

Matthew 25:31-46

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that 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, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, 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 was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' 40 And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' 41 Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; 42 for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' 45 Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

These lessons from Jesus occur at a very specific time. Relationships are built in stages. You meet, connect, engage in conversation, and then build up the relationship from basic understanding of one another to your relationship apex. The timing of these lessons is at the apex of their relationship. It is two days before Passover. This dialogue occurs when Jesus is approaching death. The timing indicates the seriousness of the lesson and the responsibility of the believers.

The lesson on the faithful and wise servant starts at Matthew 24:45. This one big lesson on the danger of assuming righteousness has four parts. The first part of the lesson is about the faithful and wise servant that is found to be working when the master arrives. The bad servant assumes he's OK. He knows the master and he knows what the master wants but due to his assumption of righteousness he underperforms. The second lesson is the ten bridesmaids. The bad servants assume they are OK. They know the groom and they know he is coming. However, due to their assumptions they fail to be ready. The third lesson is on the talents. The bad servant hid his talent because of his attitude. His focus was on fear for himself instead of focusing on pleasing the master.

The fourth lesson is on judgment. When Jesus returns in all his glory with angels everyone will be before him and he will separate everybody. This is an either or situation; there is no middle ground. Like a shepherd separates the sheep and the goats. The sheep will be on his right. They will be blessed by God and will inherit the kingdom. The condition of this blessing is the degree of care shown to humanity. They fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, welcomed

a stranger, provided clothing to the needy, cared for the sick, and visited those in prison. The righteous ask “Lord, when did we do this for you.” The answer from Jesus is “When you did it to one of the least of these, members of my family, you did it for me.” Get this. Jesus said those on the fringes of society are member of his family. These are the people that a society neglects. The words of Jesus tell us that when you do not care for them, you are cursed because you did not care for his people.

You can say what you want to and think what you want to but according to Jesus, this is what judgment looks like. I preach Jesus and when it comes to judgment he is tough and strict. I have the ethical responsibility to teach about judgment day. People interpret religion according to their own satisfaction with their own terms of salvation. Some say that there are many ways to get to God. This is true; there are many ways to get to God from human made religions. Theories do not have to be true. They only have to work. Some theories are completely false and serve to satisfy individuals. We are to satisfy God. According to the Bible the way to God is Jesus. This is different from world religions. The Christian faith is very special. It is about what God has done for us. God is reaching out to us. If you do not accept it, you reject God. If you reject God, or you reject what God has done for you, you get rejected by God. That is a fair and equal trade off. Now imagine the dialogue when you are face to face with Lord. The accounting is not what you assume it to be. The accounting is according to Jesus and he is adamant. He starts off with “Truly I tell you.” There will be judgment and we are to be ready as faithful servants. We are to shine the light for the Lord. We are to put our talents to work for the Lord’s mission. There is no getting in through the back door. There are not short cuts. There is no other way.

Jesus is talking to us. You’re responsible now - between the death of Jesus and his return. The lesson is so important it is covered at the apex of Jesus’ ministry in detail. The lessons on obedience are in regards to his followers. It is not a contrast between good and evil. It is a contrast between the attitudes of the followers. Jesus issues a warning to those who fail hospitality of the very basic human needs. You are asked about what you have done for the outcast. This is not the only criteria but it is at the heart of God. Our charity shows our love for Christ through daily kindness and personal service. The tests of life are preparatory tests for the final exam to get you ready for the face to face meeting with the creator of heavens and earth there at the throne of his glory.