

WHAT REALLY MATTERS ON JUDGMENT DAY

I. Take Care of Jesus' Brothers

II. What Happens on Judgment Day

III. Our Lesson for Today

Matthew 25:31-46

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2020 | END TIME

SECOND SUNDAY OF END TIME

LAST JUDGMENT

<i>Old Testament</i>	Jeremiah 8:4–7
<i>Psalms</i>	Psalm 16
<i>New Testament</i>	1 Thessalonians 4:13–18
<i>Gospel</i>	Matthew 25:31–46

GRANTS PASS

Divine Service, Rite Two, ELH p. 60

The Entrance Hymn or Introit – ELH 9 Come Down O Love Divine

Chief Hymn – ELH 537 Day of Wrath

Distribution Hymn – ELH 316/317 Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior

Closing Hymn – ELH 538 vv. 1,2,7 The Day Is Surely Drawing Near

MEDFORD

Psalm 16, p. 68

Opening Hymn - CW 227 Come, Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs

Hymn of the Day – CW 209 Day of Wrath, Oh, Day of Mourning

Distribution Hymn - CW 313 Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior

Closing Hymn - CW 207 The Day Is Surely Drawing Near

Faith & Our Savior Lutheran Churches

Medford & Grants Pass, Oregon

Edward L. Bryant, Pastor

Matthew 25:31–46 (EHV)

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. ³⁶ I was lacking clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or lacking clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

⁴⁰ “The King will answer them, ‘Amen I tell you: Just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.’

⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you did not give me food to eat. I was thirsty and you did not give me anything to drink. ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, lacking clothes and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not take care of me.’

⁴⁴ “Then they will also answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or lacking clothes or sick or in prison and did not serve you?’

⁴⁵ “At that time he will answer them, ‘Amen I tell you: Just as you did not do it for one of the least of these, you did not do it for me.’ ⁴⁶ And they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Dear fellow redeemed: This is one of Jesus’ sermons that is most quoted, usually in support of a so-called “social gospel” theology, that Jesus’ teaching was centered on helping the poor in order to get to heaven, or to bring heaven on earth.

In reaction to such “works righteousness” we often interpret these verses according to the scriptural teaching that *in Christ*, all that we do in faith is counted as righteousness, while nothing that an unbeliever does is done out of love for God is therefore intrinsically sinful.

The works-righteousness understanding is, of course, false, but the reaction to it is just that, a reaction, and therefore doesn’t lead to a thorough understanding of the text, so let’s start from the beginning to see

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I. Take Care of Jesus’ Brothers

This is the last part of Jesus’ discourse on the consummation of the age, which began in chapter 24 of St. Matthew. As such, it tells us on what basis people will enter the kingdom. It has to do with the way we treat Jesus’ brothers. ⁴⁰ “The King will answer them, ‘Amen I tell you:

Just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.' Entering the kingdom in the resurrection depends upon how we treat the brothers of Jesus.

So who are the brothers of Jesus? If we look through the gospel of Matthew, we see that He always uses this term ADELPHOS, brother, in reference to His disciples, as, for example, in 12:49-50 **"Stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.""** (Matthew 12:49–50, CSB)

So people are separated into the righteous and the unrighteous according to the way they treat the followers of Christ.

We also see this in Jesus' Mission Discourse in Chapter 10. First He sends out the twelve without a bag, extra shirt, or food, depending on those who hear the gospel to take care of them. He sums up, **"The one who welcomes you welcomes me, and the one who welcomes me welcomes him who sent me. Anyone who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. And anyone who welcomes a righteous person because he's righteous will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, truly I tell you, he will never lose his reward."** (Matthew 10:40–42, CSB)

II. What Happens on Judgment Day

With this in mind, we can look again at the lesson.

On the last day, Christ will return, as we confess, to judge the living and the dead. The dead will rise, and all nations will stand before Him. He will come in glory with all His angels and be enthroned before those who are living and those who have been raised from the dead. All nations will be divided into the righteous and the unrighteous. To those on His right He will say, **'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**

He says why. It has to do with the way they treated those who teach the word. **'Amen I tell you: Just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.'** So, those who welcomed the pastors, teachers, prophets, Sunday school teachers, evangelists, and so on are those who rise unto eternal life, for they live and act in faith.

But those who despised Christ's brothers, the ministers of reconciliation, stand cursed, for they live and act in unbelief, ⁴¹ **"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you did not give me food to eat. I was thirsty and you did not give me anything to drink. ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, lacking clothes and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not take care of me.'**

It is interesting that Jesus doesn't say that their fate hinges not only on attentiveness to their teaching, but on the way they were treated. But this is consistent with the way Jesus elsewhere characterizes the experience of preachers: **"Greet a household when you enter it, and if the household is worthy, let your peace be on it; but if it is unworthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone does not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town."** (Matthew 10:12–15, CSB)

III. Our Lesson for Today

As you can see, there is much for us to learn.

First, live in anticipation of the resurrection. For the Christian, the sentiment “Rest in Peace” is an unfinished story. The story with the climax and the happy ending is “Rest in peace and rise in glory!” Don’t buy into the sort of spiritualized afterlife picture of mythology, that everyone goes “up there, somewhere” in a sort of pleasant nirvana. Christ the King rose body and soul from the grave, and so shall we, in glorious, robust, physical reality. Wait until you see this body the way it was meant to be, glorious and immortal.

Second, this glorious resurrection, as opposed to infinite darkness and the eternal fire is dependent upon how we treat Christ as He comes to us through those who proclaim Him. It’s interesting how he puts it in physical as well as spiritual terms. Believers don’t just listen to their pastors, and those who stand in Christ’s place, but as Paul writes, “**Let the one who is taught the word share all his good things with the teacher.**” (Galatians 6:6, CSB)

Conversely, unbelief shows in disrespect, neglect, and general oppression of those who speak the word of Christ. Those in our age who make it so pastors have to be bi-vocational, that is have another job, or where it takes two congregations to support a full-time pastor are communities of unbelief who will rise on the day of judgment, be sent to the left by the King, and commended to perdition.

And third, there is all the world between those who listen to the word of Christ as He comes to us proclaimed, sung, and taught and those who listen to what they want to hear, what they feel, and what they desire.

And what is the message that is heard or rejected? It is this: You are righteous by the righteousness Christ lived, you are forgiven by the atonement Christ made, and you are His because He purchased you by His own blood. Never stop listening, cherishing, this precious Gospel.

AMEN