

**Introduction:**

- Last week we looked at the topic of judgment from Mt 25:31-46. Goats on the left, sheep on the right.
  - Two points: 1) Jesus is the judge; and 2) the purpose of judgment. Finished with three types of rewards: Great reward, lesser reward, no reward.
- Just as there are rewards for the righteous there are punishments for the unrighteous. This is the subject of tonight's message.

**I. The Judgment of the Unrighteous**

- A. Just as there are levels of rewards for the righteous, there are I degrees of punishment for the unrighteous. Some punishment is more tolerable than others.
  1. As Jesus sent out the 12, he told them what would happen if a town didn't receive them...*"Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town."* (Matthew 10:15, ESV)
  2. Same for Choazin, Bethsaida, and Capernum. If the works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon they would have repented... *"But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you."* (Matthew 11:22, ESV)
  3. The issue at hand with each of these cities is how they responded to Jesus, to the Gospel. They were too hard hearted, calloused and indifferent.
  4. On the day of judgment, the punishment of the town in Jesus' day will be more severe than those of old, because the town in Jesus' day had Jesus, the Son of God in their midst—and they denied Him.
- B. Some punishment is described as greater or harder than others.
  1. The scribes receive greater condemnation/more severe judgment. *"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."* (Luke 20:46-47, ESV)
  2. Jesus in Mt speaking to scribes and pharisees, *"You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?"* (Matthew 23:33, ESV) Those who lead people will be judged more severely. Notice the movement from 'more tolerable' to severe.
  3. Jesus has no place for hypocrites in His Kingdom.
- C. Still others will be punished far more severely than other people will be.
  1. To the servant who beats, abuses and uses fellow servants. *"the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful."* (Luke 12:46, ESV)
  2. So this is telling us that there will be degrees of punishment in the life to come. None

of them are good and all of them are still eternal separation from God.

- a) It tells us that if you refuse the Gospel/refuse Jesus this is your eternal fate... punishment.
- b) It is telling us that those who have a position of responsibility and abuse it will be more severely punished.

## II. What Is the Standard of Judgment?

A. How will people be judged? I believe the scripture reveals three ways that unbelievers will be judged. One, is an inward witness. Two, the law given to Israel. Three, God's will revealed in Christ.

### 1. The inward witness.

- a) This is simply to say that humanity seems to have written on its heart a law of good and evil.
- b) Internally there seems to be something that helps us tell the difference between right and wrong.
- c) *"For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them"* (Romans 2:14-15, ESV) Humanity will be judged by this internal witness.
- d) Because of this inward witness they have a responsibility to walk accordingly.

### 2. The witness of the law.

- a) The Jewish people who have been entrusted with the law/the counsel of God/the voice of the Lord, they will be judged by it. *"For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law."* (Romans 2:12, ESV)
- b) The Jewish people who have been given the law will be judged more harshly than the gentiles without the law, because they have great responsibility according to what they have been given.
- c) Just like people with the inward witness can move further and further away from God so can one who has been entrusted with the law.
- d) Israel will stand and be judged by the very law God gave them. And the law will not save them because they reject the One who came to fulfill the law and prophets. *"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope."* (John 5:45, ESV)

### 3. The third standard of witness is Jesus Himself

- a) *"The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day."* (John 12:48, ESV)
- b) His word is the final judge. How are you lining up with it?

- c) Therefore we are moving from inward witness, to the law, to Word of Jesus.
  - (1) The word judges the believer
  - (2) The word judges the sinner.
- d) Sermon on the Mount is way beyond the law. *"You have heard...but I say..."*  
The Word deals with the heart!
- e) Watch this: *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."*  
(Matthew 24:35, ESV). *"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."* (Revelation 20:11, ESV)

### III. Where is the First Judgment?

- A. The Bible is very clear when it speaks of the Last Judgement. But where is the first judgment?
  - 1. Christ in His first coming has already judged the world. *"Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out."* (John 12:31, ESV)
  - 2. *"Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.""* (John 9:39, ESV)
  - 3. "The world was being judged by its reaction to Him." J Rodman Williams, Renewal Theology.
  - 4. *"And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed."* (John 3:19-20, ESV)
- B. The first judgment is clearly when Light Himself came into our dark world.
  - 1. Demons screamed at Him before He showed up.
  - 2. The very ones who crucified Jesus, thinking that they were judging Him were themselves being judged.
  - 3. This judgment continues, every moment, until the final judgment. Then, good and evil will be separated, righteousness and unrighteousness separated. Matthew 13, both grow together until that day, then the angels will separate the wheat from the tares.

### Conclusion:

- For the believer judgment will be a time of disclosure too but what is disclosed is presented as forgiven! This will cause the believer to be all the more astonished at the magnitude of the amazing grace of God!
- There will be levels of punishment but none are nowhere close to being satisfying for an opportunity to choose sin. IE. If you are trying to straddle the fence the pain is the same when you fall.
- All humanity is judged daily simply by the presence of Christ in our world.

