

Scripture Reference: Matthew 25:31-46

Date: March 9, 2014

Title: "In Service to the King"

Focus: Service - Touching the Lives of Others — What the Church is Series 7 of 10

Initially, Jesus' words here would seem to support the notion that people can be right with God because of what they do.

However, two things must be kept in mind,

- a. What Jesus says is presented in the context of two parables: The Ten Virgins - vv. 1-13 (Living expectant of your God's coming) and The Talents - vv. 14-30 (Stewardship of your God's possessions).
- b. In the end, relationship ("I never knew you") was the determining factor.

This is not a lesson about being the sort of person that results in being right with God. Instead, it is about being right with God leading to being a particular type of person. The life of Jesus in people naturally compels them to touch others through service.

vv. 34-40; The "Sheep"

One group, Jesus said, will be “*blessed of [His] Father.*” They will receive the inheritance “*prepared . . . from the foundation of the world.*”

These people are characterized in two ways:

a. They fed the hungry, quenched the need of the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, and visited those imprisoned.

It is undeniable Jesus meant His disciples would literally feed, provide drink, welcome, clothe, and visit those in need.

God expects that His life in His people will express care for others.

James 2:14-17; “*What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.*”

What His disciples do are the things Jesus did as a servant of God.

Luke 4:18-19; “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.*”

Looking to the life and service of Jesus, it is not enough to apply this physically. It must embrace it spiritually as well. Jesus quenched both the physical and spiritual thirst of people (the woman at the well). He healed both the physical and spiritual afflictions of the crowd (the man born blind). He liberated those imprisoned for crimes, but also by sin (the woman caught in adultery).

Caring for the physical needs of people is not enough (remember Lazarus). It is not the end game. Ministering to their physical needs is only part of service.

b. What the "sheep" did was done without any thought of currying The Shepherd's favor.

The disciples' response to their great blessing? "Really, we blessed You? When, How?"

Their actions were done as a *natural* expression of the Spirit of God in them.

vv. 41-46; The "Goats"

This other group was not blessed

The ones on the left stand in stark contrast to the others. What was said of them could not be declared of these.

They were people who lived to themselves, "*whose god is their appetite . . . who set their minds on earthly things*" (Phil. 3:18-19).

Living to themselves, by their practices, they betray they had no relationship with God. Their "end is destruction."

It is not enough to *do* the right things. It is essential one be *right* before God.

Closing:

1. God is concerned about actions as far as they indicate who a person is. What do your actions tell you about yourself?
2. Are your actions born of a nature that experiences the very person of God, or are they indicative of an individual who is focused on self and personal values?

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