

Matthew 25:31-46 NAS

The Open Declaration of *Faith* or *No Faith!*

Sunday, November 23 at 8:00 & 10:45

Last Sunday in the Church Year – 2014

Worship with us on Thanksgiving Eve at 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Let's go back to when Jesus initially told the account of the sheep and the goats:

- It was Tuesday of Holy Week; in less than three days Jesus would lay down His life to *seal His victory over sin, death, and the devil.*
- It is possible that Jesus *publicly* taught more *on that Tuesday* than on any other day of His life.
- This account of the sheep and the goats ♦was Jesus' *final teaching on that Tuesday* and ♦seems to be the *final public teaching of Jesus' entire ministry.*
- In this teaching Jesus was looking ahead to ♦the day of His return and ♦the open declaration He would make about each person: **Faith** or **No Faith**

1. **The Separating:** 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.”** // *Most sheep* have wool and no beards; *most goats* have hair and beards. There are also differences between believers and non-believers: Believers are ♦sorry for their sins, ♦trust in Jesus as their Savior, and ♦abide in God's Word; then they desire to glorify God in their lives. Non-believers are lacking in *one*

or more of those important realities. When Jesus comes He, *who knows every heart*, will do the separating.

2. **The Welcoming In:** ³⁴ **“Then the King will say to those on his right [the sheep], ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’”** // A person *with whom we have a relationship* must die for us to receive an inheritance. **Jesus died for us and for all;** when He comes we will receive our inheritance – *because of our saving relationship with Him.*
 - a. The reasoning: Jesus said: 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.”** // Jesus knows **WHAT** we have done and **WHY** we have done it! *For those with faith which resulted in action*, Jesus will say: **“Come in.”** He will ♦*see their faith* and ♦*point to their properly motivated deeds.* The Bible says: **“And without faith it is impossible to please Him [God]...”** (Heb. 11:6 NAS)
 - b. The confusion: 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?’”** // Those who believe in Jesus have *no reason* to keep track of their good deeds; *they know heaven is a gift (Rom. 6:23).* As a healthy

apple tree naturally produces apples, so *healthy believers naturally help people who are in need.*

- c. The explanation: 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.”** // Upon knowing Jesus as Savior, *we undergo an internal transformation; we begin to care more about God’s will than our will, so we begin to care more about the needs of others and less about our own needs.*
3. **The Sending Away:** ⁴¹ **“Then he will say to those on his left [the goats], ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”** // How do people become cursed? Paul told us in [Galatians 3](#): If anyone tries *in full* or *in part* to earn his way to heaven, *he is cursed* (10). Here are two reasons: (1) No one can perfectly keep God’s Law and (2) anyone who tries to do so *for heaven* is automatically rejecting Jesus as His Savior ([Gal. 5:4](#))! The eternal fire is for the devil and his angels, *those who fought against God and lost*. Those who reject Jesus, *who is the winner over the devil*, automatically become members of the losing team!
- a. The reasoning: Jesus said: 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.”** // *Selfishness is sin; they go together. When people are without Jesus, they tend to be like a dead apple tree which produces no fruit* ([John 15:6](#)).

- b. The confusion: 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?’”** // Such people are *without repentance* and *without faith*, so they didn’t see or *respond* to those in need; instead, *their time and efforts were focused on self.*
- c. The explanation: 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.’”** // So Jesus will basically say: Since such doing – *which is done with God-pleasing motivation* – can only come from faith, you have No Faith!

Conclusion: ⁴⁶ **“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”** // Jesus has told us what will happen when He comes back: Some will be welcomed in, the others will be sent away:

- The sheep are those who are ♦sorry for their sins, ♦trust in Jesus as their Savior, and ♦abide in God’s Word; then, *as a result*, they seek to glorify God in their lives. The goats are those who are lacking in *one or more* of those essential realities.
- The sheep have faith; *from faith comes works.*
- The goats have no faith; *from no faith comes no works* – at least not works which are pleasing to God.

Now, *knowing that eternity is coming and that Jesus is the only way to life* ([John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#)), may God ♦keep us in Christ and ♦use us to warn others – *before it is too late!* And all God’s people said: **Amen!**