In Revelation 14, the inspired writer John takes us to the final scenes of world history. In highly symbolic imagery, he describes what Christ the King will be doing at that time. Referring to him as the Lamb, we are told that he will prevail against all his enemies. As a result, he is acclaimed Lord of lords and King of kings - and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.

In other words, as this sin-tainted world comes to an end, and after Christ the King has attained his ultimate victory over Satan and his demons, then all who followed him in this life, those he personally selected to be his own, will come after him into his kingdom. From that moment on, he will be our undeniable King, and we will be his subjects!

As a constant reminder of his kingship, Revelation 19 tells us that on his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of kings and Lord of lords. There will never be any doubt about our relationship to him from that point on. He will be our acknowledged King. And we, recognizing that we are his subjects, will always revere him as our King and treat him as such.

My question is: Do you want a king? Even if he is Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, do you really want a Sovereign Lord? The reason I ask is that the idea of king is one that we have never embraced - either as a society or as individuals. Indeed, our country was founded on the principle that we wanted no king. To this day, we fight the notion of one human being having superior rights and privileges.

We are perfectly willing to elect a President or Governor to rule over us. But we want it thoroughly understood that we, the people, put them into this position, and then, only for a time, and then only with powers limited by our constitution. We reserve to remove them from their office at any time we may choose.

Perhaps it is our understanding of history that perpetuates our resistance. Most kings we have studied were self-centered and lived only for themselves. They seemed to think that their subjects existed just to provide for their comfort. We see king after king making decisions that only hurt the people they ruled. As a result, the idea of a king and kingship has very little support among us!

So, do we really want a king? Do we really want a Sovereign Lord who has the final say-so on our life, our actions, our words, even our thoughts and attitudes? Our earthly experience with kings may lead us to answer No, we don’t! But as our sermon text reveals, Christ the King is a different kind of king. Before we make up our minds about him, let’s explore the difference between him and other kings.

Christ the King begins his explanation with the declaration: This is what the sovereign Lord says. Right from the start Christ the King makes it clear that he intends to be our King with all the power and authority and privilege that belongs to the position! He insists that he will be sovereign in our lives, that is, he will occupy the supreme and ultimate place of authority in our lives.

Christ the King will not be merely role-playing, that is, not taking it too seriously. He will not settle by being a partial King or being our King most of the time. He will look for, he will demand, that we always regard him as such. He is not kidding around, his expectations are high! He fully intends to have lordship over us in every way. He wants to be, he will be, our King in every sense of the word.
Then he goes on to define what the word king means to him! He does not give a pithy catch phrase as a meaning. Rather he spends an entire 6 verse paragraph showing us what he understand by the concept of king. He describes how he will act as king and allows us to formulate the definition of what it means to be king.

Perhaps the first thing that jumps out at us in his words is his use of the word I instead of the word me. He is telling us that his kingship is not all about him, that is, What you can do for me. No, his kingship is all about us, What I can do for you! Over and over again, the phrase I will occurs, and it is always connected to something he will do for us!

This immediately shows us that he is a different kind of king. Christ the King considers it to be his calling, his most important task, to care for us and all our needs. He exists as King to serve, not to be served. There is no selfishness in him. There is only a desire to rule in a way that brings us, his subjects, the highest good and the greatest blessing! This certainly causes us to rethink our aversion to Christ the King.

In Christ the King we have an all-loving, all-powerful, all-knowing God. His love for us is unwavering, there is nothing he can’t do for us, and he knows how everything in our life fits together for our good. And he is willing to serve us as our King! That is an intriguing, not to mention generous offer! So, let’s see how he envisions serving us as King.

He says, as Christ the King: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. To begin with, Christ the King bids us think of him - not as some cold and harsh overlord, but as a tender shepherd. We are to think of ourselves as his sheep!

A shepherd cares for his sheep. He makes sacrifices for his sheep. He sustains his sheep. This is the essence of Christ’s kingship! He is the King of love, willing to do whatever it takes to bring his sheep together as one with him. He promises to provide everything the flock needs. His sheep will lack nothing. And that is easier said than done.

Notice that Christ the King says that, above everything else, he will search for his sheep. By nature, the sheep, the people of his kingdom, are not his! We are sinful, we daily sin much and deserve only hell and damnation. Our enemy Satan, and the death our sin brings with it, have us firmly under their control. We belong to them - and rightly so!

Before Christ the King can even begin to search for us and makes us his own, he must redeem us, that is, buy us back from the devil. He must do battle with death and render it powerless. That is what we see in our Gospel reading. We see Christ the King offering himself as the full payment for every sin we have ever committed. We see him dying in our place so that death loses its rightful claim upon us.

The pathetic image we see in Jesus’ Passion does not mean he is losing. He is doing everything it takes to be the final victor, doing what must be done to solidify his claim as our King. That is what he means when he says: I will shepherd the flock with justice. On the basis of his actions, alone, Christ the King won the right to search for us and bring us into his flock! And he does!

In verse 11 he says: I myself will search for my sheep. And in verse 12 he
says: **I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.** In verse 13 he says: **I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries.** In verse 16 he says: **I will search for the lost and bring back the strays.** It is hard to imagine how the King could be any more emphatic about his desire to find us - no matter where we may be - and bring us into his kingdom no matter what it takes. It is hard to imagine any greater comfort the King could give us, as he gives it so often and so definitely. Truly we will live under him in his kingdom.

This is the kind of King we want and need! For when he finds us, this is what he will do for us. **I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel. I will tend them in a good pasture. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture.** When Christ the King finds us, he will provide for our every need in an abundant fashion.

The fullness of his bounty will be experienced in heaven. Until that time, his care will still be complete. We will lack nothing. We will, for the most part, enjoy plenty - a foretaste of the King's endless bounty. And if we do not have all that we want, we rest secure that his love and knowledge knows what is best for us. Not only that, but the King **will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, and the sleek and the strong he will destroy.**

As a King totally devoted to us, he will tend to any injury of body, mind, or soul that might afflict us. Whenever we grow weary and do not know if we can make it, he will refresh us, renew us, and strengthen us for what lies ahead. And when our sleek and strong enemies attack, threatening body and soul, he will fight them off and keep us safe.

Finally, he will bring us to complete safety. **I will bring them into their own land,** he says. Jesus promised to prepare a place for us in his Father's house. At the right time, he will take us to what is our own, a place with him in heaven. There Christ the King and we, his willing subjects, will live in a kingdom of divine grace and boundless peace and joy.

**Christ the King will be forever Christ your King! Amen.**

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