

**"The Lesson of the Sheep and the Goats, Part 2" Matthew 25:31-46, Sermon Notes**  
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**Saving Grace Bible Church**  
**June 7, 2020**  
**Morning Worship Service**

"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.<sup>32</sup> "And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;<sup>33</sup> and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.<sup>34</sup> "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'<sup>35</sup> 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;<sup>36</sup> naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'<sup>37</sup> "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink?<sup>38</sup> 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?<sup>39</sup> 'And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'<sup>40</sup> "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even* the least of *them*, you did it to Me.'<sup>41</sup> "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;<sup>42</sup> for I was hungry, and you gave Me *nothing* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink;<sup>43</sup> I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'<sup>44</sup> "Then they themselves 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 take care of You?'<sup>45</sup> "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'<sup>46</sup> "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matt. 25:31-46 NAS)

**Textual Purpose:** To inform the disciples of the coming judgment of the righteous and the unrighteous at His second coming

**Sermonic Purpose:** The Purpose is to identify who is being judged and when they are being judged and what that judgment will look like when Christ returns

### **Introduction**

We have spent 15 weeks looking at the End Times. We now come to the final sermon in this marvelous section of scripture

This section of scripture is known as the Sheep and the Goats judgment

As I mentioned last week, we anticipate three distinct judgment events to occur in God's eschatological timeline

*We have provided for you a timeline of the events we expect to come based on our study of God's Word.* This is what the Church teaches and these things are reflected in our doctrinal statement. Here I want to lay them out for you

Our position aligns itself with Premillennialism. We differ from those who would hold an Amillennial view

- The Amillennial viewpoint says there is no 1000-year (Millennial) reign of Christ
- The return of Christ will happen when He comes to usher in the eternal state
- There is no Literal Kingdom
- There is no literal reign of Christ
- The Church is the Kingdom. The Church replaces the Kingdom
- The reign of Christ is in us and through us
- The thousand years is a symbolic number
- All of the passages that we have covered over these last 15 weeks must be taken symbolically to demonstrate the Church is the Kingdom which Christ rules in and through now

There is at least one similarity between the Amill and Premill position in that they both see things getting worse before Christ arrives. This is in contrast to the Post Millennial Position which says things will get better as the Church grows and ushers in the Kingdom of God

- The Amill sees the Church will decline and get worse before Christ arrives
- The Premillennial position will see the Church taken out of the way and during the tribulation society gets worse and worse as God pours out His wrath
- So while both see society and mankind getting worse their differences are far greater

The Amillennial view does not see a literal rapture. Nor do they see a difference between Israel and the Church

- Some amillennial teachers will teach a future for Ethnic Israel at the end

So we acknowledge that there are those who believe the polar opposite as we do

These differences exist because we differ on how to handle the texts of scripture that account for the end time events

- Logic is not the cause of our difference
- Nor is it experience
- Though many argue for their position from logic or experience
- But at the heart of the debate is our hermeneutics
- We seek to take each passage in its context. Find the authorial intent. Apply the Historical Grammatical principles of interpretation

When we do that, we find that God has clearly laid out exactly what He is going to do

- He has laid out a clear, reasonable, sane, and tolerable explanation for what will occur next
  - Unless you have replaced the Kingdom with the Church
  - Unless you have replaced a literal throne with the figurative throne in our hearts
  - Unless you have taken literal days and made them figurative
  - Unless you have replaced Israel with the Church

Then nothing I say will persuade you for you have already put a grid over the scriptures through which all passages must be filtered

By walking through these texts verse by verse it does not mean that this is an easy study

- Is every mystery solved? No
- Are there things that are hard to believe? Yes
  - For example, if we are correct in the Millennium you will have Glorified Saints living along side of unredeemed humanity
  - IE those who have their earthly bodies living along side of those who have their heavenly bodies in the Kingdom of God
  - This is bizarre to the Amill conviction. But we don't teach it because we imagined it. We teach it because the text states it (Just compare Rev 20:1-6 with Matt 25:31-46). And the events that are to take place at the end of the Millennium demand it
  - Plus I am not sure why it is so bizarre. Did Jesus not raise from the dead? And in what body did he possess when he rose from the dead? Was it not his glorified body? And When He was in that glorified state, did He not live among his disciples for 40 days before he ascended into heaven?

So if we are going to have any kind of understanding of what is going to take place we must go back and look at what God has said. We expect that God is going to complete His work the same way He started it

- When the Bible says that Jesus was going to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), we are not surprised to find that He was born in Bethlehem (Matt 2:6)
- When the Bible speaks of the Messiah coming through the line of David (2 Sam 7:14-17) we are expecting then Jesus would be in the line of David. As He was (Matt 1:1)
- When a sign of a Virgin with Child (Isaiah 7:10-16) would be demonstrated to Israel we are not surprised that Christ came into this world through the Virgin Mary (Matt 1:18-25)

On and on the Testimony goes of the OT prophets declaring the coming of the Messiah and we see the literal fulfillment of that in Jesus Christ

We premillennialists then should not be faulted if we expect that God will continue to fulfill His promises in the same way He started to fulfill them

- And if we handle the scriptures in the same way our Lord handled the scriptures
- And if we come to expect the literal coming and literal reign of Christ just as the early Church did

Also when Jesus confront the religious leaders in chapter 22-23 and calls them out for not handling the scriptures properly

- He rebukes them in chapter 22 for not understanding what Moses wrote about him or about the resurrection
- He also demonstrated his love and dependence upon the text of Scripture by responding to questions by turning to God's Word

So we too seek to do the same thing. We seek to go to God's Word to let God speak to us through His scripture to direct us into all meaning. We seek then to lay out the text and answer the questions that God seeks to answer. And to let the mysteries of God exist where He does not answer our questions

*So let me start by giving you a big picture look of God's Eschatological timeline as we understand it and then get into the text we have before us*

Present Age: We are currently living in what Jesus called the time of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24). During this time the gospel is preached to the whole world. The Church is God's administration for this time. The Church as the Bride of Christ reflects God and His glory in this time. God is reaching the Gentiles as He promised

Next event is the Imminent Gathering of the Church. Or the Rapture of the Church. We anticipate a time when Christ will come for His people and take them into heaven with Him. This can happen at anytime and will come unexpectedly

The Judgment of Christians: Those who have been raptured and the resurrected during this time go before the Judgment seat of Christ

- This is known as the Bema seat judgment
- This is the term in 2 Cor 5:10

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10 NAS)

- Judgment seat is the Greek word "bema"
- At this judgment, the Christian's life will be laid out before Christ and His works judged and he will be rewarded for what he has done in the body whether good or bad
- Those who stand before this seat have no fear of eternal condemnation as they are in Christ Jesus
- This judgment is described in more detail in 1 Cor 3:14ff
- This judgment is for the Church and the whole Church will be brought before it at this one time. The dead will be resurrected and those who remain will be raptured. So that this event will cover all those who are the Bride of Christ

Those who thought they were Christians at the time of the gathering of the Church will be left behind along with the unbelieving in the world where they will go through the tribulation

(Described in Rev 4-19; Dan 9; Matt 24:4-31)

- There will be many who thought they were in Christ
- *They thought they believed but they did not have genuine faith*
- There will be those during this time who will say Matt 7: Lord didn't we do these things in your name?
- They will have thought they knew the Master but their life will demonstrate that He never knew them
- There will be the unfaithful servants who used their Master's resources for their own pleasure and they will be left out
- There will be those foolish who were not prepared when the Lord returned and they will be shut out and knocking on the door saying let us in

*These if they continued in their unbelief and rebellion would ultimately be turned away at the next judgment as they would be found as goats, the unrighteous, the unbeliever*

After the Bema seat the saints in heaven will be at the Marriage supper of the lamb. This will take place at some point during the tribulation

(Described in Rev 19:7-10)

After the Events of the Tribulation, which conclude when Israel turns from her rebellion back to God and embraces Christ. This repentance of the remnant 144k occurs and then you have Christ returning with His Angels and His holy ones and sets up his Kingdom with "His glorious throne." During this time you have the Sheep and the Goats judgment. Which we will explain in a moment

- Also during this time Rev 20:1-6 describes that the tribulation saints who are martyred are resurrected and the OT saint is resurrected. Not necessarily at this event here but during this time
- Those who lived through the tribulation and are righteous in Christ are gathered on His right. These are the sheep
- Those who are on his left are the goats who are cast into judgment

After that you have the Millennial reign of Christ

(Described in Rev 20:1-10)

- Here Christ reigns with His people over all the nations on the earth.
- During this time Satan is bound
- Those who lived through the Tribulation will live along side of the redeemed saint who was either resurrected or raptured and returned with Christ
- At the end of the Millennium there will be a final rebellion of Satan and unredeemed humanity aimed at Christ
- *Christ will then conquer Satan and destroy the remaining wicked*

Then will come the Great White throne Judgment when all unbelievers are raised from the dead, this is the last resurrection. This is recorded in Rev 20:11-15. This judgment is where all unbelievers are sent into eternal punishment according to the deeds that they had done

- Finally Christ brings in the New Heavens and the New Earth. And then we enter into eternity and all that God has prepared for us there
- The OT Saint, The Church, The Tribulation Saint, The Angels enter into eternity together

This is the premillennial picture

- Pretribulation rapture
- Pre-Millennial return of Christ

So this morning let us look more closely at the sheep and the goats judgment

"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.<sup>32</sup> "And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;<sup>33</sup> and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left

<sup>34</sup> "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'<sup>35</sup> 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;<sup>36</sup>

naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'<sup>37</sup> "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink?'<sup>38</sup> 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?'<sup>39</sup> 'And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'<sup>40</sup> "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.'

<sup>41</sup> "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry, and you gave Me *nothing* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'<sup>44</sup> "Then they themselves 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 take care of You?'<sup>45</sup> "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'<sup>46</sup> "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matt. 25:31-46 NAS)

The setting of this event is at the second coming of Jesus Christ. 5 on our graphic. When He returns with His Angels and sets up His glorious throne

- During this time all the nations are brought before him and are separated into two groups. One on His right and one on His left
- The sheep are on His right. They are the righteous
- The goats are on His left they are the unrighteous

Now let us evaluate the judgment of each of these groups. First look at the judgment of the Sheep. Vs 34-40

Last week we saw the King. We saw the one who is going to sit upon the throne is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Son of Man will come in His glory and take his rightful place and bring all things back into subjection under God

- If man thinks he is oppressed now wait until he has to give an account for his sin
- There will be a day when Justice will reign and each one will have to give an account
- There will be a day when the sinful heart and actions of man will not be able to hide behind labels which have emboldened the heart to walk in sin
- There will be a day when the Law of God will be laid out and man's actions will be measured against it
- Passages like the one before us remind us that while there is disorder and chaos around us, there will come a time when everything will be brought back into order just as God has designed

Notice what Jesus teaches in our text this morning:

## The King's Commendation: vs 34

<sup>34</sup> "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

- He is the son of man who takes His glorious throne
- He is the King that speaks

Jesus here refers to himself as the King. The one who is giving out the verdict. Here is saying to those who are on His right that they can possess the Kingdom which has been prepared for them from the foundation of the World

- The Emphasis here is the eternal workings of God
- As He has prepared a people and a place from eternity past
- *From the beginning of God's work, He has prepared for this time*
- The reference to the gathering of nations is to demonstrate all are brought before Christ
  - Not just the Jews
  - But all nations are brought before Him

Some have concluded that because the nations are brought before Christ then the people are separated by nations. But that is not the case. Since each person was directed individually not nationally

- Clearly what Christ says here demonstrates that those who are on His right are there because of the eternal plans of God
- They are the ones blessed by the Father
- They are the ones receiving what the Father has prepared from the foundation of the world

*This is important to notice here because of what is going to come next*

- One might be tempted to think that the righteous entered into eternal life because they did good works
- They showed brotherly love and kindness
- This is not the case. They entered into eternal life because they are blessed of the Father and they enter into a place prepared beforehand by the father

"A child does not earn an inheritance but receives it on the basis of being in the family. In exactly the same way, a believer does not earn his way into the Kingdom of God but receives it as his rightful inheritance as a child of God and a fellow heir with Jesus Christ." JFM pg 122

*This is the King's Commendation to the righteous: They are blessed by the Father and will receive a place prepared for them from the foundation of the world*

The Commendation Justified:

<sup>35</sup> 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; <sup>36</sup> naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

There are none who are righteous who do not also live in righteousness

- Here the righteous are marked by what they practiced
- They loved those who were in need, distressed, naked, hungry, in prison

“... the genuinely righteous deeds Jesus mentions in verses 35-36 are measurable evidence of salvation, and He therefore highly commends those who have performed them.” JFM pg 122

Now this is a section that is often confused

- Many run to this and say look we are to be involved in social concerns
- They say, “We need to embrace social justice”
- We are told that there are those who are under oppression and have been taken advantage of so that we now need to go meet their physical needs
- And look even Jesus tells us here how we treated these is how we know we are the righteous

They conclude that this is how we love our neighbor and this is how we prove that we are Christians

- We love the oppressed
- The poor, the hungry, and the sick and the weak in the World
- We seek to demonstrate that certain lives matter and we show that by going out and caring for their needs

*But this is not what this passage is saying*

- This passage is not saying that the righteous indiscriminately shows love to all by caring for their physical needs
- *This is not the verse promoting social justice by calling the Church to right all wrongs by showing mercy and grace to everyone in the world*

*I am not saying we should not be gracious and generous to all. We should as God grants us opportunity. I am saying this verse is not a clarion call to social justice that some are proposing*

Notice a couple of observations about this text

First notice the works done:

- <sup>35</sup> 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; <sup>36</sup> naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

They showed mercy and grace towards those who were distressed

- They were to everyone but to those who were distressed

Our second observation to clarify comes from our next section:

## The Commendation Affirmed:

<sup>37</sup> "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? <sup>38</sup> 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? <sup>39</sup> 'And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' <sup>40</sup> "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.'

Now the righteous in this account are a bit confused. When did we do this to you? When did we care for you?

*The proof that what they were doing was not works oriented is their response: When did we see you and do these things?*

- They were not running around trying to find all the sick and distressed and care for them and prove they loved God by their works
- This is obvious in their response: When did we see you?
- They were unaware of how they cared for Christ

Vs 40 is the Key

'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.'

- Here the passage is clear. Those who are cared for are not the whole world indiscriminately
- Here is the proof these works are not about social justice, mercy ministry, or seeking to bring relief to the lost world through physical means
- Those who are cared for are those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. "these brothers of mine"
- This has been a consistent theme in the NT
- James 2 makes this clear when James rebukes the church for showing partiality to the rich over the poor

But John has the most to say in 1 John:

"The one who says he is in the light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now." (1 Jn. 2:9 NAS)

"By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother." (1 Jn. 3:10 NAS)

"We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 Jn. 3:16 NAS)

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." (1 Jn. 4:7 NAS)

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 Jn. 4:11 NAS)

"No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us." (1 Jn. 4:12 NAS)

“If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.<sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.” (1 Jn. 4:20-21 NAS)

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.” (1 Jn. 5:2 NAS)

- Obedience to God is loving others

You see this is not an indiscriminate call to love everyone and care for everyone’s needs. Or to right all social and racial wrongs. This is a call to love God’s people

*But in loving God’s people someone should not assume this means that we are saved by our works*

“The King addressed them as the righteous, not simply because they have been declared righteous in Christ but because they have been made righteous by Christ. Their works of service to fellow believers give evidence that they are themselves the product of divine “workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:10).” JFM pg 123

- These righteous brethren walked in love and did the things pleasing to God by caring for God’s own people

It is as if Jesus is saying this:

“Come into My kingdom, because you are the chosen children of My Father, and your relationship to Him is made evident by the service you have rendered to me by ministering to your fellow believers, who, like you, are My brothers.” JFM pg 123

The King’s Commendation, the commendation explained, the commendation affirmed

Next we see:

### **The King’s Condemnation:**

Notice what He says to the Goats vs 41- 46

<sup>41</sup> “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

Instead of being blessed like the righteous these are the accursed

- They are under condemnation
- Their fate is prepared with the devil and his angels in the lake of fire

Now there are a possible explanations of this

- It could be that they are cast into hades here and held until the great white throne Judgment
- Or this could be prophetic foreshadowing in that they are ushered to the great white throne Judgment when they will be judged for their evil deeds

### **The Condemnation Justified:**

<sup>42</sup> for I was hungry, and you gave Me *nothing* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' <sup>44</sup> "Then they themselves 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 take care of You?'

Here we see this terrifying judgment is justified

- And what is scary about it is not a list of wicked deeds done
- Does not list murder, rape, incest, stealing, lying, cheating, drunkenness, adultery – 1 Cor 6
- No here he lists their condemnation for how they treated God's people
- Because the godless man hated the light they mistreated the people of God
- For this they are condemned

### **The Condemnation Affirmed:**

<sup>45</sup> "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' <sup>46</sup> "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

They will not be able to escape their judgment. Their unbelief led them to either passively disregard God's people or actively reject God and His people

- Thus their unbelief manifested in their evil deeds and this will be the basis of their eternal condemnation

"It is significant that the marks of lostness Jesus mentions here are not gross sins committed but rather simple acts of kindness not committed. The five foolish virgins who had no oil for their lamps were not shut out of the wedding feast because they were morally wicked but because they were unprepared for the bridegroom. In the same way, the slave with one talent was not cast into outer darkness because he embezzled the master's money but because he failed to invest it. Also in the same way, a person who is shut out of the kingdom of God is not condemned because of the greatness of his sin but because of the absence of his faith. It is not that those who are damned to hell are equally wretched and vile; their common reason for damnation is lack of faith." JFM pg 126

### **Conclusion**

You see friends the lessons our Lord has been given us over and over again through this message on the Mount of Olives

- We are to be prepared for His coming
- It will come at any time and we do not know when but when it does come it will be obvious and unmistakable. It will be like a tree changing color with the change of a season
- We are to be faithful. For the righteous servants in Christ will live in faith and be prepared for their master's arrival
- The faithful servant does not grow weary or slack by his master's departure but remains faithful and vigilant
- But know this, there will be some, so called believers, some so called servants of God, who say they love the Lord and their master but deny him and are not prepared for His arrival

- When He comes they will be revealed for what they are, apostates

No true believer will lose what has been eternally prepared for them. But not all who claim to possess eternal life actually have it. So how do we know we are true possessors of eternal life?

- Live by faith. Show your faith by loving the brethren.
- How do I love the Brethren? Remember 1 John 5:2

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.” (1 Jn. 5:2 NAS)

A faith filled life loves God and others by observing His commandments

- Keep His commandments. Not to earn salvation but to demonstrate your faith