

Introduction: (*Renewal Theology; J Rodman Williams.*)

- In Mt 25 we find the parable of three stewards who were tasked with taking care of the Master's goods while he was away. The first two did very good and received a reward. The third man did not invest the Master's goods, he buried it. And when the Master returned, what he had was taken from him and he was thrown into the darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- That is a very sobering parable that challenges us to use what God has given us wisely.
- The parable also sets up an even greater, in-depth, teaching by Jesus.
- Read: Mt 25:31-46. This passage poses two questions.
 - When did we do all of this?
 - When did we not do all of this?
 - *"And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"* (Matthew 25:40, ESV)
 - *"Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'"* (Matthew 25:45-46, ESV)
- I want us to consider a topic that I am not sure I have ever preached on...judgment.

I. Jesus the Judge

- A. Jesus is presented as the judge in Mt. 25:31: *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne."* (Matthew 25:31, ESV)
1. He will sit on His glorious throne! We need to think about this before moving on. Jesus comes in all his glory! The angels are with Him! He is sitting upon the supreme throne over all things! All glory! All dominion and power! All majesty—His now and forever more.
 2. Revelation 20 portrays this in an even more grander way: *"Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."* (Revelation 20:11-15, ESV)
 - a) Great white throne.
 - b) Earth and sky fled from away from Him.

- c) The dead stand before him!
 - d) The book of life is opened.
 - e) And each/**each** was judged according to what they had done. Rev. 20:12
 - f) It is the final judgement. This day stands appointed by God and is on the schedule.
- B. It is a day of reckoning.
- 1. In Mt 25, Jesus puts the sheep on His right, and on His left are the goats. It is a picture of His judging all people in a language that they would be very familiar with. This judgment is a separation for the purpose of reward according to what each man has done. *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."* (2 Corinthians 5:10, ESV)
 - 2. Jesus is the judge.
 - a) According to Rom 2:16 *"on that day when,... God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus."* (Romans 2:16, ESV)
 - b) It is a day appointed by God: *"because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; ..."* (Acts 17:31, ESV)
 - c) *"For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,"* (John 5:22, ESV)
 - 3. Let's not be narcissistic and think only of ourselves here. It is important that we see Jesus in all of His glory, having judged righteously and now handing out to each one according to how they have lived. Again, earth and sky fled and there was no place found for them.
- C. Angels and people will be judged.
- 1. Angels - Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4. Which had the fallen ones kept in darkness for this day.
 - 2. The focus of scripture is on people. One that day all people will appear before Him. Mt 25:32. *"He will render to each one according to his works:"* (Romans 2:6, ESV) See verses 7 and 8.
 - a) All people of all times will be raised. The books will be opened and if your name is not found in the book of life you are thrown into the lake of fire. Rev 20:15
 - b) Both believing and unbelieving.
 - (1) *"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."* (Daniel 12:2, ESV)
 - (2) *"...an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those*

who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28-29, ESV)

- c) The righteous and unrighteous upon death are already experiencing, at some level, the coming condemnation: Luke 16:19-31 Rich man and Lazarus. The thief next to Jesus, "Today you shall be with me in paradise." *"then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,"* (2 Peter 2:9, ESV)

II. The Purpose of Judgment *(Renewal Theology; J Rodman Williams.)*

- A. To show forth the righteousness of God's judgment in the salvation of the righteous and the condemnation of the unrighteous.
1. It is not a day to determine the eternal destinies of angels and people. It is a day to show forth God's righteousness and justice in what has already been determined.
 2. It is Christ, on His glorious throne, ruling and reigning.
 3. It is not a day to 'discover' if one's name is in the book of life. It either is or it isn't. That judgment has already been determined. IE. Sheep are sheep by their acts of love and compassion. Goats are goats, and the opposite, they are judged by what is written in the other books.
 4. Works are crucial on the day of judgment! They matter for eternity. *"He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury."* (Romans 2:6-8, ESV)
 5. As James says, "Faith without works is dead."
- B. To reveal what is in each person.
1. Jesus will judge the secrets of the heart. *"...He will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God."* (1 Corinthians 4:5, ESV) This addresses the motives of the heart.
 2. On the day of judgment there will be nothing external to hide what is internal. *"The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden."* (1 Timothy 5:24-25, ESV)
 3. It will even include our words: *"I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."* (Matthew 12:36-37, ESV) In another place, Matthew 12:34, Jesus speaks that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.
 4. On the day of judgment nothing will be hidden: motives, thoughts, imaginations, words, deed all will be exposed.

5. What is the difference between believers and unbelievers?
 - a) For the unbeliever it will be a time shame and guilt and grief.
 - b) For the believer it will be a time of disclosure as forgiven! This will cause the believer to be all the more astonished at the magnitude of the amazing grace of God!
- C. To hand our rewards and punishments.
 1. *"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done."* (Revelation 22:12, ESV) This is not eternal life of eternal punishment that is referenced here. It is rewards and punishments. *"The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.""* (Revelation 11:18, ESV)
 2. All believers will share in eternal life but the rewards to each will be different according to how they lived before God. Think in terms of least and greatest. Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7.
 - a) *"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."* (Matthew 5:12, ESV)
 - b) Mt 10:41-42 ...prophets reward, righteous reward, disciples reward.
 - c)

Conclusion:

- How we live and serve makes an eternal difference.
- We want to present a good life lived to His glory for Him.