

When the Hidden King Is Revealed

Matthew 25:31–46

I. Introduction

A. Read the passage, pray

B. Review:

1. At the end of Chapter 24, we are told to be ready, faithful, and wise
2. Chapter 25 tells us what that means: The Parable of the 10 virgins tells us to be prepared for the return of King Jesus. The Parable of the Talents explains that this means being faithful with what God has entrusted us – our gifts and our resources. And today’s parable, the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, tells us what that faithfulness entails.

II. The King Who Comes in Glory (Matthew 25: 31–33)

- A. The Son of Man appears as Judge — the hidden King now unveiled.
- B. “All the nations” gathered before Him (v. 32) fulfills both prophecy (Dan 7; Joel 3) and mission (Matt 28:19).
- C. His judgment is universal in scope but personal in application — He separates each one like a shepherd with sheep and goats.
- D. Key truth: The One who will judge the nations is the same One who now calls the church to them.

III. Reversal of Expectations

A. The Surprise of the Righteous (Matthew 25:34-40)

1. The Righteous never realized their mercy was ministry to the king- their love was not calculated
2. The two greatest commandments (Matthew 22:35-39) meet in the same act.
3. The mystery of union with Christ. Love of God intersects with love of neighbor because Christ is present with his people (Matthew 1:23).
4. Key Truth: Every deed of compassion toward Christ's people is fellowship w/Christ Himself.
5. Question: "the least of these my brothers" – Christians or generic neighbor?
 - a. Exegetically, has to be Christians
 - b. But we do not know who truly belongs to Christ (Hebrews 13:1-3)
 - c. Draw analogy w/predestination (God knows who are His elect, but we don't, so we preach the gospel to everyone; God knows who are His people, but we don't, so we show love to whomever we can, whenever we can)
 - d. Galatians 6:10

B. The condemnation of the indifferent (Matthew 25:41-46)

1. The wicked are equally surprised, but their ignorance is defensive
2. Faith without mercy, "orthodoxy" without love
3. Their view of God is ultimately like that of the 5 foolish virgins and the man who hid the talent in the ground – they are proximate to Christ's people, but not really a part of them.

4. Neglect of the least is rejection of the Lord; love withheld from His people is love withheld from Him.

C. How is this not legalism/works righteousness?

IV. The Mission and Mercy of the King

- A. The same nations gathered for judgment are those Christ now sends us to in mercy — “Go and make disciples of all nations.”
- B. The church meets those nations first among the least: the hungry, the stranger, the poor.
- C. 1 Cor 1:26–29 explains God’s pattern — He chooses the weak, the lowly, the “nothings,” to display His wisdom.
- D. Serving the least is therefore both mission and worship:
 1. Mission — the gospel embodied in mercy.
 2. Worship — the King honored in His hidden presence
 3. The mission to the nations begins with love for the least, because the King we proclaim to the ends of the earth is already waiting for us in the faces of the poor and powerless.

V. Conclusion