

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church

Last Judgment—series A.

(3rd from last Sunday of the Church Year)

Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Shultz

Matthew 25:31-46 November 6, 2011



The Sheep and the Goats

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² 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. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 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. ³⁵ For 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, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' ³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' ⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' 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. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I 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.' ⁴⁴ "They 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?' ⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' ⁴⁶ "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

This world is full of judges. If you watch the TV show *Sing-off* – there are singing groups – some with as many as 20 guys – some as small as 5. They sing acapella. Then three judges tell them what they did very well – and what they could do a little bit better. Then – they vote someone off the island. They sing a good-bye song – and it's on to next week! There is *American Idol* – again judges and people get voted off. There's *X-Factor* – singers – voted off. There's *Chopped* on the Food Network. Again three judges – sometimes painfully honest remarks – *your chicken is raw – or you didn't turn your cutting board over – between raw juice and cooked meat. I would be risking my health to eat what you are serving.* Again people get voted off! If you have an evaluation at your job – if you have a performance review – you get judged! Someone tells you what you did well. Then they tell you where you need to do better! It's hard

to be judged – by your peers – by your superiors. Sometimes – sinfully so – we are quick to judge people. We see someone – look them over and decide – “I don’t think I like you!” That’s sinful. That’s wrong. There is one Judgment that is more important than all the other judgments in the world put together! That’s the judgment that’s coming at the end of the world. This Last Judgment Sunday God’s Word reminds us:

The Son of Man Comes In Glory!

1. Unbelievers will know eternal dying

2. The righteous will know eternal life.

As we catch up with the Lord Jesus in spirit today – Jesus’ brief – 3 year public ministry is fast coming to an end. Appreciate the context! Matthew chapter 21 – Palm Sunday – Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a little donkey! People wave palm branches. Little children sing, “Hosanna!” Jesus went to cleanse the Temple – the way he did at the start of his public ministry. **He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. “It is written,” he said to them, “My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”** Jesus made the fig tree wither immediately! The chief priests and the elders interrupted Jesus’ teaching in the Temple courtyards. Jesus enemies tried again and again to discredit him. Should you pay taxes to Caesar the accursed Roman Emperor or not? You know the answer! **“Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”** What about someone widowed 7 times – who is the spouse in Heaven? You know that answer, too. We aren’t married in Heaven the same way we are on earth! Which is the greatest commandment? You know the answer to that, too! The most important commandment is **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.”** Chapter 23 – Jesus said seven times, **“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!”** Jesus alone could say that – because Jesus could see into their hearts. Jesus saw the dry rot – the filth and gross evil that infected their hearts – and he told them very plainly! Chapter 24 Jesus said the massive stones of Solomon and Herod’s Temple would not be left one upon another. Jesus talks about the horrible pain and grief of the End Times. Jesus said, **“It those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.”** As terrible as they will be Jesus said, **“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.”** Jesus remains in control. He will keep us safe until he brings us home to Heaven!

When Judgment Day comes – God’s Word says: 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.’”** We are the blessed – saved from sin and guilt by grace alone, faith alone and Scripture alone. We are the blessed – because we have an inheritance in Heaven – **where moth and rust cannot corrupt – where thieves cannot break in and steal.** You don’t earn an inheritance. You don’t deserve an inheritance. It is a gift pure and simple – a gift! Our inheritance stored up in Heaven is a gift that Jesus paid for with a flawless life and a tortured death. Jesus died and rose again – so that whenever we die we will open our

eyes in Heaven. That is for sure and for certain because it doesn't depend on us. It all depends on Jesus!

A very famous singer passed away a few months ago. She was known to have struggled for a long time with an addiction to alcohol. Her autopsy was performed in England – where she came from – where she died. The Coroner is named Suzanne Greenaway. In a uniquely British way with words she gave a verdict of "*death by misadventure*," saying the singer died of accidental alcohol poisoning. "Four and a half times the legal limit for being drunk – is in fact a lethal – a fatal amount of alcohol! The unintended consequence of such potentially fatal levels [of alcohol] was her sudden and *unexpected* death," Greenaway said. Unexpected?! How can you say that? Unexpected? It was the proverbial train wreck waiting to happen! And lest we throw stones – be reminded – it would be entirely appropriate for every single one of us to say we will suffer "death by misadventure"! The wages of my sin – my rebellious self and soul destructive attitude. And the wages of my sins – my thoughtless and hurtful words and my gross thoughts and imagination – and all the good I have left painfully undone – all deserve eternal judgment. But because of God's *Amazing Grace* – we are forgiven – declared not guilty!

Jesus will say to all the unbelievers on Judgment Day: ⁴² **"For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I 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."** My nephew is the news anchor for a TV station in Wausau. He wrote the other day about a guy in Wausau who admitted he was texting when he crashed – literally drove his car into the back-end a State Trooper's squad car. To make matters worse he was also drunk, didn't have a driver's license, was a convicted felon, and had an uncased rifle in the car. Again it would be tempting to say – as we sit here in the soft glow of stained glass windows – I may not be a saint – but at least I'm not as bad as that guy! It's tempting to watch the NFL on Sunday – and watch a professional football player run out of bounds on the far side of the field – and start punching all the people of the bench of the other team. How dumb is that – to punch with your bare hands – people who are wearing all sorts of body armor and helmets? Who do you think is going to come out on the short end? Again it's tempting to think at least I'm not that out of control! When you watch the NFL on Sunday and see a football player sack a quarterback who is known to kneel and pray and then see the sacker--pretend to kneel and pretend to pray – to mock the player who does pray. Again it's tempting to say – at least I don't mock prayer. And yet – do we **pray without ceasing**? Or do we neglect our prayer life – because we are too busy. Or because we don't really believe that prayer changes anything? When Jesus comes on Judgment Day and speaks to the people destined for Hell – notice he isn't talking about their acts of unspeakable violence – the abuse of drugs and alcohol – the battering of women and the abuse of small children. Jesus is not here talking about unspeakable sins – so gross and disgusting that's it's a shame even to mention them. No – Jesus is pointing to the smallest acts of kindness and compassion. These seemingly insignificant acts of kindness – are not – in and of themselves the point! The failure to be kind and compassionate is practical and literal evidence of their unbelief! Why would an unbeliever be concerned about the fatherless, the widows and the orphans? Why would an unbeliever be concerned about

helping anyone! All they really care about is them-self! Jesus will point to their selfishness—their self seeking and self serving self centered life as one more evidence that they did not love their Savior and their Redeemer. Because of their unbelief Jesus will send them into the flaming lake of fire—prepared for the devil and all his demons—to be forever dying and never dead!

A very famous person died a few weeks ago. The Internet had an article the other day saying it was about his last words. I always find that fascinating—the very last thing they said. The sister who was beside his death bed said his last words were, “Oh, wow! Oh, wow! Oh, wow!” I like that! “Oh, wow!” I have said before—I wonder if the first thing you say when you open your eyes in Heaven isn’t the word, “Wow!!!” Heaven will be wonderful beyond words to explain. **No more death or mourning or crying or pain—for the old order of things has passed away.** It won’t be like this world—any more. We will be better than new. Because there will be no more sin. The possibility of anything ever going wrong won’t exist. We can only imagine how wonderful it will be when we hear angels sing and see Jesus face to face. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schultz