**Matthew Sermon XVI**

**Sheep and Goats**

**Review:**

Matthew 24:1-23:13 Preparing to Meet God.

1. This is about the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the end of Jewish age.

2. This is about the second coming of Jesus at the end of the age.

3. This is about our need to stay focused and to be prepared.

Jesus: Do not get distracted by wars, rumors of wars, famines, pandemics, great recessions, and (even legitimate concerns about social justice) earthquakes, persecutions, people falling away, false teachers,…

v. 13 Stand firm to the end!

v. 37-38 As in the days of Noah…. A complete surprise

What should I do to prepare for the coming of Jesus?

Live as if it might happen today.

Live as if it will not happen in my lifetime or in the lifetime of those who come after me. Do both!! If you were to die tomorrow, how would you act today?

Plead with my friends to become Christians, call my family, tell them I love them.

Matthew 25:14-30 The Parable of the Talents.

v. 14 Again, it will be like… What does “it” refer to? The second coming of Jesus (or the end of your life, whichever comes first). (remember 25:1 “at that time…)

This is a second parable about the return of Christ.

This parable is helping to answer the unanswered question from 25:1-13. How do I keep my lantern full? (we tend to answer by saying good quiet times) Answer: by doing things for God—by actively serving him!

v. 14-18 God has given us all various talents. The amount is not the chief issue here. Are some more “talented?” I suppose, but God does not care about that. It is what you did with that talent.

BTW, the word talent in English comes from this parable.

Also, note that God gave us 1, 2, 5, or 10 talents. A talent is $2,000,000! God has give you a lot of stuff to work with.

v. 19 After a long time. It is like the Parable of the Ten Virgins.

v. 19-23 5- and 2- talent servants/disciples had doubled what the master/God had given them.

They were not like the fig tree of Matthew 21:18-22 or the unfruitful workers in the Parable of the Tenants in Matthew 21:33-41 “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end” and “rent the vineyard to other tenants.” (v. 41)

v. 21 In the kingdom of God, the reward of faithful service is not a great pension. It is even more faithful service! The reward of hard work for God is:

1. Even more hard work God? Yes!

2. Share God’s happiness. This is what makes God happy, and what makes us happy. I have work for you to do in the New Heaven and Earth.

v. 21 3. We hear those blessed words, “Well done, good and faithful servant! I LOVE that phrase.

I think about Chris and Gary Simmons. John and Alisa Sparks. Manny and Sandy

Q: What about you? Are these the words you expect to hear? Do you long for them?

If you want something done, who should you ask? Ask a busy person!

Some of us had demanding parents for whom we were never good enough. I hope that was not you. God is not that way. He expects us to earn something with what he has given us, but he is not a taskmaster. It is for our good! The things he expects us to do are also what make us happy and fulfilled.

v. 24-27 The other guy… I know that you are a selfish God and an unloving God, so I protected myself. I knew that you were just using me, so I watched out for number one.

None of us actually say that, but…

v. 26 You wicked and lazy servant! You could at least have put it in a bank!

Take the talent away from that one, and give it to the one who will use it.

You could have given your stuff to someone else who could have done something for me with it. You would not study the Bible with people, you could at least have given your money to someone who would.

You would not share your faith or help with our community service activities. You could at least have encouraged those who did.

I do not want to hear those words.

What do I learn from this parable? God expects results.

I have two questions:

1. What is your talent? What is your gift? What has God given you?

2. What are you doing with it/them? Ephesians 2:10-11 We are “created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do

1 Peter 4:10-11 (read it).

1 Cor 4:2 God requires that those who have been given a trust, must prove faithful.

My gift is teaching. I LOVE teaching. Eric Liddle Chariots of Fire. When I teach, I feel God’s pleasure.

If your gift is doing crafts, then put on a craft event for the church on zoom.

If your gift is computers, build up our social media presence.

If your gift is as a handyman, then be handy.

If your gift is fixing cars, fix cars for Christ.

If you have the gift of evangelism (Zane) use it to reach out to people.

If your gift is serving the needy (Andres) find a career that uses that gift.

Q: What is your talent? Luther, what is your talent? Rosa, what is your talent? Egypt, what is your talent?

Remember, we are talking about who will be in heaven and who will be in hell.

This is how we keep our lamps full. (Matthew 25:4)

In case you were not sure:

Matthew 25:31-46 Sheep and Goats.

For now, just read 25:31-33

Matthew Ch 24 Jesus talks about God coming to destroy Jerusalem in AD 70, and he talks about his second coming.

Matthew 25:1 At that time…

Matthew 25:14 Again, it will be like…

Matthew 25:31 When the Son of Man comes in his glory. Q: Which is he talking about? The Second Coming, obviously!

25:32 All the nations will be gathered before him. This scene is not represented often in Scripture. Daniel 12:2-4 Rev 20:11-15

Imagine the scene!!!!!

Jesus is doing the judging here. This confused me for a time. John 3:17 (condemn the world but to save it), John 12:47 “I did not come to judge the world, but to save it.”

True. That is now why Jesus came to this world to take on flesh and to die for our sins. He did not come here to judge the world, but when he returns at the end of time, it will not be to save, but to judge.

Matthew 25:34-46 Q: So, who will be in heaven?

v. 34 Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father: take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. This has been God’s plan all along.

Who will be in heaven?

Matthew 25:35-40 Those who served God. How? By serving and looking after his disciples (these brothers and sisters of mine).

Q: v. 40 “the least of these my brothers and sisters.” Is he only talking about how we have loved, served and taken care of his disciples? Maybe, but let us not worry about that. Does this distinction matter?

Isaiah 58:6-12. Read it.

Who will be saved? Those who worship, serve and obey God. How do we do this? By being his instruments to serve humanity.

The point: We will not remain saved because we have believed the correct doctrines. We will remain saved to the end because we have acted in this world as God would act in this world—by feeding the hungry, by inviting in the stranger, by clothing the homeless, by helping the sick and visiting those in prisons, either literal or figurative. By making those phone calls to the weak or those not getting the attention they need.

When we study the Bible with people we are feeding the spiritually hungry, we are inviting the spiritually alienated into God’s kingdom, we clothe the spiritually unclothed (like the guy at the banquet who was not clothed with Christ), by helping the spiritually sick, and by helping to free those who are spiritually imprisoned.

Let me be honest here. This passage bothered me a bit. Is this works salvation?

James 2:24 “You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.” James 2:26 “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.”

These things—feeding the hungry, inviting in the stranger, clothing the homeless, helping the sick and visiting those in prisons—is what sheep do.

These are the things our faith needs to be combined with, otherwise our faith is dead.

On Judgment Day God recognizes his sheep—those who have been doing these things, because this is what his sheep do.

This takes us back to Matthew 24:45-46 “It will be good for that servant who finds him doing what he was instructed to do when he returns.”

Matthew 25:1-13 Who were the wise virgins? They were the ones who prepared by keeping plenty of oil in their lamp. How do we do this? By praying and reading the Bible.

Sure, but Jesus says to keep your lamp full for the day of his return we need to feed the hungry, invite in the stranger, clothe the homeless, help the sick, and visiting those in prisons—be these things physical or spiritual. We need to be about the business of the kingdom of God. That is how we keep our lamps full.

Here is the encouragement:

God says that when we do this, we do it to/for God.

Q: How do you love God? Is it a feeling?

Illustration: Children, how do you make your parents happy?

Matthew 25:41-46 Some did not do this. They did not…. They lived a self-focused, self-centered, self-interested, self-indulgent life.

25:41 the eternal fire prepared, not for you (God only prepared his kingdom for us), but for the devil and his angels. It was not God’s plan for us to be in hell.

Summary: God wants and expects us to use what he has given in service to his kingdom—to increase our talents.

More specifically, God wants us to use those gifts, talents, ability, time, energy to take care of the needs of our fellow-Christians and others as well—to feed the physically or spiritually hungry, to invite the stranger and care for him/her, to clothe the physically or spiritually unclothed, to heal the spiritually or physically sick, to visit the spiritually or physically imprisoned.

If we do, God will say “Well done, good and faithful servant, come share my happiness in eternity.”