regard, **But Jesus is a different kind of king.** He calls ordinary people like fishermen and even children - people like you and me- to come and follow him.

You might expect a king to seek blessings for themselves, gaining authority through wealth, strength, and violence. You might expect a king to instill fear amongst their people. **But Jesus is a different kind of king.** He blessed the poor, the meek, and the peacemakers. He tells his followers to not worry about tomorrow, but to come to him and find rest.

You might expect a king to indulge in lavish royal feasts, sharing in abundance with specially invited dignitaries and government officials, **but Jesus is a different kind of king.** He wants all to be fed. He takes a just a few loaves and fishes - and shares with all who came near, no strings attached. He shared with tax collectors and sinners. He shared with those who were, sick, overlooked, forgotten, and pushed aside.

You might expect a king to store up riches for themselves, to live a life of self-preservation, to build bigger monuments and castles. You might expect a king to be inward focused, rather than outward looking, motivated by greed and the assumption that there isn't enough to go around. **But Jesus is a different kind of king.** He stores up treasures in heaven, not on earth. He serves instead of being served. He seeks out the little, the lost, and the least to give them what they need.

You might expect a king to send armies and soldiers to distant lands and against neighboring people, to take advantage of the vulnerable ones - for the sake of building up their kingdom, **but Jesus is a different kind of king.** He invites his followers to give up our possessions and follow him, so that the hungry might be fed, the thirsty given something to drink, the stranger be welcomed, the naked given clothes, the sick and imprisoned visited. He reminds us that our call is to love our neighbors as ourselves.

You might expect a king to wear a crown of jewels, to sit on a throne, and flaunt their power. **But Jesus is a different kind of king.** He wore a crown of thorns. He hung on a cross. In his suffering he brought God's compassion; he showed that power and strength come through vulnerability and weakness. He spoke the words: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they are doing. Today, you will be with me in paradise."

You might expect that when a king dies, their body will lie in repose for people to come and honor. People will come from miles around to pay their respects and to grieve that their reign is over. **But Jesus is a different kind of king.** His body was tucked away in a borrowed tomb. Just a few women came to pay him respects. And as it turns out, his death was just the beginning of his reign. Because those women soon learned that with Jesus, the dead don't stay dead. "He is not here, he has risen!" the women shouted. With Jesus, death isn't the end of the story. In dying, we are born to everlasting life.

In the Lord's Prayer, we pray: "thy kingdom come, thy will be done." We remember that we follow a different kind of king. We follow a king who meets us in our brokenness and forgives us. We follow a king who meets us in our pain and offers healing. We follow a king who meets us in our time of struggle, and promises to lead us through to the other side.

Once upon a time...there was a different kind of king. And this king, Jesus Christ, still rules among us. And so, we place our trust in him. In Jesus we find – not happily ever after – but happily everlasting life.

Let us pray: Come, Lord Jesus, Come. Be our King – be the different kind of king that our hearts and this world needs. Amen.