



“Caring for the Least”

Matthew 25:31-46

August 3, 2008

On the Throne

How would you describe Jesus? What imagery would you use? One of the most compelling images from His parables is that He will be the Judge. In this parable, Jesus refers to how He will be on the throne, and how He will judge between the sheep and the goats. This imagery is like that of Daniel, where Jesus, as the Son of Man comes in glory, that is, will be seen as He really is, as the exalted Son of God. All the nations, which means each and every person will come before Him for judgment. As Daniel saw in 7:14, *“The Son of Man was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and people of every language worshiped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”* In ancient times, sitting denoted a position of authority, so Jesus sitting on the heavenly throne suggests His complete authority. The idea here of inheritance is that of reward, that flows from having known and having served God. The importance of our relationship with God is stressed in Ezekiel 34:11, 17, where God says, *“For this is what the Sovereign Lord says, I myself will search for my sheep and look after them...I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats.”* Jesus will be in charge and will judge each of us. Kyrie eliason. Pleasing God.

Caring for the Least

This judgment will focus on how faithfully we have cared for the least among us. Jesus in fact, reiterates His connection to the least, saying, *“I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for the least of these, you did not do for me.”* Jesus is saying that our love for God must be concretely expressed in love for our neighbor. A pastor went to work with Mother Teresa. She asked him at the end of the day, *“Did you see Jesus today?”* In essence, she was saying that he should be able to see Jesus in the untouchables, in the least of Indian society. This idea reminds us of Galatians 3:28, where Paul says, *“There is neither slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”* We are all equally loved by God. Jesus died for each of us on the cross. No matter how society views us, we matter to God, you matter to God. Since each of us matter to God, each of us should matter to one another. I remember at the funeral of a homeless and mentally ill man, the family thanked Pastor Bill for loving him, when He was hard to love. As James tells us in 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 one's self from being polluted by the world.”* Jesus wants us to see people from His perspective, as being worth dying for, as being worth loving. There are no excuses. Each person matters deeply to God, and therefore must matter to us. Do they?