Matthew Ch25v31-46 - Sheep and Goats

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 June 2022

Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0:00] I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Matthew's Gospel. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 25.

Today we come to a conclusion, as in we finish our studies in Matthew today. You may think, well, there's a few more chapters to go.
Well, there are, and we covered them over Easter time as we looked at the death and the resurrection of Christ. But today brings us, and I think the text that we're going to look at today brings us to a fitting conclusion.
If you've missed any of the talks along the way, they can be found on our church website. You can follow up there and listen to them. And also the little brochure, which gave you a summary of Matthew's Gospel.
I hope you all got one. If you didn't, you can ask me, and I can email it on to you. Well, let's read God's Word. Matthew, chapter 25, starting at verse 31, down to verse 46.
[1:25] Let's hear his words. When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.

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. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.
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.
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. I needed clothes and you clothed me.
I was ill, you looked after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer him, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you something to drink?
[2:40] When did we see you a stranger and invite you in or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison and go to visit you? The King will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

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. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat.
I was thirsty, you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger and you did not invite me in. I needed clothes and you did not clothe me.
I was ill and in prison and you did not look after me. They also will answer, Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or ill in prison and did not help you?
He will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.
[4:01] Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life. Well, let's pray together.

Father, our text this morning, what we have just read, is sombre, it's serious. and we pray that we would understand the depth of what you are saying to us individually about our eternal destiny and the way we live our lives as we wait for your return.
Father, by your Spirit, do a work in each of us so that we are changed by what we hear in such a way that we gladly welcome and look forward to the King's return.
We ask for your help to us. In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, Jesus has been teaching his disciples and us about his return.
Have a look back with me at chapter 24, verse 36, as he's been talking about his return. Jesus says, But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-08 19:57:56

the Father.
[5:44] The return of King Jesus is going to be a surprise. And as he continues through the rest of chapter 24, Jesus explains that he could come surprisingly early or he could come surprisingly late.

Verse 44, So you also must be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.
chapter 25, verse 13. Therefore, keep watch because you do not know the day or the hour.
Now, while we do not know when he will come, we do know what is going to happen. And to help us understand what's going to happen, we're going to look at three things, broken it down simply like this.
One judgment, two destinies, and three truths. One, two, three. One judgment, two destiny, and three truths.
[6:53] First, one judgment. Look at chapter 25, verse 31. When the Son of Man comes, so this is Jesus referring to himself, it's his favourite title for referring to himself, the Son of Man.

It's not just a name, it's a title, it's a position, and it refers to God's Son who has absolute power and supreme authority over all things and all people.
So, when the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. If we were to read on in Matthew, we would learn that in his remaining days, he would be mocked, despised, rejected, and killed.
But he's telling his disciples that when he comes again, after his resurrection and ascension, when he comes again, he will come as the supreme king, the ruler, and judge.
And two things are going to happen. First, he tells us in verse 32, that all the nations will be gathered before him.
[8:12] That's an extraordinary scene, isn't it? Every people group in the world, every language, and every religious group, no nation is going to be excluded.

All will be gathered and all will take their place before the Son of Man, including you and me, whatever your nationality might be.
The nations will be gathered. And second, the people will be separated. Look at verse 32 again, 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.
Now, we don't need to be farmers to know that goats are not sheep and sheep are not goats. So, just as a shepherd separates one from the other, so Jesus the King will separate the peoples of the world.
You see, when Jesus comes to judge, there will only be two kinds of people. Those who've been humbled and welcomed the King and those who've been proud and reject the King.
[9:33] And the question isn't going to be about what country you came from or what language you speak or what particular religion you are, but what did you do with Jesus?

What did you do with my Son? verse 33, he will put the sheep on his right, that is, the place of honour and the goats on his left.
Those who've bowed the knee to Jesus will be placed on his right and those who've turned their back on Jesus will be placed on his left. There's no third group here, is there?
There's no middle ground, no sitting on the fence. There's either sheep or goats. It's either right or left. It's either for Jesus or against Jesus.
Which one are you? Which one am I? Now of all the things that Jesus teaches, this is probably the one that we find the most difficult and most offensive.
[10:43] the idea of a supreme judge who's going to determine my eternal destiny is very uncomfortable.

We really don't like it. Well, before we rubbish the idea of a God who comes to judge, consider these three things. First, God's judgment is loving.
Imagine for a moment if our government suddenly decided that there's going to be no more laws in this country. There's going to be no more police, no more courts, no more judges.
We can all do as we please and nobody is going to be held accountable. Well, that would be a terrible way to live, wouldn't it? And it would be a terrible government.
It would be uncaring and unloving. You see, judgment or justice is loving. It cares for the weak and the poor.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-08 19:57:56

[11:48] It holds the wrongdoer to account. If God did nothing about injustice, it implies that he's complicit in it. So, having a judge who comes and will hold all people to account, well, that's good news.

That is loving. Second, God's judgment is just. The fact that there will be a separation is a sign that God is just.
His judgment is not arbitrary. God doesn't randomly with a blindfold pick and choose who's going to be on the left or right. Listen to how one author puts it, speaking about this separation.
You can follow along. They are consigned there first and foremost because they defy their maker and want to be at the center of the universe.
Hell is not filled with people who have already repented. It's filled with people who for all eternity still want to be the center of the universe.
[13:04] God gives people what they most want. So God's judgment is just.

And third, God's judgment is fair. I mean, as we think about it, some may feel that it's very unfair that God would give the same judgment to a Hitler as a regular guy who rejects God but doesn't go around murdering millions of people.
Well, scripture is clear, it seems, that there will be degrees of punishment. Jesus has already taught about this. Just go back to Matthew chapter 11.
Matthew chapter 11 verse 21. Here Jesus is talking about the different towns that he had gone to, where he had taught and preached and where he had done different miracles in these towns.
Chapter 11 verse 21. Woe to you, or judgment to you, Chorazin. Woe to you, Bethsaida.
[14:21] For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in these other towns, Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more, what?

It will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. It will be more bearable.
Let's go back to Matthew chapter 25. You see, judgment, while irreversible and unchangeable, it will be fair. It will be in proportion to what one has done.
So, there will be one judgment for all people, a judgment that is loving, just, and fair.
There can be no complaints. Second, there will be two destinies. You see, as God judges and as God separates, it will be to two eternal destinies.
[15:27] First, there's the kingdom of heaven, verse 34. Then the king will come and 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.

The kingdom of heaven is life as it should be for all eternity. The full and glorious experience of peace, joy, happiness, love, and kindness.
It will be the absence of despair and darkness and hopelessness, no more sin, no more evil. It will be the realization of the father's promised inheritance of no more sorrow, no more pain, no more death, no more curse.
It will be a kingdom filled with the infinite beauty of God and the uncontainable delight of God's children. This is the guaranteed destiny for all those who bowed the knee to King Jesus.
But there's also the fire of hell. Hell is not, as many people like to think, an eternal party with your best buddies.
[16:56] It's everything that is opposite to the kingdom of heaven. It's life separated from God for all eternity. Look what Jesus says in verse 41.

Say to those on his left, depart from me or be separated from me, you who are cursed. There is no blessing.
It's a living death. You see, to be separated from God is to be separated from the source of love and beauty and laughter and joy and happiness.
It's the absence of friendship, pleasure and delight. It's an eternal cycle of evil and sin where we are filled with guilt and shame and the impossibility of forgiveness or release.
peace. The most common word used to describe hell is fire. Not because it's a literal fire, I don't think.
[18:04] I think it's metaphorical here because Jesus also talks about it being a place of darkness. Well, how can it be darkness if you have fire at the same time?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-08 19:57:56

I think it best explains the destructive torment that hell is. There's nothing good about it. And sadly, this is the guaranteed destiny of all who turn their back on King Jesus.
So there will be two destinies summed up in verse 46. Then they will go away to eternal punishment but the righteous to eternal life.
No appeal, no retrial, a final and forever judgment. Now this is difficult for us, isn't it?
It's not something I would naturally choose to speak about. It's difficult because, well, we're concerned, aren't we?
[19:18] We're concerned about ourselves but perhaps we're concerned for our loved ones. Friends and family who reject Jesus as King and insist on living their own way.

And our desperate desire is that they too would enjoy the kingdom of heaven rather than suffer the fire of hell. Well, let's not be in despair because your desire for your loved ones is God's desire too. Look at what God says about heaven and what he says about hell. Look closely at verse 34. He says, come you who are blessed by my father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.
God's longing in God's heart is that we would be in his eternal kingdom that he's been preparing for his people. people. Now look at verse 41.
He will say to those on his left, depart from me, you who are accursed into the eternal fire, prepared for who? The devil and his angels, the fallen angels.
[20:44] God's desire is to punish the devil and his minions. So can you see the difference there between those two verses? He has prepared heaven for us and prepared hell for Satan.

his desire is that we would enjoy the kingdom and not have to suffer hell. That's his desire.
And to make that all possible, what did he do? God sent his son Jesus to save us. That's what we've been looking at through Matthew's gospel. He is the God-man who's come to serve and save us by suffering for us.
Let me read to you from Becky Pippert who summarises it like this as we think about the sufferings of Christ on our behalf.
This is what she says. Just as sin separates us from God's loving presence, so Jesus was separated from that loving presence.
[21:55] To pay the price for human sin, Jesus had to experience the utter anguish and abandonment of being forsaken by his father and bearing his judgment for our sin.

That is what hell is. To be severed from the loving presence of God. And hell is what Jesus' agony was about because through all eternity the son of God had never known a moment apart from the love of his father.
God is not a cruel tyrant delighting in crushing people to hell.
He is a loving father longing to rescue people for heaven. God so when you cry out from your heart for your loved ones when you pray for their salvation you are just beginning to touch and experience the eternal loving pursuit of God who longs that none would perish perish.
But that all would come to repentance. So one judgment two destinies and three truths that we need to look at.
[23:28] You see if Jesus is going to come again and he's going to judge us and there's going to be a separation of all people how does he make his judgment?

How does he base his judgment? Well let's consider three things. First we must remember that we are always saved by grace.
At a first reading as you perhaps listen to this text as it was read it seems like we're judged on the basis of what we do or don't do. So look at verse 34.
Jesus says come you who are blessed by my father take your inheritance the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world because or 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. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was ill and you looked after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me.
[24:41] It's the same in verse 41. Jesus will say depart from me you who are cursed to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Why? Because I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat and I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink and so on. Now that all sounds like we're judged by our performance doesn't it?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-08 19:57:56

If I've done good things then I'll be in the kingdom of heaven. But if I haven't done enough good things then I'll end up in the fire of hell. Well no, Jesus hasn't changed the entry requirements into his kingdom.
It's never about what we can do. It's always about what God has done for us. Let's just go back and look at a few of the things Jesus has been teaching.
Follow with me as we trace these verses. Chapter 4, verse 17. Chapter 4, verse 17. He'd been talking about the darkness that the world is in, the shadow of death, and he comes as a light into that darkness.
[26:09] Verse 17, from that time on Jesus began to preach, repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near. Repentance is always turning from yourself and turning to Jesus.

It's trusting in him and what he does for you. Chapter 5, verse 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Again, it's not what you can offer, but it's about recognizing your poverty of spirit, that you have nothing to bring. Or chapter 11, verse 28.
Jesus' wonderful invitation, his compassion. Matthew 11, verse 28. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, weighed up because of your sin and guilt.
come to me and I will give you the rest. I'll take the burden off you and I'll give you rest. Chapter 18, verse 3.
[27:23] 18, verse 3.

And Jesus said, truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
The context here are infants, little toddlers who are utterly dependent. They cannot look after themselves or care for themselves.
They need somebody else. They are utterly dependent. And so we come utterly dependent upon God our Father.
let's go back to Matthew chapter 25. You see, Jesus hasn't changed his entry requirements into the kingdom.
[28:21] We are not judged by what we've done. I mean, look at the response of those who enter the kingdom in verse 37.

When Jesus has already gone through in, this is Matthew chapter 25, verse 37, he's told them of all the things they've done and they respond. The righteous will answer him, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you something to drink?
When was it that we saw you a stranger and invited you into our home or needing clothes and clothes you? I don't remember any time we did that for you. When did we see you ill or in prison and go to visit you?
Clearly, they're not doing things to try and get the Lord's attention. They didn't even think their works had been seen. They're shocked that their deeds have been noticed.
You see, entrance into the kingdom is always by grace. In other words, we're not judged on our performance, but the perfect performance of Christ who lived a perfect life for you and for me.
[29:39] So let's be clear about that. We are saved by grace. But second truth, evidence of faith. While our works can never earn our way into the kingdom, our deeds provide the evidence that we belong to the kingdom.

Say that again because this is key. Our works can never earn our way into the kingdom, but our deeds provide the evidence that we belong to the kingdom. And that's what Jesus is teaching here. You say, yes, I believe in Jesus. You talk about, yes, I've put my faith in Jesus. Well, that's brilliant. That's great. Where's the evidence?
How do I know that what you say with your words is true? answer, by the works you do.
So now our text begins to make sense. So again, look at verse 35. As Jesus says, I was hungry and you gave me something to eat.
[30:52] I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. Jesus is saying you're welcomed into the kingdom and here's the evidence that you belong to the kingdom. Here's the evidence of your faith.

you said you had faith. Now here's the demonstration of that faith. You see, God's grace doesn't mean that we live as we please and well, I can do whatever I like and it's God's job just to forgive me.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-08 19:57:56

No, God's grace radically changes us from the inside and gives us a new way to live, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. So when we are judged, Jesus will judge on the evidence of a changed life.
So, evidence of faith. And the third truth is love for the family. you see, the evidence that Jesus will look for, or the evidence that will be on display, is an intentional love for our brothers and sisters.
Look at verse 37. The righteous will answer Jesus, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in?
[32:20] Or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison and go to visit you? The king will reply, truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

You see, Jesus here is speaking of his solidarity and unity with his people. Jesus identifies with his church, with his people so much that to act in love towards your brother or sister is to demonstrate your love for Jesus.
So can we feel the impact of his words? He says, you say that you love me, will the evidence that you love me will be seen in the way that you love the people in your church.
That's going to be the standard. Love for Jesus is always love for your brother and sister. So when we stand before King Jesus, I imagine one of the questions will be, do you love me?
Well, of course I love you, Jesus. didn't I tell you in my prayers and in the songs that I sang? No. Did you love me by caring and visiting and serving and providing for your brothers and sisters in Carigoline Baptist Church?
[33:58] Did you take time to talk to, and did you take time to get to know and did you help them?

You see, when we love one another, we are demonstrating our love for Jesus. And of course, this is also true for those who are separated in the fire of hell.
Look at verse 44. They will answer, Lord, look, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or ill or in prison and did not help you?
He will reply, truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for the one of the least of these, you did not do for me. they will be judged on the basis of how they treated God's people, the church.
Because you didn't love my people, because you opposed and persecuted my children, because you spoke against the truth, against the church and made laws to hinder the work of my church, you will pay for it for all eternity.
[35:17] You see, to stand against God's people is to stand against King Jesus. So how we treat our brothers and sisters is how we treat King Jesus.

Love for the church family matters deeply. It matters deeply. So what's our response?
Where does this leave us? Well, I hope it leaves us running to the cross afresh. Because in coming to the cross, we see God's love towards us, don't we?
Well, we see God in the God-man, Jesus Christ, suffering hell for you and for me, separated from the Father on our behalf, so that we could enjoy the kingdom forever.
Our response is not to be one of despair, but one of running to the Father yet again in humble dependence, like little children, experiencing his love afresh, and asking him to change our hearts by his grace, so that we would love as he loved, that we would care for one another as he has cared for us.
[36:51] One judgment, two destinies, and three truths. Let's just take a moment to pause and to reflect and think about where we are today.

let's just take a moment quietness to do that. Let's just take a moment quietness to do that. once before let's try and you take a moment.
you you can 30 it it to you you you you you you you you you you this is how we know what love is Jesus Christ laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters Father God we are amazed at your incredible love towards us for suffering the depths of which you did taking on our sin and guilt and shame suffering the depths of hell so that by faith we would never be separated from God or his eternal kingdom
Father would you teach us afresh the extent of your love may it melt us and mould us and fill us with thanksgiving that it would fill our hearts with worship worship that overflows in love and good deeds towards those we are with this morning we thank you for our church family we thank you for the many acts of love that there are the many ways in which we serve one another the care the prayer the help Father may that continually grow and develop in our lives as an expression of our love to

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-08 19:57:56

you for all that you have done for us please help us we ask in Jesus name
Amen We're going to sing together We're going to sing together speaking together we're going to do something again at night including The Will and the Will not ró stock and the■■ ■ we're gonna ■■■ up so tune with us and click vem us we have to learn this and click and click and click and try

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-08 19:57:56