

MEETING OTHERS' NEEDS / Sunday, February 15, 2015

Unifying Topic: **SERVING THE LEAST**

Lesson Text

I. **The Judgment To Come** (Matthew 25:31-32)

II. **Separation Of The Sheep From The Goats** (Matthew 25:33-40)

III. **Depart From Me** (Matthew 25:41-46)

The Main Thought: And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (Matthew 25:40, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Opportunities for serving others are all around us; although believers do not always recognize or respond to them. What are the consequences of their action or inaction? Matthew says that believers should serve others as if they were the Lord, and God will judge the believers accordingly.

Lesson Aim: To show the importance of helping the least in society.

Life Aim: To foster a greater awareness for helping those who are helpless.

HISTORY:

Chapter 25:14-30 begins with the Parable of the Talents. A man went to a far country, called his own (those that were supposedly faithful and responsible) servants together as he entrusted his goods (gifts, abilities, responsibilities) with them. He loaned them his money to invest for him while he goes away. This is how the Kingdom of Heaven was illustrated. So, we really have Jesus going into a far country, and after a long time He returns. A far country indicates the time between Jesus' first coming and His final return from heaven. The Parable of the Talents further emphasizes the need for personal preparation and faithful service to the Master. We must be faithful and diligent. If we are not, when He returns, there will be severe judgment. The three servants are typical of three types of work habits. Each had been entrusted with these talents. The talents represent monetary values and are distributed according to ability—one receives 5 talents (\$5,000); another 2 talents (\$2,000); and the last 1 talent (\$1,000). Each have the same opportunity and they all are endowed with the Master's goods. Two servants were responsible: the one with the 5 talents and the one with the two talents both invested their money and received double. However the one with the one talent dug a hole in the earth and buried his money (**25:14-18**).

After a while the Master over the servants returns to deal with them. The first servant acknowledged God's gifts and grace and labored 100% for the Lord. He was commended and given a great reward: rulership and joy—"The lord said, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." This is a view of continued service in the Millennial Kingdom. The second servant did the same, and recompensed the same. The last servant didn't labor or acknowledge what the Lord had given him at all. The servant gave these reasons for not working: 1) He misunderstood God—thought God was too demanding. 2) He feared loss while on earth. The great mistake of the unfaithful servant was in misjudging the character of his Master: "thou art a hard man." He failed to understand the real generosity of his Master who wanted him to experience the joys of service (**25:19-25**).

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The Parable of the talents stressed the importance of faithfulness—what they had done with what they had been given during His absence. There is a reward! (**25:26-30**).

LESSON: Matthew 25:31-32 The Judgment To Come

25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:— Jesus had already come as Savior, now He comes as Judge. This is at the end of the Tribulation Period. There are **five things about His coming**:

1. So, when He comes, **He's coming in His glory**, that is, in His glorified body; His transfigured body; in a body full of light and splendor; a body shining as the sun in all the brilliance of God's glory. However, He is not coming in humiliation which He suffered as a man, but He is coming as the Son of Man, for He is the Ideal Perfect Man to judge the sons of men!
2. When he comes, **He's coming with His holy angels**—man innumerable number of glorious being accompanying Him, demonstrating the glory and honor of His person as God! The holy angels will be the attendants and ministers of His justice.
3. When he comes, **He's coming to be enthroned**: to sit upon the throne of His glory, He sits in judgment. He will become the One where they before Him and every knee shall bow (Phil.2:9-11)

Note: Christ is now sitting on the throne at the right hand of God. There is a difference between the throne of grace and the throne of judgment pictured in this passage. We can now come to the throne of grace for help (Heb.4:16), but when Christ returns in glory, it will be too late to receive help. His throne will be a throne of judgment to which there will be no approached apart from judgment.

So we see: the throne will be set up, the King will take His place, and the judgment of the nations will begin.

25:32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:— This judgment of all nations takes place before the kingdom is established on earth. It must be distinguished from the Great White Throne Judgment. ¹A comparison of the judgment in Matthew with the one in Revelation would show the difference.

- *Different Time:* The judgment of the nations occurs at the Second Coming of Christ (Matthew 25:31); the Great White Throne occurs following the Millennial kingdom (Revelation 20:11-12).
- *Different Scene:* The judgment of the nations occurs on earth (Matthew 25:31); the Great White Throne judgment occurs at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11).
- *Different Subjects:* At the judgment of the nations, he will separate the Believers and the Unbelievers, as the Shepherd does with the sheep and the goats. The Great White Throne judgment involves the unsaved dead (Revelation 20:12).
- *Different Basis:* The basis of judgment at the judgment of the nations is how Christ's "brothers" were treated (Matthew 25:40); the basis of judgment at the Great White Throne is their works (Revelation 20:12).
- *Different Result:* The result of the judgment of the nations is twofold: the righteous enter into the kingdom; the unrighteous are cast into the lake of fire. The result of the Great White Throne judgment is that the wicked dead are cast into the lake of fire (the righteous are not mentioned).
- *Resurrection:* No resurrection is mentioned in connection with the judgment of the nations. A resurrection does take place in connection with the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:13). ²

So, the Judgment of the Nations is different from the Great White Throne Judgment. This judgment is of the living nations after the Tribulation.

Continued—Five Things About His Coming:

4. When He comes, He's coming to gather all nations. The nations are those individuals living through the Tribulation on earth at the time of Christ's return. All men will be gathered by the angels and brought before Him. This word "nations" (eqnh) is often used to denote Gentiles or "non-Jewish people." Matthew (himself a Jew) was writing primarily to a Jewish audience in his Gospel, using terms a Jew would readily understand. His goal was to convince them that Jesus is the Promised Jewish Messiah. The Jews fully expected that the (non-Jewish) nations would be judged for how they treated Israel. Every living citizen will be gathered before Him in judgment!
5. When He comes, He's coming to separate the nations. There will be a separation of His obedient followers; genuine

¹ <http://www.pre-trib.org/data/pdf/Rhodes-Posttribulationismand.pdf>

² See Charles C. Ryrie, Basic Theology (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986), p. 518.

believers, from pretenders, to unbelievers. Man looks at the outside, but God looks at the heart, and He knows! Throughout history, there have been a mixture of sheep and goats, good and evil, tares and wheat, the sinner and the godly, and the believer and unbeliever.

Matthew 25:33-40 Separation Of The Sheep From The Goats

25:33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. This is the judgment: the separation of sheep on His right (the saved), and goats on His left (the lost). Judgment is coming, and it is inevitable; it cannot be avoided nor evaded. God will judge the world by His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will own you as you have owned Him and the Father on earth, or He will disown you as you have disowned Him and the Father on earth (Matt.10:32-33).

25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:— The Son of Man (v.31) is Jesus; also King. Daniel 7:13 says, *"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. 14 and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."* Jesus will say to those on His right hand (the saved; righteous), *"Come, ye blessed of my Father."* The purpose of the judgment is to determine who shall enter the kingdom, for there is a promised reward. The invitation is to the sheep, for He calls them blessed of the Father. They will inherit the Father's kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. It was in the eternal plan and will of the Father to bless those who followed Jesus. They have come through the Tribulation! What qualifications did those in the Tribulation have to come and inherit the kingdom?

25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:— 25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Jesus gives them the qualifications as He puts Himself in the place of those that have been hungry, thirsty, a stranger needing a place to stay; someone naked and needing clothing, one that is sick, you visited, or in prison, you came. He says you came and you ministered unto Me. We're always saying in our prayers, *"Lord, send healing to the hospital."* You're that one to lay hands on the sick.

25:37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 25:38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 25:39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?—The righteous that heard that statement were literally perplexed, and had to ask these questions of when did this occur; when did they have a chance to minister to Him? They were really thinking literally when did they do this to Jesus? Yes, physically we give food, a drink of water, clothes, lay hands on the sick, and go to the prison, but spiritually we are to have the heart, mind, and soul, so ingested with the love of Jesus as we minister; as if it is the Lord Himself that would need the help for He's the One sending us to those in need. And when we see people in need, it would be as we see Jesus being the center of why we help others. And those that will go through the Tribulation will need that kind of help, as well as others!

25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. He was never literally in these positions, but when the sheep; the vessels of Christ follow His teachings, they minister physically and spiritually as believers and servants of Christ, and become what's needed for the people. Christ has identified Himself with men in their pain and suffering; that He counts men as one with Himself. Matthew 10:40 says, *"He that receiveth you, receiveth me. And he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."* His brethren are His disciples. Jesus is saying that the nations will be judged for their actions toward His followers, and brotherly behavior, and then they will show that they have definitely received Him. Therefore, the righteous serve without even thinking about it! They don't neglect any need of the least of these brethren. It just came naturally, which shows their true connection with the Lord.

Matthew 25:41-46 Depart From Me

25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:— Those on the left hand are the goats (the lost; wicked).

- He will tell the goats to depart from His presence; into a world of misery; a world of outer darkness; a world of weeping and gnashing of teeth; a world of everlasting punishment; a world without God and hope. The goats rejected Christ, and refused to be identified with Him while on earth. John 12:48 says, "*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*"
- He called the goats "cursed." ³He is not the author of the curse. Those who have brought themselves under the curse by their own evil deeds, He no longer acknowledges as His.
- The goats are sent into an "everlasting fire," that was prepared for the devil and his angels. It is a fire that lasts forever.

25:42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 25:43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Jesus again puts Himself in the place of those hungry, thirsty, a stranger needing a place to stay, naked and needing clothing, sick or in prison and says that they did not visit or minister to those in that situation.

The sheep heard come	The goats heard depart
The sheep are called blessed	The goats are called cursed
The sheep are invited to inherit	The goats are cursed
The sheep receive the Promise	The goats receive everlasting fire
The sheep dwell in a place prepared for God's people	The goats dwell in a place for the devil and his angels
The sheep spend eternity with God and their Christian brothers	The goats spend eternity with the devil and his angels

25:44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?— The wicked are just as perplexed as the righteous were when they asked this same question.

25:45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. If they did not do it for the least of them in those situations, they didn't do it for Jesus.

- The goats failed to minister. They simply failed to help the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner. They are persons who do not become involved in meeting the needs of people. They are persons who do not dedicate themselves to meeting the desperate needs of the corruptible world.
- The goats lived a selfish life. The goats are people who live a life of comfort and ease. They live selfishly while the world around them is suffering with hunger, and sickness, and death.
- The goats were spiritually blind. The goats are people who refuse to see the truth about Christ, that He identifies Himself with the suffering masses, with the pain and need of individuals. The goats refuse to open their eyes to see those lying all around; those desperately in need: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner.

Goats are not condemned for what they did, but for what they did not do. Their sin was the sin of omission, not commission. But note how terrible the sin is. How many destitute people were left suffering all through life because a goat (*the wicked and lost*) did not help them? The goat neglected others; the sheep neglected themselves going unnoticed, accept to the Father and the Son!

25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. The judgment of punishment is eternal for the unrighteous. And the righteous shall live a life of eternity. This is where there are no second chances.

³ <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/25-41.htm>
<http://www.pitwm/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

SUMMARY:

There will be a time when the Son of Man will come in His glory with **all** His angels and will sit in a place of honor on his glorious throne as He gathers all the nations. He will separate people one from another as a Shepherd separates the sheep from the goats (**25:31-32**).

33 The sheep will be placed on His right, and the goats will be placed on His left. 34 Those on His right, Jesus, the King will say, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 He explains a time when He was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was 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 him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick and visited you, or in prison and came to you?' 40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me' (**25:33-40**).

41 "Then He will tell those on His left to depart from Him, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 He illustrates again with an opposite approach. This is a time when He was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty 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, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46 And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (**25:41-46**) (*excerpts from English Standard Version*).