

## Matthew 25:31-46 The Pronouncement of Judgment

Well, we are finishing up Matthew chapter 25 this morning, and finishing up this long third section of Matthew's Gospel. Matthew chapters 5-25 is The Public Ministry of Christ and we are finishing that up today.

Our focus is morning will be in Matthew chapter 25 verses 31 through 46, The Pronouncement of Judgment. Let's read these verses, 31 through 46:

**31) Now whenever the Son of Man should come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit upon *the* throne of His glory:**

**32) And before Him will be gathered all *the* nations; and He will separate them from one another, just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.**

**33) And on the one hand He will set the sheep from off of His right, but on the other hand the goats from off of *His* left.**

**34) Then the King will say to the ones from off of His right, Come, the ones who have been blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you from *the* foundation of *the* world:**

**35) For I hungered, and you gave Me to eat; I thirsted, and you gave Me to drink; I was *a* stranger, and you took Me in:**

**36) Naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.**

**37) Then the righteous will answer to Him, saying, Lord, when did we see you being hungry, we fed *You*? or being thirsty, we gave *You* to drink?**

**38) And when did we see *You* *a* stranger, and took *You* in? or naked, and clothed *You*?**

**39) And when did we *You* sick, or in prison, and came to *You*?**

**40) And having answered, the King will say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it to one of these, the least of My brothers, you did *it* to Me.**

**41) Then He will also say to the ones from off of *His* left, Go from Me, the ones having been cursed, into the everlasting fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.**

**42) For I hungered, and you did not give Me to eat: I thirsted, and you did not give Me to drink:**

**43) I was *a* stranger, and you did not take Me in; I was naked, and you did not clothe Me; I was sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me.**

**44) Then they themselves also will answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see *You* hungering, or thirsting, or *a* stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to *You*?**

**45) Then He will answer them, saying, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of these, the least, neither did You do *it* to me.**

**46) And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.**

This last section on the punishment of judgment between the righteous - that is, the faithful and the unfaithful - is tacked on the end of two parables that we studied earlier in the chapter. The Parable of the Ten Virgins and The Parable of the Talents, both parables dealing with the faithfulness of the Jewish people to fulfill the commission that God had given to them. That is God gave them the Word of God and gave them the commission to go and give the Word of God to the world and be ready for their Messiah to come and receive Him and present Him to the world. Some Jews did, some Jews did not. And it is really a ministry to the Jews, to the believing Jews.

So we began our section of The Pronouncement of Judgment. First of all, the circumstances in verses 31-33. **Whenever the Son of Man should come in His glory, that would be the end time, when everything comes to a final, to a climax. Whenever the Son of Man should come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit upon *the* throne of His glory.** So He is going to sit in judgment. **And before Him will be gathered all *the* nations.** That is all the nations of the world will be gathered together to Him. **And He will separate them from one another, just as the shepherd separates His sheep from the goats.** The sheep will be the believers, the faithful. The goats will be the unbelievers, the unfaithful. **And on the one hand He shall set the sheep from off of His right, but on the other hand the goats from off of His left.**

Then the compensation for the sheep. So the first group that He turns to is the sheep on His right hand side. **Then the King will say to the ones from off of His right, Come, the ones who have been blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you from *the* foundation of *the* world: For I hungered, and you gave Me to eat; I thirsted, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; Naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.** Please understand the emphasis that is being made here. Jesus is emphasizing Himself. *I* was hungry. *I* was thirsty. *I* was without clothing, and you gave *Me* clothing. *I* was sick and you visited *Me*. *I* was in prison, and you came to *Me*. So Jesus is talking about Himself, He is not talking about a group of people. He is not talking about hungry people. He is not talking about a program that somebody started to feed the poor. He is talking about Himself. Jesus said, You didn't know it, but you were responding to Me in people who were downtrodden. So it was not a *feed the poor* or *feed the hungry* program the Lord is talking about. Individual people who were in these conditions the Lord is talking about Himself.

Then, the curiosity of the sheep. Because unbeknownst to the sheep, they are responding to Christ. Christ in them was responding to Christ in others. He is talking about our response to believers here. **Then the righteous will answer to Him, saying, Lord, when did we see you being hungry, and we fed *You*? or being thirsty, and we gave *You* to drink? So, when did we do that? We did not see You. When did we see You a stranger, and took You in? Or**

**when did we see You naked, and clothed You? When did we You sick, or in prison, and came to You?** They did not even know that they were doing this. They were responding to Christ in them, that is the people who they are responding to. **And having answered,** verse 40, **the King will say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it to one of these, the least of My brothers, you did *it* unto Me.** So you did it to believers. You did to the least of My brothers.

Interesting, He uses the word *brothers* or *brethren*. People who have Christ in them are called *brothers*, even to Christ himself.

In Hebrews chapter 2 verse 11 it says, **For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.** Jesus is not ashamed to call them brethren who come from the same Father that He does. So Jesus calls believers *brethren*.

Paul says in I Corinthians chapter 6 verse 17, **The one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.** Brethren, in a family sense.

**When did we see You this way? Inasmuch as you do it to one of these, the least of My brothers, you did *it* to Me.** They were actively involved in responding to Christ and other people without knowing it. It was Christ in them responding to other people.

In James chapter 2 verses 15 through 17 it says, **If a brother or sister is without clothing, and in need of daily food.** Notice, it is a brother or a sister - He is talking about Christians, believers. **And in need of daily food and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be warmed and be filled; and yet you do not give them what is necessary for the body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.** So just to tell somebody, "I am going to pray for you. You are hungry, you have no food. You need help. You need clothing. I will pray that you will get warm somehow." And James says, when all you do is use words, you do not use action, your faith is useless.

John said in I John chapter 3 verses 17 through 18, **Whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need, and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with words, or with tongue, but in deed and in truth.** So again, if you behold your brother in need and you close up your heart against him, how is this the love of God? And again, I am emphasizing to you *the brethren*, those who belong to Christ. It is when the Spirit of Christ touches me and moves me to respond to Christ in other people, that is what he is talking about here. He is talking about these righteous, these faithful people, who inherit the kingdom, it is because during their lifetime Christ in them responded to the need.

But then there is the condemnation of the goats verses 41 through 43. **Then He will also say to the ones from off of His left, Go from Me, the ones having been cursed, into the everlasting fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.** If you ever want to know in the Bible, the one place in the Bible where it says that hell was prepared for the devil and his angels, there it is right there. It is in this text. It was never prepared for human beings.

Then how did human beings go there? It is human beings who acknowledge their allegiance to Satan, who will be with their leader, who will be with Satan. But the point is the Holy Spirit in us prompting us to respond to Christ in them. It is what the Lord is prompting them to do. It is not the people themselves. It is not people. It is not a human situation. But unbeknownst to us it will be Christ in them that prompted it.

Verse 42 and 43, **For I hungered, and you did not give Me to eat; I thirsted, and you did not give Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not take Me in; I was naked, and you did not clothe Me; I was sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.** Did not respond to one of My people, the least of which could be in the worst of circumstances. It could be the least of all My people in the worst of circumstances, and you did not respond. You had no response, spiritually dead.

It is going to be very interesting when people say, "Well, I fed the hungry." Were they responding to Christ? Or was it a human program to try to fulfill a quota? You see, everything is going to be in judgment in response to Christ. What is the Lord leading someone to do? How is Christ leading someone to respond to Christ in someone else? And that is not just food and clothing, it is persecution as well. Jesus is going to say you did not persecute people, you persecuted Me.

Remember Saul of Tarsus when he was on the Damascus Road? On his way to Damascus to round up the Christians, to have them jailed and some put to death. The Lord stopped him on the Damascus Road and the Lord said, **Saul, Saul why are you persecuting Me?** "Why are you persecuting *Me*?" Jesus said. Well, in reality in the circumstances Saul was persecuting Christians. But Jesus said, "No, you are not persecuting Christians, you are persecuting Me in My people. You think you are persecuting Christians, but you are actually responding to Me and persecuting Me. I am in them. They are My people."

It is also comforting to know, for a believer, wherever we go we have Christ with us. And people persecute us because we are Christians. They are not persecuting us because we are Christians, they are persecuting us because that is their response to Christ in us. It is not a response to me as a Christian, but to Christ.

So after He said to them, go into everlasting fire, **For I hungered, and you did not give Me to eat; I thirsted, and you did not give Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not take Me in.** Again, the emphasis is on Him, Christ, not people. **Naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me. Then they themselves, verse 44, will answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungering, or thirsting, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and when is it that we did not minister to You? Then He will answer them, saying, Truly I say to you, in as much as you did not do it to one of the these, the least, neither did you do it to Me.** So again, it is their lack of response to Christ in other people. They persecuted God's people rather than help them. They rejected Christ rather than receive Him.

The conclusion, **And these shall go away into eternal punishment:** that is, the goats, **but the righteous into life eternal.**

It is really Christ in me responding to Christ in you. It is all a spiritual response. The Lord is going to lay on my heart to help my brother or help my sister in need, because He put them in that situation for my response to be, because I am in the position of responding to Christ, who is making me sensitive to the needs of others. So there are the faithful and they are shown to be faithful by their response to the needs of God's people. Whereas the unfaithful are insensitive. In fact, they persecute God's people because of Christ, not because of the people themselves.

It can be said that what is presented to us here is the fruit of salvation, not the root of salvation. The fruit of salvation is to see the Spirit of God moving in someone's heart and life, to be touched with and minister to the needs of other people. The root of the problem is the works. Works is not the root of salvation. Faith is the root of salvation. Faith in Jesus Christ and the fruit of that relationship will be evident, manifested.

Let's close with prayer.