

THE END TIME COMING: “WIN”

THESIS: What Side Are You On?

TEXT: Matthew 25:31-46

OPEN: (Reading of *Ezekiel 1* which gives a glimpse of Heaven around the throne of God)

In **Matthew 25:31-46** let's discover how to “win” in the End Time coming by the way of the eternal blessed rather than the everlasting cursed.

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.*”

- **Glory** (Greek: *doxa*) means brilliance, honor, or splendor.

What happens when Jesus comes with His angels?

Matthew 25:32-33 “*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. ³³He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.*”

Historical: Sheep are mild whereas goats can be wild. When visiting Palestine, Dr. John Broadus reported seeing a shepherd leading his flock of white sheep and black goats all mingled together. When he turned into a valley, he faced his flock: “When a sheep came up, he tapped it with his long staff on the right side of the head, and it quickly moved off to his right; a goat he tapped on the other side, and it went to his left” (*Manners and Customs of Bible Lands*, p. 166-167). Sheep and goats mingle during the day while at pasture, but at night are separated. The Savior seeks to illustrate the truth that though righteous and wicked are now together, there will come a time of separation (*Manners and Customs of the Bible*, p. 379).

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.’*”

The inheritance is “the kingdom prepared for you.” **Inheritance** (Greek: *kleronomeo*) means to receive as one's own by virtue of birth/sonship—not because of a task accomplished or a price paid. God gives out of favor not debt.

When it comes to inheriting the kingdom “prepared for you since the creation of the world” (v34)—the Lord gives us access to all He possesses as our own—what's His is ours and what is ours is already His.

- **1 Corinthians 3:21b-23** “All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.”
- **1 Corinthians 15:51-53** “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.”
- **2 Corinthians 5:4b-5** “We (wish) to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come.”

- **Galatians 3:26-27, 29** “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ...If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

What awaits the “goats on the left”—representing the unruly and stubborn towards the will of God and thus uncaring about others?

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.’”

Scripture describes condemnation here as “the eternal fire.” Clearly, Jesus teaches there is a place called hell just as the Bible says there is also a Heaven. Elsewhere eternal damnation is described as:

- Unquenchable fire of hell...where the fire never goes out (*Mtt 3:12; 5:22; Mk 9:43*)
- Blackest darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (*Mtt 25:30; Jude 13*)
 - **Darkness** (Greek: *skotos*) means intense or utter despair and misery
- “Agony in this fire” (*Luke 16:24*) • Everlasting destruction (*2 Thes 1:9*)

Historical: Some translations refer to hell as the fire of Gehenna. “During the reigns of the wicked Ahaz and Manasseh, human sacrifices to the Ammonite false god Molech were offered there. It became a sort of perpetually burning city dump and later a figure for the place of final punishment” (Zondervan NIV Study Bible, p. 1476).

The Lord points out that the eternal fire is prepared for the devil and his angels. Apparently, it was created with them in mind but also becomes the destination of those who reject God. However, the Lord’s desire for mankind which is made in His image would enjoy the inheritance of the eternal kingdom yet some hate Him and that.

Insight from LeRoy Lawson: “Prince Machiavelli, contemplating the afterlife from his deathbed, long ago said, ‘I desire to go to hell, not to Heaven. In hell I shall enjoy the company of popes, kings and princes, but in Heaven are only beggars, monks, hermits and apostles.’ The Heavenly company seemed too tame for him; he had been accustomed to consorting with the world’s shakers and movers...Real love goes out of its way to be bothered by people that other people can’t be bothered with” (*Standard Bible Studies, Matthew*, p. 298, 302).

The opposite of light is darkness and there is no “in-between place” nor eternal non-existence. The opposite of God and Heaven is the devil and hell.

- **Death** (Greek: *thanatos*) is used of: (1) the separation of the soul (the spiritual part of man) from the body (the physical part of man), the latter ceasing to function and turning to dust; (2) the separation of man from God.

Quote from W.E. Vine: “Death is the opposite of life; it never denotes non-existence. As spiritual life is conscious existence in communion with God, so spiritual death is conscious existence in separation from God” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*, p. 276).

Some people are mistaken about Christianity. They think that to not believe in God and His Son Jesus Christ—one is cast into hell for it because the Lord is just mad about being rejected. However, Jesus sacrificially died on the cross to pay the penalty (make up) for our sins because God is loving, righteous, and just. If one rejects their only possible pardon which is through faith in Jesus, they forfeit eternity in Heaven. Therefore, condemnation in hell is not just about rejecting God—it’s that there’s no other means for forgiveness from sin other than Christ.

- **John 3:16-18** “For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only begotten Son.”
- **1 Timothy 2:5-6** “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time.”

Why are some people self-condemned despite God’s love?

- **John 3:19-20** “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”

Those who will not believe in Christ are self-condemned because the Lord has done all He can to grant eternal life (i.e. “gave up His one and only begotten Son”). If someone will not accept God’s gift of eternal life by receiving their pardon through faith in Christ—there is no other way or option to attain it.

- **John 3:35-36** “The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in His hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”

What makes one “right” or “left”...“sheep” or “goat”...“blessed” or “cursed” when Jesus comes in His glory with all the angels?

Matthew 25:34-40 “*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. ³⁵For 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, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you came to visit Me.’ ³⁷Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? ³⁸When did we see You a stranger and invite You in, or needing clothes and clothe You? ³⁹When did we see You sick or in prison and go to visit You? ⁴⁰The 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.’”*

Who will be on the right side of Jesus for eternal glory? It’ll be those who expect to meet Him, be judged by Him, and faithfully witness in words and works accordingly. The gospel and God’s people are about eternal salvation—the saving of souls for Heaven *and* earthly service to others. Good words of the gospel and good works inspired by the gospel are not exclusive of one another. Consider the following Scriptures:

- **1 Timothy 5:8** “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”
- **James 1:27** “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”
- **James 2:14-17** “What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

- **1 John 3:17-18** “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”

Insight from Alexander Strauch: “Christ wants us to associate with those who are poor and troubled. Christian hospitality extends to the unwanted and needy people of society. Some people are never invited into others’ homes because they are ‘problem’ people. Yet they, too, need our care and love. There are single people in our churches who need a family’s loving care. There are widowed people who eat alone every Sunday after gathering with the Lord’s people to hear of Christ’s love. There are troubled people who need attention. There are unpleasant neighbors who are uncomfortable to be around yet need our love and concern. Hospitality could be a means of winning these hurting people to the Savior. Your home could help meet some of these needs” (*Using Your Home For Christ*, p. 27).

Matthew 25:41-46 “Then the King 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. ⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, ⁴³I 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.’ ⁴⁴They 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?’ ⁴⁵He 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.’ ⁴⁶Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Insight (author unknown): “Religion may become unacceptable because some religious people cultivate a personal piety unrelated to love for their fellow man. There is the danger of cultivating inward religion and forgetting the needs of others. Kindness must flow from our love of God.”

The Lord takes it personally when we help or ignore the needy. He looks out for the “little guy.” Figurately speaking, He has a “weakness” for the weak. It’s understandable because mankind is created in the image of God.

- **Proverbs 14:31b** “He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.”
- **Proverbs 19:17** “He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward him for what he has done.”
- **Hebrews 6:10** “God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them.”

Illustration: (A “Why” story about suffering and sustenance)

Insight from LeRoy Lawson: “God does not allow us to reduce discipleship/belief to a narrow concern for (just our) personal ‘spirituality.’ Jesus believes a ‘spiritual’ person becomes involved in a very physical world, where people are hungry (and hurting) and frightened by their troubles” (*Standard Bible Studies, Matthew*, p. 300).

Video: (“Got Service?”)

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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.’”

CLOSE: With the End Time coming—what side are you currently on?