

FOUNDATION
Instruction About Eternal Judgment
Matthew 25:31-46

Matthew 25:31-46~³¹ “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; ³³ and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are 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 *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; ³⁶ 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, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You *something* to drink? ³⁸ And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? ³⁹ When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ ⁴⁰ The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even* the least of *them*, you did it to Me.’

⁴¹ “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been 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; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ ⁴⁶ These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

I. Introduction

Good morning, Brothers and Sisters. We have finally reached the end of our journal through the six elementary teachings about Christ ... the basic foundations that were laid down before maturity could be build on top of these foundations. As the author of Hebrews declared ...

Hebrews 6:1~¹ Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity ...

And that should be what we all desire ... that is, to grow up in Christ and not just to grow old in Christ. And many of us have grown old, for some of us, very old ... but the question is, “Have we grow up? Have we reached maturity?” The Apostle Paul instructed us that God has given the Church gifted people for the purpose of “building up the body of Christ ...”

Ephesians 4:13~¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man ... [NASB]

And there are two foundational teachings, in my opinion, that help motivate us to “go on to maturity”. They are the doctrine about Resurrection of the Dead (which we had looked at last week) and the doctrine about Eternal Judgment.

Now when we talk about Eternal Judgment many people get scared. I was talking to a friend about the Judgment of God and he responded, “Oh, that is a scary topic.” And it is, but it really isn’t for those whose trust is in the Lord ... for those who have been living righteously.

Please allow me to give you a few introductory thoughts about the Judgment of God.

1. First, the Righteous Prays for the judgment of God.

The righteous does not fear the judgment of God. In fact, the righteous will ask for God’s judgment on themselves and on others.

Psalm 35:24~²⁴ Judge me, O LORD my God, according to Your righteousness, And do not let them rejoice over me. (NASB)

Psalm 7:8~⁸ The LORD judges the peoples; judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me.

“Judge me, O Lord!” the Psalmist prays, “I am not afraid of Your judgment. I want it and desire it.”

And the reason that the righteous ask for God’s judgment is because the judgment of God is the vindication of those who are righteous ... that is to clear them of false accusations, to prove or declare them of their innocence.

Psalm 43:1~¹ Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people, from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me!

Oh, let me read one more ...

Psalm 54:1~¹ O God, save me by your name, and vindicate me by your might.

The righteous are able to pray such prayer of judgment on themselves is because they know they have lived righteously and have lived with integrity. It is not that they confess to have lived righteously. It is because they have lived righteously. So when the psalmist is victimized for his righteous living, he welcomes the judgment of God.

I wonder if you and I can pray such prayer. Can we ask God to judge us? And please note, it is not to ask God to judge other people (and in some cases the Psalmist do asks such thing), but it is to ask God to judge us. And I think we should. At least the Apostle Paul instructed us to examine ourselves now before we appear before God later.

2 Corinthians 13:5~ ⁵ Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

2. Second, the Righteous Rejoices in the judgment of God.

Not only does the righteous welcomes and prays for the judgment of God, he rejoices in the judgment of God.

Psalm 48:11~ ¹¹ Let Mount Zion be glad! Let the daughters of Judah rejoice because of your judgments!

Psalm 97:8~ ⁸ Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments, O LORD.

The judgment of God makes him glad. The judgment of God may even make him dance. There is no fear of judgment for those who are following Jesus. There is only rejoicing.

3. Third, the judgment of God is Righteous.

Why such comfort and confidence the righteous has in the Judgment of God? It is because the Judgment of God is righteous. Let me just read a few declarations of God's judgment from the Psalmist.

Psalm 9:8~ ⁸ And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity. (NASB)

Psalm 19:9~ ⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. (NASB)

Psalm 119:137~ ¹³⁷ Righteous are You, O LORD, And upright are Your judgments. (NASB)

The judgment of God will be fair. It will be righteous. We will not be treated unfairly. We will not be treated impartially. We take comfort that the Righteous Judge will be judging righteously. Everybody will get what they deserve.

II. The Eternal Judgment

When the Bible talks about judgment, some people think that judgment means punishment. This is not the case. Judgment does not mean punishment. Judgment means to make an assessment. It means to make a judiciary judgment or decision. This is why both the righteous and the wicked will appear before God and stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to be judged. Some, Jesus will vindicate. Some Jesus will punish.

Thus, enter Matthew 25 when Jesus pulled back the curtain of heaven to reveal the time of judgment that is to come. He does this through a parable known as the Parable of the Sheep and Goats.

1. First, this parable is about Eternal Judgment.

We see this in the last verse of the parable.

Matthew 25:46~ ⁴⁶And these [that is the wicked] will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

So this parable is not about temporal judgment in this time, but about the last judgment that is to come ... the Eternal Judgment.

2. Second, the Eternal Judgment occurs on One Day.

Matthew 25:31-33~ ³¹“When the Son of Man [Jesus] comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³²Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

There will come one day when Jesus “comes” ... that is, when He returns, he will gather together both the righteous and the wicked. The righteous is known as the “sheep” in this parable. And the wicked is known as “goats”.

Now, there is a teaching out there that there are two days of judgment - one day for the righteous and another day for the wicked, separated by a thousand year. In other words, some people teach that Jesus will raise the righteous first and then judge them. Then one thousand year later, after what is known as the Millennial Kingdom, Jesus will raise the wicked and judge them.

The Bible does not really teach that. The Bible teaches that there is one day when both the righteous and the wicked will appear before the Judgment Seat of Jesus.

Jesus mentioned this “one day” in John 5 verses 28-29.

John 5:28-29~ ²⁸Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

There is “one hour” when all who are in the grave will be resurrected – both the righteous who will receive life and the wicked who will receive judgment. One Hour ... One Day.

3. Third, the Eternal Judgment is based on Works.

This is extremely important here. The judgment is NOT based on our confession. The judgment is NOT based on what we believe or say we believe. The judgment is based on our works ... on our deeds ... on what we have done.

This is the teaching throughout the New Testament. And before we go to Matthew 25, listen to some of the lessons from Jesus and the Apostles concerning judgment by works.

Jesus says that we will be judged by the good or evil that we have done.

John 5:28-29~²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Paul writes that we will be judged according to our works, rather we are doing well for others or we are seeking wellness for ourselves.

Romans 2:6-8~⁶ He will render to each one according to his works: ⁷ to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; ⁸ but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

2 Corinthians 5:10~¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Peter chimes in as well, penning that we are judged impartially according to our deeds.

1 Peter 1:17~¹⁷ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,

The Apostle Paul says we will be judged by our deeds. The Apostle Peter says the same thing, that we will be held accountable by what we have done. And now, the Apostle John also exhorts us that we will be judged according to what we have done in the body.

Revelation 20:12~¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

The Eternal Judgment is based on our works ... on our deeds. Why? Because confession is subjective. You can hear it, but you cannot see it. Faith is subjective. Someone can say they have faith, but how do you know? What is NOT subjective and what you and I can see is our works.

Many a man confesses to be faithful, but do we see that in his doings. Many a people confess to love God, but do we see that in their deeds. So when we stand before the

Judgment Seat of Christ, and our works lay bear before us and Jesus, we stand in silent to wait for His verdict.

Now, I am NOT talking about salvation by works. Salvation is always by faith. But that faith that we have will always produce some type of works. ALWAYS. I cannot see your faith, but I can see your works.

4. Fourth, Eternal Judgment is about our treatment of our Brothers.

What kind of works are we talking about? Let's get really specific here so we are not in confusion about the Judgment and be ashamed at the Judgment Seat.

Some people would say, "Well, I come to Church every Sunday, that should earn me some brownie points, right?" Nope.

"Well, I read my Bible and I preach a good message. That should get me in the Kingdom, right?" Nope.

The work is based on how we treat our Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

Matthew 25:34-36~³⁴ 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. ³⁵ 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, 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 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ 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.'

Our relationship to our Brothers and Sisters in Christ are of extreme important to God and to Jesus. In fact, it is a measurement by which we truly love God or not. We can confess that we love God, and we can even confess that we love one another. But whether we truly do love God or love each other is seen in how we treat our Brothers and Sisters.

1 John 4:20-21~²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Allow me to make this last statement ... it is true that we are judged by what we do. But it really about our character ... who we are. If we have Jesus in us, we will love as Jesus loves. We will do things because that is what Jesus would do.

Please notice that the sheep, the righteous, does not even know that they are serving Jesus. It is not for show ... “look how spiritual I am.” It is not even to earn rewards ... “I better get my mason when Jesus returns.” The righteous does these things to his brothers and sisters because it is who he is. The love of Christ is in him. He takes care of his brothers and sisters whether anyone does it or not.

Please notice these wicked goats. They are opposite. “Well, Lord, if I had known that was You, I would have helped.” It is their neglect of the Brothers and Sisters that condemned them.

Our Church is called Forgiven Life because of this very reason. It is not by accident that we picked this name. We wanted everyone to remember every time we come here and every time we talk about our Church, that our relationship is of utmost important. Our relationship with the Father and our relationship with Jesus and our relationship with one another are of utmost important. They are one and the same.

To me, that is just a cause and a motivation to press on toward maturity.

III. Conclusion

So in conclusion, there are several things to note about the Eternal Judgment

1. Eternal Judgment will happen on one day where both the righteous and the wicked are resurrection and judged.
2. Eternal Judgment is based on our works and deeds.
3. Eternal Judgment is about how we treat our Brothers and Sisters. Do we treat them with disdain, or do we treat them with devotion.

IV. The Blessing

Presider: May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. May the love of our Lord Jesus Christ be unto you.

Congregation: And also to you.