

## **The Sermon: “When the Son of Man comes”**

Do you know when the last day of the year is? I know that we could generally look upon December 31st as the last day, but November 28th is the last day in Christian Calendar 2020. Today is the last Sunday, the Christ King Sunday. The next Sunday is the first day of our new Christian year. We begin the first Sunday with anticipation of new hope in Advent.

Today’s New Testament reading teaches us what will happen on the last day on the earth. Matthew 25:32 says, Jesus will come in the last day on earth and separate the sheep from the goats. When Jesus comes again, he will separate the sheep from the goats. What does it mean? What makes the difference between the sheep and the goats?

Jesus explains that people who have believed in God and lived good lives will be put on one side and have a place in Heaven, and people who have rejected the belief in God and sinned in their lives will be placed on the other side and will go to Hell.

In this parable, people as the sheep are commended for their great compassion for those in need, the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, and those who are naked, sick, or in prison.

They will inherit the kingdom, not because of the compassionate works, but because of their hearts to love God in response to Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom. Their compassion for the least one evidences their love for God.

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Paul teaches us in Romans that we are saved by grace through faith. Those who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ are seen as God's children. Good works are evidence of faith. Faith has to be alive with good works, including helping the needy. Works don't save us, but they are visible evidence of a living faith.

A pastor was involved in church relief after a national disaster. He noticed large crews repairing church buildings. Then they packed up and left. The pastor's team stayed on to restore people's lives, not just buildings. While people outside are hungry, thirsty, in need of clothing, need of hospitality, and in need of a caring visit, just repairing church buildings is a woeful example. Matthew 25 tells us that Jesus identifies more with the needy than our holy places.

In Matthew 25:37, the righteous asked Jesus, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?' Those "righteous" didn't even know they had fed and clothed Jesus. Their motive was love for God and their neighbor and not earning salvation by works.

In Matthew 25:40, Jesus answers, '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.'

Jesus will come back and ask us, do you give food to those who are hungry? Do you give anything to drink to those who are thirsty? Do you welcome a stranger? Do you give clothing to those who are naked? Do you connect with people who are alone in the pandemic? Do you love your neighbors as God loves you? What would you say to Christ Jesus, our King, on the last day on earth?

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