

# Christ - The King!

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Glory; Humility; God: Faithfulness; Immanuel / Matthew 25:31–46

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- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the King. Amen.

## Introduction

If you look at a church calendar you would notice that this is the final Sunday in the Church Year, you would also notice on some that this is also called Christ the King Sunday. So that's what we are going to do this morning, we are going to end the church year and we are going to focus on Christ as the King. The King who is going to come on the Last Day is not going to come as Savior, but as Judge!

Yet the text, that comes to us from Matthew 25, the concluding words of Christ's fifth and final sermon in Matthew days before his crucifixion, focuses on the End, the Final Judgment, when the Christ, the King, himself will return and separate the sheep from the goats. This Day will be one of doom and gloom and one of victory and joy. This is the third and final parable in Matthew 25 about the coming reign of God. We had the Parable of the Five Wise Virgins and the Five Foolish Virgins. We also had the parable of the Talents. This morning we see the parable of the Sheep and the Goats. It's easy to bring all these parables together.

## Goats

The Foolish Virgins and the servant who buried the talent are the goats. The goats are the ones that are not worthy and well prepared. The goats are the ones that did not help out those who are in need. In many ways, Jesus in his day and age is talking about the fellow disciple, the traveling missionary, the leaders in prison. Today, though, it could mean anyone that's in need. Really the goats are those that fail to live in the faith and love of Jesus. These goats speak to their own demise... "When did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?" They clearly say that they never saw Jesus in need (or anyone for that matter). The judging King will then tell them, "Truly, I saw to you, as

you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these goats will here there eternal destination...eternal punishment...eternal fire.

This punishment isn't temporary...this punishment for the goats is forever. And who are the goats, the goats are those that are unbelievers. Those that do not have saving faith in Jesus. And it's not the works that save. Really, the unbelievers are selfish. They think only of themselves. Their works that they might do and might like good to you and me, are only done for themselves, to make themselves feel and look good.

What do these unbelievers look like? As I said, they are selfish. They seem to smother everything that is Christian. They may even be members of the visual church that blame all the problems on the pastor and leave. They blame the institutional church for being hypocritical. More and more are speaking out against God and denying the need for Jesus and the salvation won for us. More and more are denying Jesus as King and Lord of their lives and are not living as He did. They are speaking out against God in anger and unbelief.

And yes, the Lord will come to Judge on the Last Day. He will come to Judge all nations, all peoples. And as Judge he will convict all the goats to eternal fire. When Christ returns as Judge, the judgement will be swift and it will be permanent. The judgement that will cast the goats to eternal punishment is great, this eternal punishment isn't just fire...it's eternal separation from God the Father.

Don't these goats sound like you and me? You and I we are sinners, we don't always live as Christ does. We actually very seldom live as Christ did or wants us to live. We look at the Ten Commandments and see that we have broken each and every one of them. There is a fine line between belief and unbelief. The step across this line isn't very far either. Satan will continue to tempt us to cross that line, to give up on Christ and His atoning work on the cross.

There is also the time that as sheep, who are in the right, may live as goats as we give up our vocations to those around us...our brothers so to speak, to do more glorious things.

Yet, there is something special about sheep.

## Sheep

The Wise Virgins, the first two servants who used their talents are the sheep. Sheep are believers. And on the day that the King returns with all glory, that day will be victorious and glorious for the sheep who will enter into glory, into life forever.

Our text tells us that on this last day the Son of Man will return in glory along with his angels. The time that he came before he came in humility in Bethlehem under the dark of night in a manger. His humility carried him all the way to the cross and the tomb.

His humility saves you. His humility made you sheep. In his humility he has compassion on the sheep. So what exactly makes sheep different than the goats?

Sheep are sheep because of the King. Sheep are sheep because of what the Good Shepherd does. Sheep are sheep because you have been called sheep. Sheep are sheep because you are blessed by the Father. Sheep are sheep because you have been given an inheritance, the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Sheep are sheep not because of anything that you did or attempted to do. You are sheep because of the action of the shepherd, the action of the King. You are sheep because He called you as sheep and He has given you faith through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit who also calls, enlightens, sanctifies and keeps the whole Christian Church in the one true faith.

You are sheep because you are special to the shepherd. And because you are sheep God is going to bless you. But why, remember the because is all about Jesus and the works that He created in advance for you to do.

Jesus explains to the sheep,

**English Standard Version Chapter 25**

35 For I 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.'

The sheep respond - When did we do these things to you and for you? These sheep didn't keep a list of things that they were doing. Their faithfulness was producing fruits for the kingdom. It was automatic. Sheep do as sheep do. The King responds,

**English Standard Version Chapter 25**

Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

These sheep were living in the way they were called. As you read this whole chapter...all three parables you might read that works help in the salvation process. That is not the case, in fact works are the fruit of faith. The sheep didn't know that they were doing these things. The sheep who are called by the King are doing what the king gives them to do. It's what they do as sheep.

Sheep are justified only by grace through faith in Christ alone. Sheep are justified because of the actions and merits of Christ alone. Sheep are justified because when the Son of Man returns in glory and He judges the world, He will see Himself on you. He will see His atoning work.

You are sheep because of Christ. Because you are sheep, Christ calls you to be faithful and he gives you the Holy Spirit to help you be faithful and carry out the fruits of faith.

# The End is Coming

And yes the End is Coming...it is coming quickly and drawing near. The Judgment is coming, and you are called to be ready and well prepared. The only way you are ready and prepared for the upcoming judgment is to rely solely on the merits of Christ Jesus. For indeed, you who are faithful, you the sheep, who are special in the eyes of the King, will indeed inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. You will inherit the new Eden, the new creation. You will be joined on that last day with all the Saints who have ever lived and are currently living on that last day and be welcomed into the eternal kingdom. You will hear, "Come in, this is for you." You will hear "I prepared this for you." You will hear, "Well Done, my good and faithful servant." You will hear, "this eternal life is for you because of my Son, your Savior who came once in humility, who died for you, who rose for you."

Yes, he come in humility once...this next time, he will come in glory, and indeed for you, sheep, it will be a glorious day! A day when you will experience true glory, true eternal life, true freedom, true joy, true purity...and it will be forever and it will no longer be a foretaste of what is to come as we experience even now in the absolution, the preaching of the word, and the breaking of the bread. The end is coming...and yet we wait...we wait with eager anticipation for that last and great and glorious day...since you are sheep, chosen by the King, Christ - the eternal king.

In Jesus Name. Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.