

## Bible Study for Christ the King Sunday November 22, 2020

Our texts for this Sunday are:

- Ephesians 1:15-23
- Matthew 25:31-46

**Opening Question:** When you think of Jesus as King, what images come to mind?

**Read Ephesians 1:15-23** <sup>15</sup>I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup>so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. <sup>20</sup>God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. <sup>22</sup>And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

What do you think this text is telling us?

What do you think “a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him” looks like?  
How might you recognize this in someone else?

**Read Matthew 25:31-46** <sup>31</sup>“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup>All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup>and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup>Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup>for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ <sup>37</sup>Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup>And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup>And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ <sup>40</sup>And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members

of my family, you did it to me.’<sup>41</sup> Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup>for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup>I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’<sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’<sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’<sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

This is a hard passage for a lot of people. How about you? Is there anything about the Parable of the Sheep and Goats that troubles you?

Whatever else this passage means, it plainly teaches that a day is coming when the Son of Man will judge “the nations.” What do you believe about this? Do you believe that history is headed toward a climactic, inescapable, conclusive day of judgment? Explain your answer.

How much or little does this coming judgment figure into the way you live from day to day? Are you at all concerned or apprehensive about this day of judgment? Why or why not?

What do you make of the fact that both the sheep and the goats express surprise about the standard by which they’ve been judged? How do you explain their surprise?

When we picture a shepherd separating sheep and goats, what do we picture? Does it make a difference in our thinking about what is going on if we think that sheep and goats are obviously different in many ways, or if we learn that sheep and goats may look very much alike? What difference does it make, and why?

How are Christian readers supposed to respond to this story, do we think? (e.g., should this story motivate us to be more charitable? Should it make us feel secure in God’s grace, or insecure about our eternal destiny, or ... ?) Why do we think that?

What do you think Jesus wanted to accomplish by telling this parable? What’s the message of this parable for you?

If our congregation could address one specific social need in our (metro) community, what would you choose and why?