

# The Sheep and the Goats

## Stories to be Shaped by—part 6

Matt. 25:31-46

May 1, 2016

### **DAY 1: Jesus: Messiah, God, Judge and King**

*Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.*

1. When Jesus comes back, it will be a spectacular sight! The scriptures declare that we will not see Him as the baby in the manger or the carpenter from Nazareth.

2. "Son of Man," was the Old Testament term of the Messiah. (Daniel 7:13-14)

3. Jesus gives us different pictures of His divinity! Which pictures of divinity strike you most, from v. 31?

4. One chapter earlier, Jesus is more descriptive of His coming...

*Matthew 24:30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.*

*<sup>31</sup> And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*

5. The language of divinity. His power, great glory, His angels, His elect. Which of these pictures of divinity strikes you most from Matt. 24:30-31?

*Matthew 25:32 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.*

6. Here is another picture of His divinity: Judge. The "meek and mild" Jesus our culture likes to talk about is also the God of final judgment.

*Matthew 25:33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

*Matthew 25:34 "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.*

7. King. This is a reference to His divine authority.

8. Though this parable is wrapped around final judgment, the setting is Jesus' right to be King and Judge. In today's verses, what struck you most about Jesus?

## DAY 2: Not saved by works

*Matthew 25:33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

*Matthew 25:34 "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.*

*Matthew 25:35 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,  
<sup>36</sup> 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.'*

1. A superficial reading of this parable would give the impression that salvation is earned, or that if you do good works, you'll be saved. The scripture is adamantly clear that no one is saved because of "good works."

2. Jesus simply states the things they did that marked the demarcation point between the two sides: ministering to people! The danger of these verses is reading out of context. Taken out of context, someone could read these verses and start preaching a gospel of works, that the method, the formula for getting to heaven is feeding, offering drink, practicing hospitality, clothing, visiting the ill and the prisoner. Of course we know that's not the method at all. The totality of Scripture clearly shows salvation is by grace only, through faith only and that not of works.

*Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God --*

*<sup>9</sup> not because of works, lest any man should boast.*

*<sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

*Titus 3:5 ...he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit,*

3. Circle the words and phrases that indicate that we are saved by grace through faith.

4. Underline the words and phrases that indicate that we are not saved by works.

5. The totality of Scripture also clearly shows that God's concern is that we minister to folks. He often speaks of the care of widow and orphans. Jesus quoted about freeing the prisoners when He began His ministry, He suffered the little children to come to Him.

*James 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.*

6. One evidence of our faith is our service to people. Would your service to people be an indicator of your faith?

### **DAY 3: Sheep—uncalculating**

*Matthew 25:35 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,*

*<sup>36</sup> 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.'*

1. As in so many of Jesus' parables, there is the sudden twist that no one saw coming. Here comes one of them!

*Matthew 25:37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?"*

*<sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?"*

*<sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'*

2. They did not think they were serving, loving and helping Christ, and thereby earning some kind of merit. They hardly thought of themselves as doing anything significant.

3. Their innocence argues the very point that they were not serving to get into heaven, or because they hoped their "good deeds would outweigh their bad deeds."

4. They were doing these acts of service because important things had changed **in their hearts!**

*Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.*

*<sup>15</sup> Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.*

*<sup>16</sup> Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

*1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.*

*<sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

*<sup>12</sup> No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.*

5. The sheep served and loved because they had grown and learned enough to know that this was what they were supposed to do because of the love they had for God. They were expressing their love for the Lord by following His commands that we love one another. They weren't doing it because they had to or because they KNEW they were doing it as unto Jesus, they were just doing it because it was the right thing to do.

*Matthew 25:40 "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.'*

6. Here is the second twist! While the sheep thought they were loving and serving ordinary people like them, they were actually serving Jesus! What do you suppose struck them about that?

## **DAY 4: Goats—calculating**

*Matthew 25:34 "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.*

*Matthew 25:41 "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**.*

1. When Jesus spoke to the sheep, He told them they had been *blessed by my Father*. In contrast, to the goats, He does **not** say, "*you are cursed **by the Father**.*"
2. People who will not bow the knee to God, who will not let God be their God *curse themselves*. The very One who can give them what they most need and most want is excluded from His rightful place in their hearts. As Romans 1 teaches, when a person will not have God on His terms, he is left to himself to make his way. The ultimate results are tragic.
4. In v. 40, Jesus tells us that the kingdom was prepared for the sheep, but verse 41 does not state that the everlasting fire was prepared for the goats. It was prepared for the devil and his angels (Rev. 20:10). God never prepared hell for people.
5. If sinners listen to Satan and follow his ways, they will end up where he ends up.

*Ephesians 2:1 And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins<sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, **following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience**.*

<sup>3</sup>*Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

*Matthew 25:42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,<sup>43</sup> 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.'*

*Matthew 25:44 "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?'*

6. Their attitude was the polar opposite of the sheep. "If we had known it was you, we would have done something significant!" These are people who help as long as it is convenient or don't have to sacrifice anything. They will serve if it's fulfilling, rewarding, or if they can pat themselves on the back. To help like that is really not to help. People sense why you're helping, and if they sense you're there for any reason that has to do with yourself, your sunk. While we may think we're "serving," we're really pandering to our own self-esteem. It is thinly disguised self-centeredness. This illustrates what Isaiah says about fallen human nature:

*Isaiah 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.*

<sup>7</sup>*No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins.*

*Matthew 25:45 "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.'<sup>46</sup> "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*

## **DAY 5: Jesus is coming again;**

1. Fallen mankind hates the idea of a judgment, rejects that God is “judge.”
2. Ironically, fallen man still pines for justice. Rightly so! After “the bad guy” gets caught at something you often hear these words, said with rightful glee, “At last, justice prevails.”
3. Fallen man yearns to know that what is good will be rewarded, and rightly so. We want good to triumph over evil.
4. The bible says that God is sovereign, and that eventually, all those things will be done!!!
5. In addition, Revelation tells us that Christ will make all things new! Past tears, suffering, pain, wrongs done to you, etc. will finally display their redemptive purpose IN YOU!
6. Let’s finish with a psalm from the Old Testament, that looks forward to the day that we’ve studied this week!

*Psalms 110:1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."*

*<sup>2</sup> The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies.*

*<sup>3</sup> Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the womb of the dawn you will receive the dew of your youth.*

*<sup>4</sup> The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."*

7. We are privy to a conversation between God the Father and God the Son! What things struck you about their conversation, in vv. 1-4?

*Psalm 110:5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.*

*<sup>6</sup> He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.*

*<sup>7</sup> He will drink from a brook beside the way; therefore he will lift up his head.*

8. What is your biggest takeaway from this week’s devotions?