



Daily Verse and Comment

Matthew 25:31-46

(31) "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. (32) All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. (33) And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. (34) Then the King will say to those on His right hand, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (35) for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; (36) I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me." (37) "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? (38) When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? (39) Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" (40) And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me." (41) "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: (42) for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; (43) I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me." (44) "Then they also will answer Him, 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?" (45) Then He will answer them, saying, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me." (46) And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

New King James 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

To learn more, see:

[The World, the Church, and Laodiceanism](#)

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