



## Daily Verse and Comment

### Matthew 25:31-46

(31) "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. (32) All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. (33) He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. (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. (35) For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, (36) I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' (37) "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? (38) When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? (39) When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' (40) "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' (41) "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (42) For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, (43) I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' (44) "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' (45) "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' (46) "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

*New International Version*

Understanding the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats lies in their surprised responses. Both the sheep and the goats respond, "When did we see you in need and help you?" (verses 37-39, 44). This parable contains two lessons.

The first lesson is that neither the sheep nor the goats are surprised at the place Christ assigns them. A careful reading of the parable shows that clearly. They do not respond to the place that Christ assigns them, but they express surprise at the reasons He gives for His judgment. A vital question to Christians is, on what does He base his judgment? *The basis of His judgment is how they treated Christ!* Of course, their treatment of Christ manifests itself in how they treated those in whom Christ lived, those who had His Spirit.

The second lesson is no less important than the first. [Jesus](#), our Judge, eliminates the possibility of hypocrisy obscuring His judgment of the sheep and the goats. If the goats had thought that treating their brothers in the [faith](#) would have gotten them into the Kingdom, they would have done it. What is the lesson? *Jesus is interested in [love](#) from the heart, not a false love.*

The true love of [God](#) is seen in the sheep. As the sheep respond to their brother's need, they are united in their distress and at the same time unwittingly, unconsciously, without hypocrisy, align themselves with Christ. Apparently, they are not even aware of what they were doing. This is a kind of love that cannot be faked or put on. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" ([John 13:35](#)).

The reaction of the goats is quite different. They have little sympathy for God's way and remain indifferent, [Laodicean](#), to their brethren. In so doing, they reject their Messiah, their King, since He lived in the people whom they would not serve. The goats are condemned because of their sins of omission.

Because they had developed their relationship with Christ through prayer, Bible study, fasting, and obedience, the sheep have love through a regular infusion of the Spirit of God. "[T]he love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us" ([Romans 5:5](#)). A godly life

always comes down to the basic things. The sheep are simply unconsciously and unaffectedly good, kind, sympathetic, and concerned, attributes of character that cannot be feigned.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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