The Final Judgment

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Preacher: Andrew Rim

[0:00] Good to meet with you guys this Sunday and worship our Lord this morning. Like Paul said, my name is Andrew. Matthew 25, verse 31 to 46.

Let me pray for the reading and preaching of the Lord. Heavenly Father, we thank you so much that your Word, the Scripture, is active, living, and breathing.
And as we encounter your Word, it comes to life in our own lives. Lord, this morning I feel so much inadequacy, so much weakness.
And ask for your help and power of your Holy Spirit. Lord, won't your Word come alive this morning to speak to your people, to clutch at our heartstrings, to convict us of any sin, and to fill us with encouragement and hope of the future that is yet to come.
Be with us this morning, Lord, by the power of your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
Won't you please rise with me for the reading of God's Word. Matthew chapter 25, verse 31 to 46.
[2:13] When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people, one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

And He will place the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
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. I was naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me.
Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And 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? And the King will answer them, Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.
[3:29] Then He will say to those on His left, Depart from me, you cursed. Into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me no food.

I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and you did not welcome me. Naked, and you did not clothe me. Sick and in prison, and you did not visit me. Then they 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 minister to you?
Then He will answer them, saying, Truly I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.
And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated.
Do you love Jesus? Eight years ago, I was on a church missions trip to Baja California, Mexico, when I was confronted by a little boy who sprang this question up to me.
[4:47] Do you love Jesus? I was taken aback by his eagerness with the question, but I confidently replied, Yes, of course I do.

The boy then gave me a skeptical look. And yelled, Prove it. He proceeded to run off, and I was left dumbfounded and bewildered, partly because I didn't have the Spanish vocabulary to prove it.
And also partly, I didn't know if I had the English vocabulary to prove it either. Fast forward to May 2026, two months ago. I was attending my wife's graduation ceremony for a master's program at Gordon-Connacle Theological Seminary.

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During the Bachelorette service, one of our New Testament professors gave a sermon of exhortation. And his main piece was this. The most important question that we will ever have to answer is this.
Do you love Jesus? Do you love Jesus? This question is so important that Jesus asks it three consecutive times to Peter.
[6:00] Peter, the chief disciple who denied Jesus three times and left him to be crucified and killed. Jesus, after having resurrected from the dead, approaches Peter, his deeply ashamed disciple, and asks him, Peter, Peter, do you love me?

Do you love me? Do you love me? And Peter replies, Christ, you know that I love you. You know that I love you. You know that I love you.
And each time Peter replies, yes, I love you, Jesus commands Peter to feed his sheep. If Peter truly loves his master, Jesus, he will tend to and shepherd those who Christ calls his sheep sheep for the rest of his life.
It's more than Peter's words. It's his entire life going forward. It's actions that will be the evidence for his love for Jesus. Do you love Jesus?
If so, then you prove it. Jesus doesn't ask this question and issue this commandment here as a mere mental and moral exercise. And in that same way, our answer to this question and the evidence behind this is more than just amusing, a mere thought.
[7:18] How we answer this question with our words, not just our words, our actions and with our entire lives has eternal implications for each and every one of us here.

Our passage in Matthew 25 this morning reveals that Jesus, the Son of Man, who died on the cross and resurrected from the dead, and ascended into heaven, he will come again.
In the second coming, Jesus will bring the final judgment to the eternal, to the entire world. And he will judge each and every person based on their conduct of how they have lived their lives.
Do you love Jesus? On the final day, on the final judgment day, your life, it will be truth of whether you truly loved him or not.
And whether your final verdict is eternal life with the Lord God or eternal punishment away from him. And so this is our main point for our passage this morning.
[8:20] Be ready for the final judgment of the Son of Man when he returns. I'll put some four different parts this morning. First, the authority of the Son of Man.

Second, the reward of the righteous sheep. Third, the curse of the unrighteous goats. And fourth, the eternal consequences. First, the authority of the Son of Man.
We are in the final part of what is called the Olivet Discourse in the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus speaks of the end times and his second coming to the earth. In the past week's passages, Jesus said that when the end of the age arrives, it's unknown to us.
But when Jesus does return, we will be judged for our preparedness, making the most of what God has entrusted to us in a Christ-centered and gospel-driven life. Our passage this morning, then, concludes this Olivet Discourse with Jesus explaining what exactly will happen on this day of the final judgment and the criteria in which Jesus will judge all the world.
But first, we must examine on what grounds does the Son of Man have the authority to do this? Who is he to separate and sort all the nations and peoples?
[9:39] In verse 31, Jesus says that the Son of Man will come in glory, accompanied by angels, and he will sit on his glorious throne. The term Son of Man, as we have seen in Jesus' referred to himself many times throughout the Gospel of Matthew, is referential to the prophecy in Daniel 7, where one, like a Son of Man, comes to the Ancient of days, and is given an everlasting dominion that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.

That title, Son of Man, highlights Jesus' kingship and authority based on this Daniel 7 prophecy. Jesus' authority as the Son of Man is also displayed that when he comes in glory, all the angels will accompany him.
The entire army of angels, spiritual beings created by God to worship him and accomplish his will, will leave their posts in heaven to follow up to Jesus, not as his equals, but as his subjects.
1 Peter 3.22 says that Jesus, when he had resurrected and had gone into heaven, has angels, authorities, and powers subjected to him. Here in our passage, Jesus says that he will return with all of these celestial beings leading them to earth in his final return.

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And once he returns, Jesus will sit on his glorious throne with all the nations gathered around him. Just the throne imagery, it evokes kingly authority. Though here and now, Jesus sits at the right hand of the throne of God the Father in heaven, reigning over heaven and earth.
[11:11] In his second coming, when Jesus comes again, Jesus will return to establish his kingdom and throne on earth so that his kingship will be in plain sight to everyone in the world.

It's remarkable to think that as Jesus is foretelling this glorious return, this glorious return, that future one, who will sit on his glorious throne surrounded by his angels and all the nations, he sits in this passage, perhaps on a little stone, a meager stone on the Mount of Olives, surrounded by his motley crew of disciples, knowing that one disciple will betray him, another will deny him three times, and all will forsake him, leaving him to be crucified over the three days.
This is Jesus, the Son of God, who humbled himself in the form of man, that the Son of Man would be delivered to earthly authorities to be rejected, to be mocked, to be flogged, to be crucified.
And yet, even in the humblest, perhaps most humiliating of situations, Jesus looks towards the eternal realities of the day when he will return in glory and power and majesty as the supreme king and judge of all.
And so when he returns, he sits enthroned with all nations, all people coming before him. When an official, a governor, or a king arrives to the city, the citizens are expected to greet him and gather before him, a symbol of their loyalty and subjugation.
[12:53] When a king is crowned, the people are called to gather in commemoration and celebration of his coronation. The king is at the center of his people's attention.

For example, during the 2023 coronation of King Charles III of the United Kingdom, there were over 2,000 guests who were invited to view the ceremony at Westminster Avenue, representing over 200 countries and including other nations' royalties, world leaders, religious leaders, and other prominent figures of power and influence.
Let's blow this number up just a little bit more. Within the United Kingdom, over 20 million people on that day viewed the ceremony on television. Let's blow that figure out even more.
Within the entire world, globally, there was an audience of approximately 2 billion people across 125 countries that tuned in to King Charles III's coronation.
One-fourth of the entire world had their eyes on King Charles. Church, when Jesus returns, it will be exceedingly more than that.
[14:08] All nations, all people will be gathered before him as he sits on his throne. This is not just all present living people, but all nations, kingdoms, civilizations that ever existed in the world.

Revelation 20 says that even the dead will be brought forward to the throne of Jesus to be judged. Billions upon billions of people. And Jesus commands their attention, authority over all, whether they believe in him or not.
Philippians 2, 9-11 says, Therefore God has highly exalted him and has sowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every name should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.
Revelation 1-7 says, Behold, he is coming with the clouds and every eye will see him, even those who pierce him. And all tribes of the earth will wail on countenance.
Every person, whether or not they acknowledge the Son of Man before, whether they embrace Jesus or pierce him, will see Jesus and they won't be able to help but confess that he is Lord over all things, all people, when he returns.
[15:30] And so, this is the great authority that Jesus has over all the earth and it is by his authority that Jesus judges the nations and separates the sheep and goats from one another.

And so, when he returns, the Son of Man will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep and the goats. The people listening to Jesus at this time would have been very familiar with the image of the shepherd, sheep and goats that Jesus presents here.
In ancient Palestine, shepherds would keep their sheep and goats together in the same pastures during the day since their grazing habits were pretty much the same. However, because goats tend to require warmer temperatures to rest in the evening, before nightfall, the shepherds would bring the flock to the resting quarters and would separate the sheep and goats from one another by hand. The sheep and goats would walk single file through a mare of sheep and the shepherd would swing a gaze, sorting the sheep or goats one by one, ensuring that each animal ends up with this appropriate long time.

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And let me tell you, I went down this unnecessary rabbit hole trying to search what do Palestinian sheep and goats look like. It's so hard to tell them they look so good for them.
[16:52] And just the thought of having the shepherds swinging the egg right and left and trying to pinpoint with their eyes, okay, this one's a sheep, this one's a goat, this one's a sheep. Oh, no, no, no, go, go, go, go, go, you gotta look.

It's a strenuous, it's a painstaking process of being so careful in sorting the sheep and goats their properties. Just as painstakingly and personally the shepherd sorts his sheep and goats one after another, so will our Lord Jesus closely and personally place each individual person in his or her properties, whether that is among their fellow sheep or among their fellow goats.
And Jesus says in verse 33, the shepherd places the sheep on his right but the goats on the left. There will be no middle group, no third group, no goat among sheep, no sheep among goats, only two rigid categories.
Those who are the sheep and those who are the goats, right and left. From here, Jesus, reveals what exactly these cattle is. Sheep to his right goes to his left.
Verse 3, verse 34, the son of man, now the king who sits upon his glorious throne says to those on his right, come, you are blessed by my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
[18:22] Come, inherit the kingdom. Jesus continues to describe some of the things these people have done. Verse 35 to 36, they gave Jesus food when he was hungry.

They give him drink when he was thirsty. When he was a stranger, would that home or shelter be welcomed him? When Jesus was naked, they clothed him. And when he was sick or imprisoned, they visited him.
When Jesus was in physical need or misfortune, these blessed ones attended to him and cared for him as their own. And Jesus calls them blessed by my father and calls them to inherit the kingdom into eternal life and fellowship with the Lord.
Jesus preaches this most twice only to be met with confusion. The righteous will answer him and say, Lord, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison and when did we care of him?
Imagine the bewilderment of these people. They received this glowing commendation from the most glorious Jesus. They're called blessed. They're told that they will inherit the kingdom of the Heavenly Father.
[19:36] They're told that they attended to Jesus' needs on earth. But they can't seem to recall for the life of them when they did any of their sins. They must have looked so timidly at Jesus.

This is the glorious Jesus, enthroned in all this glory, wondering if he's made a mistake if he's got the wrong guy. Jesus, my Lord, pardon me.
My memory might be a little spotty around the door. I don't think I've ever did any of these things for you. Lord Jesus, quite frankly, I don't even know if I've ever met you in person.
Jesus answers their bewilderment so patiently and says, truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the beasts of these, my brothers, you did it to me.
Anyone who cared for the beasts of Jesus' brothers has done the same to Jesus. Jesus. What Jesus says here bears resemblance to what he told the disciples in Matthew 10, verse 40 to 42.
[20:47] Whoever receives you, receives me. And whoever receives me, receives him who sends me. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to receive his disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose this reward.

These little ones, as Matthew 10 says, are Jesus' disciples. In Matthew 12, Jesus stretches out his hand towards these same disciples and says, here are my brothers.
For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother. And so whoever receives these little brothers of Jesus, his disciples, whoever clothes them, feeds them, shelters them, gives them even a cup of cold water, also does so to Jesus.
Why does Jesus specifically highlight the actions of feeding these brothers who are so hungry, those who are thirsty, those who needed shelter, clothing, comfort, companionship, because each of these actions requires great sacrifice and selflessness of time, resources, energy.
Church, it takes time, it takes resources, it takes energy for us to provide meals for fellow brothers and sisters through the meal train, just like Todd has said. It takes time to trek to the hospital to visit our sick friends and family.

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[22:16] It requires sacrifice for us to go out of our way to comfort, encourage, and uplift heartbroken brothers and sisters. But we are willing to sacrifice because we see that there is a need amongst our brothers and sisters and we're stirred up by Christ's love to serve them.

The disciples were among the lowliest of men, without home, without secure food or drink on the day by day, with barely a cloak to cover them from the elements.
They were so severely in need, but I'm sure that many people would have seen them in their poverty and hear them talking so boldly about the Messiah as Jesus, whose fears of controversy in the public, and they would have just dunked their heads and hurried away by making excuses about why they are not able to provide their least examples.
However, if anyone were to be stirred up by the love of Christ, they will pay heed to the least of these. Jesus brought us and care for them and receive their words, and doing so also care for Jesus and receive his words.
And that is what Jesus commends these chiefs for, for paying heed to the needs of his disciples and receiving them welcomingly, and thereby receiving Jesus as their own as well.
[23:41] What Jesus is not saying, mind you, is that our kindness and generosity should be closed off to unbelievers. Galatians 5.10 exhorts us to do good first to the household of faith, but then also to love our needless as ourselves by doing good to them.

God, whether it's the homeless or the sick, our neediest friend or our harshest enemy, we are called to honor even the least of these neighbors because they have been created in the image of God and bear that dignity to be treated as such.
However, the way we treat and receive fellow believers has an important significance because it reflects how we treat Jesus himself. Whoever receives the words of Jesus' disciples and accepts them also receives and accepts Jesus and is saved by faith.
And Jesus commends them and rewards them and says, come, inherit the kingdom. Now, some people will read this passage and come to the conclusion that these people of Jesus' right received the kingdom of God because they fit the home, because they helped the poor, because they sheltered the homeless, visited and imprisoned.
some will conclude that eternal rewards for the righteous hinge on their concern for and the prioritization of the social welfare of the world.
[25:05] The hungry need to be fed. The disenfranchised and marginalized need to be restored. Wealth needs to be redistributed in order for God's kingdom to manifest. The way we love others certainly has eternal significance.

However, we cannot conclude that our salvation depends on our inactive peace acts of mercy. There will be a fatal mistake and the conclusion itself is not consistent with what Jesus says all throughout his life and ministry and what God's word says.
Jesus is not suggesting that anyone can inherit the kingdom of his father based on their works. Within our passage, there are several clues that indicate that Jesus is not saying that those on his right will inherit the kingdom because of their good works.
Let's go back to verse 34 for a moment. It says, Come, you who are blessed by my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. First, the verb inherit is not used for something that is earned.
When you inherit something, it does not come at a price. It is freely given as a son inherits his father's laws. The son doesn't have to toil away in order to receive his father's position.
[26:21] He simply receives it because he is the son of his father. In the same way, the inheritance of God's kingdom is a gift that cannot be earned, but is given freely to those whom the father calls his own children.

Secondly, the kingdom is not just haphazardly given to those blessed ones. After Jesus sees that, they do all these good deeds. Rather, the kingdom was prepared for them from the foundation of the world.
From the very beginning, it was God's plan that these people would receive his kingdom. Their God elect, as it says in Ephesians 1, for those whom he chose in him before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and blameless before him.
God already knew that these people would inherit his kingdom, and the way he cared for the least of Jesus' disciples was a testimony of this. And third, Jesus' description of the good deeds that the people on his right hand had done, in verse 35 and 36, should be viewed as a statement of

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evidence, not causation.
In other words, Jesus is not saying that these people have inherited the kingdom because of their good works, but rather that their inheritance of the kingdom, their salvation, is evidenced by their good works.
[27:43] Lutheran theologian H.D. Haman provides a hopeful illustration in his commentary of the gospel according to Matthew. I can say, it has raining for the atmospheric conditions were right for raining, or it has raining for the streets are wet.

The for in one case gives the reason for the rain, and in the other case, the evidence for it. It is in the second sentence that the for of verse 35 is understood.
The judge points to the works of verses 35 and 36 as evidence for the position assigned to the sheep. The people to the right of Jesus are called righteous by him.
They're called blessed. They're called inheritors of the kingdom for their good deeds give evidence that they have been saved by Jesus on the cross and transformed by the Holy Spirit dwelling inside them.
by grace, it has become part of their DNA, their inner being, as sheep who belong to Jesus that they desire to do good works. In other parts of scripture, we'll find that same idea that we are not saved by our human strivings and deeds.
[28:56] Just as we read in our assurance of pardon, Ephesians 2, 8 says, by grace, you have been saved for faith. This is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not the result of works so that no one may boast.

Romans 11, 6, but if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace. Or Titus 3, 5, God our Savior saves us not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy.
Our salvation does not depend on our good works or our meaning of certain quota of good deeds and service. salvation is fully by grace and grace alone through faith.
It is by grace through faith that the woman with the alabaster jar was saved in Luke 7, not because she broke the perfume jar and kissed Jesus' feet, but because she was given faith to believe that Jesus was her Lord and King and treat him like sin.
It is by the Lord's mercy that the Samaritan leper in Luke 17 was saved, not because he followed Jesus' directions perfectly to be healed of his leprosy, but because he came to believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah and ran back to Jesus to bow before him in prison.
[30:19] It is by the grace of Jesus dying on the cross for our sins that whoever believes in him is saved. Not because we earned such sacrificial love by any marriage, but because God was so rich in mercy to look at our sorry and sinful sins and still say, you are my blessed ones, and for your sake my son will die.

Notice how impregulous the sheep on the right were to receive this commendation. Their kindness and generosity to Jesus' little ones, it wasn't premedicated.
They weren't scheming for their salvation. Their surprise was genuine. They were not expecting any reward for their deeds and were acting out of genuine faith and love in their hearts.
When they selflessly and joyfully received and cared for the least of Jesus' brothers, they were also selflessly and joyfully receiving the Lord Jesus unbeknownst to them. Such good works were not what caused for salvation, but rather the fruit of evidence that was born from their salvation and sanctification.
God is God is dead. God is dead. Someone who is saved by the Lord Jesus Christ will show evidence of their salvation naturally by the way that they conduct themselves, by the way that they restrain and discipline themselves, by the way that they sacrifice their own interests for the interests of others.
[31:51] themselves. And rather than coming from a place of anxiety and nervousness, of having to work for their salvation, try to earn it, these works will instead come from a fullness of joy and gratitude evidence that the Holy Spirit is indwelling.

And this is a decisive factor of the sheep that God, that Jesus calls to on his right side. They have faith in Jesus Christ. They have a relationship with Jesus.
And their joyful and self-forgetful desire to care for even the least of Jesus' brothers, his disciples, is evidence of this relationship and their salvation.

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And these sheep, who themselves have become Jesus' little ones, are giving commendation to the eternal kingdom. Brothers and sisters, with what sort of attitude do we go about serving God and his people?
Do we go about our service and create anxiety and fear that we're not doing enough to win God's favor? Do we see ourselves as too little, too unable, too unpopular, too unnoticed, too unworthy, too broken, to serve God, let alone be in his presence?
[33:15] us. Do we want to join in freedom, knowing that our salvation has already been purchased by the blood of Christ?

hearts? I'd like to say that I do this myself, but if I'm being legally honest, well, not even legally honest, if I'm being just being honest, my wife Kathy knows it much better than I do.
She notices that sometimes my heart isn't in the right place when I serve. Sometimes my heart is just so self-absorbed in itself, and I'm looking at the work set before me.
When I am most self-absorbed with myself, my thoughts are this. I need to pick some good songs for some service. I need to figure out some good talking songs for CT.
I need to cook a delicious meal for my life. I need to deliver the serving well. I need to cook. there's this pressure of needing to perform well, to do things right, that we can voluntarily stack on through the works set before us, that actually takes away the glorifying God, and instead makes it about ourselves.
[34:37] However, when we remind ourselves that we are already counted as righteous by God through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, our posture will lie, our attitude will change, and the works set before us will be done out of the joy of being able to serve our Lord Jesus and his disciples.

Wow. I get to worship God with these songs that we sing. I get to delve into God's word with my fellow brothers and sisters at CT and pray with me.
I get to love and care for my family by God's provision and grace. grace. I get to delight in God's word and deliver it to his people.
What on the Father? And over time, we won't need to remind ourselves so constantly. The Holy Spirit will sanctify us more and more that the joy of the Lord will so naturally ingrained in our work and be a part of our identity with Christ.
Christ. And so my prayer is that we would all surely transform in this way by the power of the Holy Spirit, that this would be the evidence of our salvation in the eyes of the Supreme Judge, Jesus.
[35:53] And now we turn to the ghost on the other side of Jesus. Verse 42. The Son of Man then turns to those on his left and says, depart from me, you cursed.

Into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. While Jesus beckons the sheep on his right to come, he now says to the ghost on his left to depart from me.
He calls the right blessed by my Father, but he calls the left cursed. And while those on the right will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, those on the left will instead be cast into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.
In Revelation 20. 10, the devil is cast into the lake of fire and then after the final judgment, everyone whose name is not written in the book of life is thrown into the lake of fire.
The eternal fire of punishment was prepared specifically for the devil and his angels, spiritual forces who rebelled against God. God. But now, those who participate in those same acts of spiritual rebellion against God, who continue to be in unrepentant and unbelieving sin, they participate in the work of the devil.
[37:15] And they are cast into the eternal fire because they are children of the devil, crucified in 1 John 3. 10. And Jesus describes in detail the deeds of those who are cursed into the eternal fire.

In verse 42 to 43, they did not give Jesus food when he was angry. They did not give him drink when he was thirsty. They did not welcome him as a stranger, clothe his nakedness, nor visit him his sickness and imprisonment.
Essentially, the opposite of what the sheep have done. Those to the left of Jesus will be confused and bewildered as well. They ask him, Lord, when did we not see you and not minister to you?
They cannot recall times when they saw Jesus in need and not take care of him. Like the sheep on the right, they may not even recall ever encountering Jesus in person.
Jesus, like he did with the sheep, is so patient to answer that go over the minute in verse 45. Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.

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[38:24] Again, Jesus is not teaching here that these people will be condemned for being uncharitable to the poor and needy, since that would be the same principle as salvation by works.

However, the fact that these people did not receive and care for the least of Jesus' brothers, his disciples, means that they also did not receive and care for Jesus himself.
Because they rejected his disciples and the word, they have also rejected Jesus. peace and his word. And just as the faithful disciples' deeds of care was the evidence of their salvation, the unfaithful one's lack of care was the evidence of their demise.
When a king sends a messenger to a foreign country for diplomacy, the messenger is an emissary, a representative, an ambassador to the king.
Whatever way the messenger is treated translates in the same way to the king himself. If another ruler is polite and kind when directly with the king, but then is secretly cruel and hateful to the king's messenger, he has dishonored the king also.
[39:39] To reject the king's lowly messenger is to reject the king himself. Those who neglected Jesus did exactly that. By neglecting to care for the least of these brothers of Jesus, they also neglected to care for Jesus himself.

Perhaps if they saw Jesus face to face in their lifetime, out of self-preservation and pride, they would have received him readily intended to his knees. But when they are in the most private of moments and they encounter his unassumably made, lowly disciples, they turn their hands away, refusing to care for them or to receive whatever they may have to say on behalf of their master.
Notice also that Jesus is not pulling out those on the south for atrocious sins and wrongs they have committed before neglecting to do right and neglecting to do good specifically towards Jesus' disciples.
These people could have countered Jesus and said, Lord, we never murdered your disciples. We never stole or coveted from them.
We never lied to them. However, their neglect to care for Jesus' disciples was also a rejection of Jesus. And this was evidence for their spiritual unbelief.
[40:58] Even if they had been righteous indeed all their life, even if they were the most philanthropic and generous speakers in society, even if they had a clean record to their name, they did not accept Jesus.

And they did not receive Jesus' disciples. This is evidence for their spiritual death, for their unbelief in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and their decisive seal for the eternal flames of punishment on the final judgment.
To my fellow brothers and sisters, though we do not earn our salvation by works, we still need to keep our hearts in check.
Do we follow God's commandments like a two-do list, marking off all the sins that we have not committed, but forget the heart behind each command? In the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5, Jesus tells us that the law says, you shall not murder, but that even those who harbor anger at their brother will be liable to judgment.
The law says to not swear and go falsely. But Jesus pushes that envelope, saying to just let your yes be yes and your no be no. All of these laws that Jesus fulfills in his sermon are for the purpose of loving our neighbor as ourselves.
[42:22] Simply not murdering your neighbor is not necessarily a fact of love. You can't just walk up to someone and say, I love you so I won't murder you. It doesn't sound very lovely.

But to forgive them of any wrongs that may have breached you gets to the heart of loving them well. Simply not swearing and don't falsely to your neighbor is not necessarily a fact of love.
You can't just walk over to your wife and say, I love you so I'm not going to lie. There's more to it than that.
There's more to the heart of the command. Holding fast and following through with what you say to them is at the heart of the command. If we fall into the habit of just checking off what we have not done, and yet if we've left to do what is at the heart of God's commands, we too will lack true love for our brothers and sisters and for Jesus.
In the same way that those on the left of Jesus lack love for Jesus and his disciples. And so fellow Christian, be on guard over your hearts that you do not fail and fall into neglecting your fellow brothers and sisters and neglecting the heart of our Lord Jesus.

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[43:39] To those of you joining us this morning, when we not consider yourself a Christian, please hear these words of Jesus carefully. Jesus is judging to those who must have sighted to be a bronze and steal.

Jesus, the Son of Man, who has all authority to judge the whole world on final days, is saying that those who do not receive his disciples and care for him also do not receive him and care for him. Our final verse, verse 46, makes clear what these consumments are. These will go away into eternal punishment of the righteous into eternal life.
To reject Jesus' disciple is to reject Jesus' disciple. And to reject Jesus is to reject his lordship over your own life and to be cast into the eternal fire, the eternal punishment when that final judgment day comes.
You can be as good in your actions and conduct as you can. You can be as generous to others as you want in your lifetime. But even the noblest of deeds done apart from faith in Jesus is, as theologian John Calvin calls it, splendid sin.
[44:57] Because they lack any Christ-glorifying vote. To the unbelievers who may be in our lives, I don't say this to trap you.

But this morning in our Sunday service, you are surrounded by Jesus' disciples, fellow brothers and sisters of Jesus who are asking you, imploring you, to not reject our word, to not reject Jesus' word, to not reject Jesus as your lord and savior, and to instead put your faith in him and come into eternal life with him.
We ask you so desperately not to reject our word and not to reject Jesus because we don't know when Jesus will return and bring that final judgment to the world.
But the fact that there is still time now is in itself a marvelous grace from God. Because it means that you still have time here and now to set Jesus as lord and to identify with his sheep destined for eternal joy rather than identify with the goats destined for eternal demise.
When Jesus comes, when he returns, there will be no extra time to settle your accounts. There's no adverts to make, no just one second to make amends.
[46:27] He will judge each and every one of us based off of our comment right then and there. of whether we truly loved him through his disciples, the least of his brothers and sisters.

And just as the sheep and goats were strictly categorized into right and left, Jesus, the supreme judge, will separate us strictly into eternal life and eternal punishment.
There are cosmic, eternal consequences to the decision that you make whether to follow Jesus or reject him. I share this with you now, knowing full well that there are some of you here who do not believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
And I share this with you, knowing full well how hard it is to believe this. Because I too have always been there. Many of us in the church have been there, if not all of us.
We too have once rejected Jesus and his disciples and instead sought to make a name for ourselves. To be Lord and King over our own lives.
[47:44] Maybe it was finding success in our wealth. Maybe it was desired influence amongst our friends and co-workers. Maybe it was desired to find security in our family.

Maybe it was possible. Maybe we wanted to start a legacy built on our own outlets. Or maybe our life goal was to saturate ourselves in worldly pleasure to the point that we become numb from it. Whatever the case, I too, we too, did not care for Jesus at one point. At one point we did not love Jesus. He had no business in my life, nor I in his.
But the more that I tried to climb up this endless ladder of self-driven success, the emptier I felt. The hungrier and thirstier I got.
The more estranged and alienated I became from others. The more naked and exposed I felt of my weaknesses. The sicker I felt in my stomach and my feathers.
[48:48] And the more imprisoned I felt in my own mind and in my own life. I felt hollow and empty and left to think, if this is all that there is to this life, it's not my privilege.

But God, in his infinite love and kindness, showed me how mistaken, how broken of a sinner that I was to try to play master over my own life. And in that same love and kindness, God sent his only son, Jesus, 2,000 years ago, to come into this world of the humble poor man.
Not only to live on his stuff, but to serve as the lowest, the lowliest servant, the least of these, and to die, though he was without sin, to die the sinner's death on the cross.

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For our sake. That we would be saved and redeemed of our enslaved into sin and death. On that cross, it was finished. It was done.
Whatever we may have been working for ourselves, no more death we have. It was paid full at the cross. And when Jesus died and resurrected from the dead, he defeated that bondage of sin and death that shackled us for all of our life.
[50:08] And Jesus did all this for the joy set before him. Even as the world despised him and shamed him, even as they treated him as the least of these, Jesus died with the joy set before us, knowing that his sacrifice would not only redeem us from sin and shame, but ultimately bring God the utmost glory.

Anyone who believes in this and believes in Jesus will not face eternal punishment, but instead inherit the everlasting life. 2 Corinthians 5.17 says, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
You can ask any other Christian here in this room that believing in Jesus as our Lord and Savior was the moment that transformed us forever. Anyone who puts their faith in Christ is a new creation and will be counted as righteous in the eyes of God by the blood of Jesus.
they will be called blessed by the Father and they will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world an eternal reward infinitely better than all the riches of the earth because they bear the fruits, the evidence of their salvation.
[51:43] And so please, if you do not believe now, please receive this invitation from the least of these Jesus' brothers and sisters and accept Jesus' wonderful gift of salvation today while you can.

If you do accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, when that final day of judgment comes, when the Lord Jesus returns in glory and sits enthroned on his glorious throne, we will stand before him as our supreme judge and he will give a faithful account of our deeds and our conduct.
In the words of English Pastor Charles Spurgeon, they fed the hungry, but sovereign grace had first fed them. They clothed the naked, but infinite love first clothed them.
They went to the prison, but free grace had first set them free from a worst prison. They visited the sick, but the good physician in his infinite mercy first came and visited them.
They did good for Christ's sake because it was the sweetest thing to do anything for Jesus. Your Lord will accept what you do because he's doing out of love to him.
[53:10] And at the last, while you blush to hear it, he will tell it to the angels and to the listening hosts of earth and heaven and swing wide the gates of immortal bliss and let you in according to the promise of his grace.

And so I ask you this question, this most important question that will need to be answered in your life. Do you love Jesus?
I pray that as we confess with our mouths, our lives and our conduct towards the least of Jesus' little ones would give evidence of this love until the day that Jesus returns.
what's right? O Lord, what is the matter that you would mind?
O Lord, who are we to lord over our own lives to claim that we are masters of our own faith? when you are the infinite God, the almighty God, the infinitely holy and righteous and just God who knows far better than we could ever imagine.
[54:38] Yet out of your infinite kindness and mercy, you give us grace through your son of Jesus that we could be counted as righteous, that we could be called blessed, that we would not need to earn our salvation but instead inherit it as our children.

But what gift of grace that you are our redeemer? And so stir our hearts with, fill our hearts with affection towards you, remembering that great and costly sacrifice that you are that your son of Jesus paid for our rehab.
And we pray for those who still lack in their belief. We pray that you would soften our hearts, that you would give them eyes to see and ears to listen to truly witness your wonder and your majesty, your grace and your mercy.
Now, we pray for all of us in the holy name of Jesus. Amen. Amen.

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