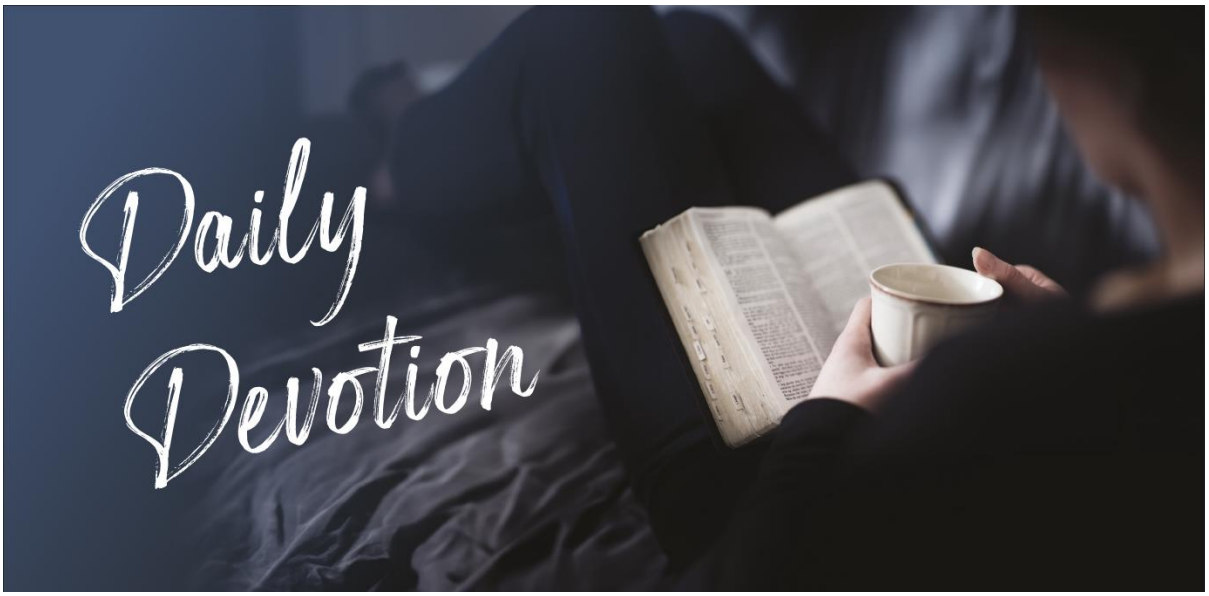


Sunday 22 November 2026 to
Sunday 29 November 2026

LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF AUSTRALIA

Sunday 22 November 2026

The King is among us

by Aaron Glover

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matthew 25:35).

Read Matthew 25:31–46

Every Saturday night, I watch movies with my older teenage children. They love to watch murder mysteries. Together, we share who we think the villain is, and there are invariably gasps and laughter as our suspected villains are, one by one, either exonerated … or eliminated.

The best murder mysteries begin as simple stories, but they have twists and turns that surprise you and keep you on the edge of your seat.

I think that's why I love Jesus' parables so much. Like the best mysteries, they seem simple, but surprises come at every turn. And the more we unpack the meaning of each sentence, the more we uncover about God's character, grace, mercy and compassion. Just like today's parable.

Standing in judgement before the King, both the sheep and the goats are surprised to find that they have somehow missed the King living among them … 'Lord, when did we see you hungry?'

Without knowing it, the sheep have served the King by acting with genuine compassion for those who are vulnerable. The goats' response, however, suggests that they might have acted differently if only they had known the King was there.

My work with Australian Lutheran World Service brings me close to the message in this parable.

I see God's people responding with compassion to those who are vulnerable, giving faithfully and sacrificially without seeking recognition. I also see the face of God in the faces of those we serve alongside around the world.

The needs of our world can feel overwhelming. Yet the surprise in this parable gives me comfort. God is not watching our suffering from the safety of his throne in heaven. He is present here, with all of us, in our joys and suffering.

And the added twist, which continues to humble me, is the invitation we have as God's people to join the King in the mystery of his work by caring for the least of these.

Where might the King be inviting you to participate in his ongoing redemptive work today?

Dear Father, thank you for your work in our world and for being present with us in our suffering. Open my eyes to recognise you in those I meet today, and give me a compassionate heart to respond. Amen.

Aaron Glover lives with his family in Brisbane. He serves as the community engagement manager for Australian Lutheran World Service and worships at Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Rochedale. Outside of work, you'll often find Aaron taxiing his four children to all their various sports, dance and music activities.

Monday 23 November 2026

In his hands

by Aaron Glover

But he lingered, so the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and left him outside the city (Genesis 19:16).

Read Genesis 19:15–29

One of my favourite memories from when my children were little is holding hands as we walked side by side at the shops, through the park or into church. It was a simple but beautiful way to feel connected and stay in step together.

Of course, if I'm honest, as a busy parent of curious little people, holding hands was also a way to keep them safe. In a crowded car park or near another hazard, I could guide them away from danger and keep us moving towards our destination.

I see that same pattern of loving guidance in today's Bible reading with the hands of God's messengers extended in care and rescue.

God has heard Abraham's plea and sent messengers to warn Lot and his family of Sodom's coming destruction. Yet when they urge Lot to flee, he hesitates.

And then comes the most remarkable moment. Because of the Lord's mercy, Lot, his wife and his daughters are taken by the hand and led to safety.

It is easy to wonder why Lot hesitates when the warning is so urgent and clear. Why linger?

Like me, Lot's hesitation may feel uncomfortably familiar. I'm sure we can all think of times when we've clung to choices, habits or distractions that harm us, strain our relationships or draw us away from God.

What a blessing that God does not leave us to the consequences of our own poor choices.

Just as Abraham interceded for Lot, Jesus intercedes for us. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus has freed us from sin and death. Thankfully, our rescue rests not on our choices or resolve, but on God's mercy.

Even when the world distracts us, or we linger on a dangerous path, we can take comfort in knowing our merciful God does not abandon us. He is with us and reaches out his hand to lead us along life's journey, hand in hand.

Dear Father, thank you that your mercy reaches for us even when we hesitate or lose our way. Take us by the hand, lead us away from what harms us, and help us trust you as we walk with you through life. Amen.

Tuesday 24 November 2026

Don’t judge me

by Aaron Glover

In passing judgement on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things (Romans 2:1b).

Read Romans 2:1–16

Don’t judge me … but last night, after flicking through the TV channels for something to watch, I stumbled across *My Kitchen Rules*.

If you haven’t seen it, it’s a reality cooking show where pairs of contestants prepare a three-course meal in their homes for two expert chefs and other contestant teams. At the end of the show, everyone judges the meals and assigns a score.

I don’t normally watch reality TV, but I do enjoy a good cooking show. Watching amateur cooks produce restaurant-quality meals was impressive. I can only dream of cooking food that good!

Sadly, judging the contestants began well before the meal was finished. Comments made among contestants felt unnecessarily personal and harsh, and not always about the food.

Isn’t it interesting how reality TV reflects, albeit in an exaggerated form, society’s strengths and weaknesses?

That’s why today’s reading hits close to home: ‘… in passing judgement on someone else, I condemn myself.’ Ouch. It’s easy to notice others’ faults and judge them while making excuses for ourselves. Perhaps finding fault in someone else helps us feel a little better about our own shortcomings.

Paul makes it very clear that everyone stands guilty before God and that, in judging others, we are heaping the same condemnation on ourselves. Yet Paul goes on to point us to God’s kindness that leads us to repentance. We are called to turn to God and seek his forgiveness.

Thankfully, when we do, we can have confidence in the mercy of our Saviour Jesus, who forgives us and replaces our sin with his righteousness. By grace, through faith, we are forgiven and accepted before God, not because we deserve it, but because of Christ.

It’s God’s grace that changes how we see ourselves and those around us. Our neighbours aren’t competitors we need to be better than – they are sinners like us who need the kindness and mercy we’ve received.

So today, when we are tempted to judge those around us, may we pause to remember God’s mercy to us and respond with that same kindness.

Dear Father, your kindness leads us to repentance, and your mercy gives us hope. Thank you that our forgiveness rests on Jesus, not on getting everything right. When we are tempted to find fault in others, remind us of your grace and help us to respond with kindness. Amen.

Wednesday 25 November 2026

God on every page

by Aaron Glover

Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling (2 Corinthians 5:2).

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16 – 5:10

I've started looking for new fiction authors to read. A few of my favourites have recently retired from writing, and I need to expand my options.

So far, my search has been hit or miss. I've read some great books, but others have been hard to get through. I prefer stories that jump straight into the action, so I struggle when an author spends pages describing every detail.

A couple of times I've found myself skipping a few pages to speed up the story. Sometimes I've jumped too far ahead and had to go back because I've missed something important.

Imagine if we could jump ahead in real life. When things are hard, sad or life feels a little boring, we could turn a few pages and arrive at the happy moments. No more waiting. Straight to the good parts of our story.

Paul speaks to that longing in today's reading. He describes our groaning as we wait for the life that God has promised. We long for bodies no longer marked by weakness, for restored relationships and for an end to suffering, hardship and death. This is a future that God promises us through Christ.

Paul reminds us that God is already at work while we wait. As we grow weaker outwardly, we are being renewed inwardly. This is not yet the complete restoration we long for, but God has given us his Holy Spirit as a guarantee of what is to come.

We aren't always able to see God at work in our lives, especially in the hard moments when we feel lonely and disconnected from him. Paul encourages us to look beyond what is temporary and trust that God is at work, bringing his promise to fruition in his time.

As you step into today, take comfort that Jesus is with you on this page of your story. You don't need to rush ahead or understand every chapter. Held by his grace, you can face today with hope and trust him with what comes next.

Dear Father, we long for the complete restoration you have promised us in Christ. Hold us in your grace and give us patience as we wait for that future. Help us trust you today and serve you in all we do. Amen.

Thursday 26 November 2026

Upside down, upside down

by Aaron Glover

I know your afflictions and your poverty – yet you are rich! (Revelation 2:9a)

Read Revelation 2:1–11

I'm showing my age, but when I was young, I watched an ABC TV show called *Mr Squiggle and Friends*.

For those who are younger than me, let me explain.

Mr Squiggle and Friends was a children's show, a bit like *Play School*, with puppets and a human host. The main character was Mr Squiggle, a puppet with a pencil for a nose. I know it sounds strange, but five-year-old me loved it.

Every week, Mr Squiggle would be challenged to turn squiggles and shapes into a complete drawing. Using his nose, he drew lines, connected shapes and added new squiggles until he suddenly stopped. The picture never looked finished, but then he would say, 'Upside down, upside down', and the host would turn it around to reveal the completed image.

Those words rang through my head as I read today's passage.

Throughout the New Testament, we find examples of God's upside-down kingdom. For example, in Matthew, we read that 'the first will be last, and the last will be first' (Matthew 19:30), and then in Mark, Jesus says that whoever loses their life for him will save it (Mark 8:35).

Again and again, God reverses the way we expect things to work.

Today we read, 'I know your afflictions and your poverty – yet you are rich!'

Normally, we associate wealth with big houses, lots of money and a comfortable life. The church in Smyrna has none of these things … yet God says they are rich.

Of course, God is not talking about money. He is talking about the spiritual riches found in their close relationship with him.

In our consumer-driven, social-media world, it is easy to forget that our worth is not measured by what we own or how successful we appear.

The Christians in Smyrna were poor and suffering, but God saw them differently. Their faith was precious. They belonged to him, and he promised them the crown of life. What looked like poverty to the world was true wealth in God's kingdom.

Sometimes our lives can feel like one of Mr Squiggle's drawings. We might only see the struggles, challenges and hardships in front of us, but Jesus invites us to look at it from a different angle. In him, we are loved, forgiven and rich in hope, even when our circumstances say otherwise.

Dear Father, turn our view upside down so we can see what you value. Help us seek the lasting riches of your kingdom and trust you in every circumstance. Amen.

Friday 27 November 2026

All things new

by Aaron Glover

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more (Revelation 21:1).

Read Revelation 20:11 – 21:1

This morning, I woke to news of a drive-by shooting at a pub across the road from a shopping centre I visit regularly. It happened less than 10 kilometres from my home. This is the kind of violence I associate with other parts of the world, not my neighbourhood. Suddenly, something that normally feels far away became very real.

Our world is broken. We know it. We see it every night on the news. War. Theft. Poverty and injustice. Profit put before people or the environment.

Closer to home, we see brokenness in our families and friendships: damaged relationships, hurtful behaviour and distrust.

We also feel it within ourselves when we act selfishly or make poor choices that hurt others. Our world is broken, and so are we.

In today's Bible reading, John shares a vision of the final judgement. God's majesty, power and authority are on display as his justice is made complete. What an awesome sight John describes.

Then comes the good news: God deals with the brokenness and makes all things new, creating a new heaven and a new earth.

There is so much I love about this world, despite its brokenness, and I cannot imagine how wonderful the new heaven and new earth will be.

But God is not only making a new heaven and earth. He is making all things new. And that includes us.

As followers of Jesus, we are being renewed by his grace through the Holy Spirit's work. God is at work in us, forgiving us, reshaping our hearts and teaching us to love our neighbours.

As we wait for the day when God renews all creation, we are invited to join him in his action in the world. We can seek peace, speak truth, care for those who are hurting and protect the world God has made.

The brokenness around us can feel overwhelming, especially when it comes close to home. Yet it will not have the final word. Jesus does, and he promises a future in which evil is judged, creation is restored and God lives with his people.

Until that day, may God keep making us new and use us to bring signs of his hope, justice and love into a broken world.

Dear Father, thank you for the hope of a new heaven and a new earth. As we wait, make us new and help us share signs of your love with a hurting world. Amen.

Saturday 28 November 2026

Shine on us

by Aaron Glover

Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved (Psalm 80:3).

Read Psalm 80:1–7,17–19

I've lived in Brisbane most of my life, so it won't surprise you that warm sunshine forms the backdrop to many of my best memories: holidays, swimming at the beach, time with family and friends, Christmas celebrations and backyard cricket.

So when I travel during winter to colder parts of our beautiful country, I can't help but seek out the sun. Feeling it on my face warms my soul and lifts my spirits.

In today's psalm, the people of Israel cry out to God for help: 'How long, Lord God Almighty, will your anger smoulder?'

Having been attacked and defeated by their enemies, we can hear the Israelite's desperation in the repeated plea: 'Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.'

They asked for more than relief from their circumstances; they longed for God to turn towards them again and renew them as his people.

Every time I read their plea for God's face to shine on them, I'm reminded of my longing for the sun's warmth on cold winter days.

When life feels cold, and grief, disappointment or uncertainty surround us, we can wonder where God is. It may even feel as though he has turned away.

In these moments, we can call out to God just as the people of Israel do in this psalm. They do not hide their pain; they share their sadness and disappointment honestly with God, trusting that he alone can restore them.

In our pain, we can take comfort that God has shown us his mercy in Jesus. Through Christ's death and resurrection, God gives us forgiveness, hope and new life. His love continues to shine on us, even when we struggle to feel its warmth.

Step into your day with this blessing from Numbers 6:24–26: 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.'

Dear Father, thank you for your love that continues to shine on us, even when life feels cold or dark. Restore us, warm our hearts with your presence and help us trust in you always. Amen.

The devotions for the coming week are taken from Lutheran Tract Mission's 2026 Advent devotional, 'Faithful Promises'. Written by Anne Hansen, the devotions explore God's faithfulness and the promises he makes throughout the Old and New Testaments, including the fulfilment of his promise to send his Son as Saviour. Each devotion focuses on a different aspect of God's promises and his steadfast love for us. The 'Faithful Promises' Advent devotional is available from Lutheran Tract Mission at https://ltm.org.au/flipbk/advent-2026/ and can be downloaded, printed or used as a digital flipbook.

Sunday 29 November 2026

God's covenant

by Anne Hansen

I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth (Genesis 9:13).

Read Genesis 9:1–3,7–17

I remember as a child making covenants with my friends about our secrets. It was a solemn promise sealed with a 'pinky promise'. Many of my friends had other ways of keeping a promise – 'Cross my heart, hope to die' sort of promises. As children, they were binding, and your friendship was in jeopardy if you broke one. Watching the 'American Pickers' show on TV, I see that when a monetary deal is reached, it is sealed with a handshake. A handshake is viewed as a promise. It means a deal has been made and should not be revoked.

Way back at the beginning of creation, God made promises to his people. He promised to be with Adam and Eve even though they sinned. His promises came in many forms, and we read of them through the stories of his faithfulness and love for his people in the Old Testament. The story of Noah brings with it not just a promise but an eternal sign, even for us today. God referred to it as an 'everlasting covenant'. This was God's promise that he would never again destroy the whole world through a flood – his handshake with humankind. God promises to be with us today and will never leave us. This physical promise is seen every time we have storms or rain: a rainbow in the sky. The rainbow is an amazing phenomenon. It is caused by the reflection and refraction of light through moisture in the atmosphere – God truly is amazing. As we walk through this season of Advent, let us remember all the promises of love and faithfulness from a God of love. A prophesied Messiah was promised throughout the Old Testament, and finally, in the New Testament, God's promise is fulfilled in sending his Son to earth as a baby. Enjoy this season as we wait for the promised Saviour at Christmas and rejoice in God's faithfulness and the promise that he will come back again one day.

A rainbow is God's handshake of his faithfulness and promise!

My Heavenly Father, you have promised to be with me. I can rest in this promise and remember all the things you have done throughout my life. You truly are faithful. Amen.

Anne Hansen served as Lutheran Tract Mission Development Officer for 20 years. She lives in Noosa, Queensland, with her husband, Mark, who is a pastor. She enjoys leading Know Your Bible (KYB) and Mainly Music, as well as walking, reading, gardening and playing pickleball.

Ezekiel 34:11-16 The Lord himself will be the Shepherd King

For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: 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. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

Ephesians 1:15-23 Christ reigns at God's right hand

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 25:31-46 The King's final judgment

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was ill and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison and go to visit you?" The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, [1] was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was ill and in prison and you did not look after me." They also will answer, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or ill or in prison, and did not help you?" He will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me." Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.'

Sermon
26th Sunday After Pentecost
Light Lutheran Church – Bethel & Kapunda
November 22nd, 2026

Matt 25:31-46 – "Sheep & Goats... What's the Difference?"

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.
Have you ever tried to tell the difference between a sheep and a goat?
For those who grew up around farms, it probably isn't too difficult. You know what you're looking for. Sheep have woolly coats, goats have hair. Sheep tend to flock together, while goats can be rather independent and curious creatures. Yet, from a distance, particularly when they're young, they can look remarkably similar.
Getting them mixed up could cause a few problems for a farmer. That's why farmers know the importance of sorting their animals.
In today's Gospel, Jesus paints a picture of just such a scene. A shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. The sheep go to his right, the goats to his left. Jesus describes the final judgement. He shows us what happens when he returns in glory, sits upon his throne and gathers all the nations before him. There will be a separation. There will be no middle ground.
So, what's the difference between the sheep and the goats?

Firstly, the difference isn't always obvious to us.

Jesus isn't telling an ordinary parable here, nor is he offering an allegory where every detail represents something else. He's describing the reality of the final judgement through images his listeners would understand. A shepherd. Sheep. Goats. A farmer sorting his animals.
In the Middle East, sheep and goats often grazed together. They could look quite similar, particularly from a distance. An untrained eye might struggle to tell them apart. Yet an experienced shepherd knew exactly what he was looking at. The shepherd knew his animals.
That image tells us something important about God. We might look at one another and make all sorts of judgements. We might decide who looks religious, who seems respectable, who appears to have their life together and who doesn't. We might even look around our own congregations and think we know who the strong Christians are.
Yet God sees much deeper than appearances. He knows our hearts. He knows our faith, our doubts, our failures and our need for his grace. The difference between the sheep and the goats isn't simply something we can measure by looking at someone from the outside.

Secondly, Jesus tells us what distinguishes the sheep from the goats.

Listen again to what the King says to those on his right:
"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."
The sheep respond to people in need. They feed the hungry, welcome strangers, clothe the poorly dressed, care for the sick and visit those in prison. The goats don't.
What's particularly interesting is that neither group seems to recognise what they've done or failed to do. The sheep ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you?"
The goats ask a similar question: "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?"
Both groups seem surprised. The difference isn't that one group has kept a careful record of its good deeds while the other hasn't. The difference lies in their relationship with the King.

The sheep belong to him. Their lives reflect his love. They respond to people in need because Christ has already shown them his love and mercy. This is important for us to understand.
Jesus isn't teaching salvation by good works. We don't earn our place in God's kingdom by feeding the hungry, visiting the sick or helping the disadvantaged.
We receive salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone. He has done everything necessary to reconcile us to God. Through his death and resurrection, he has forgiven our sins and given us eternal life.
Our good works don't purchase that gift. They flow from it. They're the fruit of repentance and faith. They're the evidence of a life connected to Christ. Luther understood this well. We are saved by faith alone, but faith never remains alone. It becomes active in love.
Thirdly, Jesus makes a rather confronting statement.
"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."
Think about that for a moment. Jesus identifies himself with those who suffer. When we respond to someone who is hungry, lonely, vulnerable, sick or forgotten, we're responding to Christ himself.
When we turn away, we turn away from him. That challenges us, doesn't it?
We live in a country where most of us have food in the fridge, a roof over our heads and more material comforts than many people throughout history could ever have imagined. We've enjoyed relative peace and prosperity in the Western world for generations. Yet something strange has happened along the way. Our comfortable lives can make us forget just how much we need God.
Australian culture increasingly treats the Gospel as something optional. Something for people who need a crutch. Something that might be useful when you're young or when life gets difficult but otherwise can wait. We can become comfortable with our possessions, our routines and our own little corner of the world and that can happen in church as well.
We're blessed with five preaching points across Light Lutheran. Each has its own history, traditions, friendships and familiar ways of doing things. There's a great deal of love and commitment in each community.
Yet it's easy to become comfortable in our own spaces. We can concentrate on looking after our own congregation and forget that Christ calls us to look beyond ourselves.
The good news is that we're seeing some new families joining us across our congregations. That's encouraging. They're a reminder that God continues to bring people into our midst. They're also a reminder that our mission hasn't finished. We're not simply here to maintain our buildings, preserve our traditions or keep our little corner of the church ticking along. We're here to share Christ.
Finally, there's something even more important in this Gospel.
Jesus doesn't leave us wondering whether we belong to him. The King says to the sheep:
"Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world."
Did you hear that? The kingdom was prepared for them before they had done a single good work. Their inheritance wasn't something they earned. It was God's gift. That's the Gospel!
Through baptism, God has called us his own. Through faith in Jesus, he has adopted us into his family. We're members of Christ's body, the church. We belong to him, not because we've lived perfect lives, but because Jesus lived, died and rose again for us.

Our assurance doesn't rest on how many people we've helped, how many church services we've attended or how well we've managed our Christian lives. Our assurance rests on Jesus. He's the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep. He's the King who gives us an inheritance. He's the Saviour who laid down his life for us. The final judgement is real. Jesus makes that absolutely clear. There are ultimately only two groups: those who belong to him and those who reject him. Those who receive eternal life and those who face eternal punishment.

That's a serious warning, but it's not a reason for believers to live in fear and uncertainty. Rather, it's a reason to keep trusting Jesus and holding firmly to his promises.

While we wait for his return, he calls us to live as his people. To recognise those in need. To welcome the stranger. To care for the vulnerable. To forgive one another. To share the love and reconciliation we've received through him.

We don't do these things to become sheep. We do them because Christ has made us his own. Perhaps that's the real difference between the sheep and the goats. One group lives turned towards the King, while the other lives without regard for him.

So, what's the difference?

It's not the size of our bank accounts, the age of our congregation, the number of people in our pews or how well we manage our church affairs. It's Christ.

He has claimed us, forgiven us and made us his own. He now calls us to share his love with the people around us, especially those who need it most.

As we finish another church year and look towards the coming of our King, let's not become complacent or turn inwards. Let's keep our eyes on Jesus, trust his promises and keep sharing his love across all five of our preaching points and beyond. For the Good Shepherd knows his sheep. He has laid down his life for them, and he will bring them safely home.

Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

Amen.