

Matthew 25:31-46: When the Son of Man comes in His glory, & all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. ³² Before Him will be gathered all the nations, & He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will place the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry & you gave Me food, I was thirsty & you gave Me drink, I was a stranger & you welcomed Me, ³⁶ I was naked & you clothed Me, I was sick & you visited me, I was in prison & you came to me." ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry & feed You, or thirsty & give You drink? ³⁸ And when did we see You a stranger & welcome You, or naked & clothe You? ³⁹ And when did we see You sick or in prison & visit You?" ⁴⁰ 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." ⁴¹ Then He will say to those on His left, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil & his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry & you gave Me no food, I was thirsty & you gave Me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger & you did not welcome Me, naked & you did not clothe Me, sick & in prison & you did not visit Me." ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, & did not minister to You?" ⁴⁵ 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." ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

Intro: So much is happening in the world right now: war in Europe; war in Africa; war in the Middle East; an assassination attempt on a former US President; a crazy election cycle in the US; a relentless push by the world to promote gross sexual immorality (Vice President/Olympics). Plus all the challenges, pains, & losses in your own personal lives. **Danny Byram:** The main thing in life, is keeping the main thing the main thing!

Jesus reminds us of the main thing in life as He speaks His last Words to His disciples before He dies. Jesus is the main thing! Living for Him is the main thing! Trusting & obeying God & His Word is the main thing! Loving God & loving His people & loving others is the main thing! Being ready for the return of the King is the main thing!

- **Martin Luther:** There are only two days on my calendar: today and that day.

King Jesus will return in glory & separate the righteous from the wicked, so pursue God & His blessedness through love

1. The Son Of Man (Jesus!) Is Coming Back

2. The Son Of Man's Return Will Be Glorious

3. The Son Of Man Is King

4. All Nations Will Be Judged By King Jesus

5. King Jesus Will Separate The Righteous From The Wicked

6. King Jesus Will Invite The Righteous To Inherit The Kingdom Of Heaven

7. King Jesus Will Pronounce A Judgment According To Works On The Last Day

Matthew 25:34-46: Then the King will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry & you gave Me food, I was thirsty & you gave Me drink, I was a stranger & you welcomed Me, ³⁶ I was naked & you clothed Me, I was sick & you visited me, I was in prison & you came to me." ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry & feed You, or thirsty & give You drink? ³⁸ And when did we see You a stranger & welcome You, or naked & clothe You? ³⁹ And when did we see You sick or in prison & visit You?" ⁴⁰ 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." ⁴¹ Then He will say to those on His left, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil & his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry & you gave Me no food, I was thirsty & you gave Me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger & you did not welcome Me, naked & you did not clothe Me, sick & in prison & you did not visit Me." ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, & did not minister to You?" ⁴⁵ 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." ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

a. Justification (explain) is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone: Matthew 1:20-21: an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

In Matthew, Jesus told His disciples 3 times that He would be killed & then rise from the dead (Chap. 16, 17, 20) - Parable of the tenets: they kill the Son!; The rest of Matthew's Gospel!

John 10:11, 26: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep . . . ²⁶ you do not believe because you are not My sheep; **John 3:16; GOSPEL!**

b. Yet, on the day of judgment, we will be judged according to our works: You see this in what Jesus says in Matthew 25! Our works will function as evidence that we are truly justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone! Faith without works is dead, but true, saving faith most certainly will do good works!

- **Matthew 16:27:** For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

- **2 Corinthians 5:10:** 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.

Mark Jones: I've been told that some folk are taking issue with John Piper's Foreword to Thomas Schreiner's book on justification. According to Piper, who agrees with Schreiner, we are "right with God by faith alone" but we do not "attain heaven by faith alone." He adds that "there are other conditions for attaining heaven." Based on what I believe is a charitable & straight-forward reading of Piper, there is not a single word in his Foreword that seems out of place in terms of the basic Reformed approach to justification, salvation, & conditionality. Piper affirms strongly & clearly that works do not contribute to the acquisition of salvation. But Piper also wants to affirm that good works should be considered necessary for the obtaining of salvation. I fail to understand how this idea isn't present in literally dozens of Reformed luminaries from the Early Modern period. [Francis Turretin, Herman Witsius, Petrus van Mastricht, Boston, Ball, Owen, & Rutherford]. In sum, as Piper says, "there are other conditions for attaining heaven". Or, by someone else: "The New Testament lays before us a vast array of conditions for final salvation. Not only initial repentance & faith, but perseverance in both, demonstrated in love toward God & neighbor...Holiness, which is defined by love of God & neighbor...is the indispensable condition of our glorification: no one will be seated at the heavenly banquet who has not begun, however imperfectly, in new obedience." And if you don't like that last quote, you can take it up with Michael Horton. But I happen to agree with it completely.

Revelation 20:11-12: Then I saw a great white throne & him who was seated on it. From his presence earth & sky fled away, & no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great & small, standing before the throne, & 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.

Tom Schreiner: The dead are judged by what is written in the book, i.e., according to their works. Scripture repeatedly says that judgment will be according to works (Ps. 62:12; Prov. 24:12; Jer. 17:10; 32:19; Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; 14:12; Rev. 2:23; 22:12). Judgment according to works is not merely an OT theme but is also prominent in the NT. Those who are in the book of life have performed works warranting inclusion, while those who are punished are those who have pursued and practiced evil. Such works are not the basis for being found in the book of life but constitute the necessary evidence of belonging to God. As Daniel teaches, those written in the book will be delivered on the last day, raised to everlasting life, but those who have done evil will know "shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:1-2).

WCF 33:1: God has appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power & judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but

likewise all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, & deeds; & to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

John Piper: I like to think for example of the thief on the cross. OK, a lifetime of sin – all he did was sin for what? Forty years? He's dying, may begin by cursing, like we heard from John, Bam! The Spirit blew where [He] wills, no explanation. This man's repenting. He's crying out for mercy. & Jesus says, "See you in Paradise today." That man will experience the judgment according to works. What will he have? Not many. Half an hour's worth? But they're sweet. & they're real! So the file will be opened, alright, the books & the book. We got the book of life, & you got the books. These books are really thick. Everything you've ever done! Every idle word, Jesus says, everything. They're all written down. So this man's file is getting picked up like this. Wow! And every one is "F"! His grades are all "F"! Pick them up. Throw them out. He's got a little teeny file at the back. And in it is: "Heart was broken for his sin; Recognized Savior; Lovingly exhorted his comrade in evil; Died." & the LORD will hold this up to the whole universe [& say]: "He was real! He trusted my Son! This is the evidence!" So that had he ever read a commandment in the Bible that says: "You will not enter into the Kingdom without a work." He'd know how to interpret it. The work isn't the ground of his acceptance. The work was the fruit of this amazing opening of his heart, believing in Jesus, being justified, & the fruit for fifteen minutes? half an hour? an hour? And that goes written down. [Sawa!]

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8. The Righteous Serve Jesus By Serving Other Believers

Matthew 25:35-40: For I was hungry & you gave Me food, I was thirsty & you gave Me drink, I was a stranger & you welcomed Me, ³⁶ I was naked & you clothed Me, I was sick & you visited me, I was in prison & you came to me." ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry & feed You, or thirsty & give You drink? ³⁸ And when did we see You a stranger & welcome You, or naked & clothe You? ³⁹ And when did we see You sick or in prison & visit You?" ⁴⁰ 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."

a. The righteous minister to Jesus by meeting basic needs: Jesus says He was hungry, & they gave Him food! He was thirsty, & they gave Him drink! He was a stranger, & they welcomed Him! He was naked, & they clothed Him! He was sick, & they visited Him! He was in prison, & they came to Him! [Not miracles & casting out demons!]

b. The righteous are unaware that they did all of this: Vs 37-39: Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry & feed You, or thirsty & give You drink? ³⁸ And when did we see You a stranger & welcome You, or naked & clothe You? ³⁹ And when did we see You sick or in prison & visit You?"

1) This shows us the righteous are not trying to earn heaven by their good works! They are not keeping score! They are not seeking to do enough good deeds to get in! They are just being who they are! They are born again! They are new creatures in Christ! **2 Corinthians 5:17:** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. [They have new hearts! United to Christ! Law on heart! Holy Spirit!]

2) This shows the utter humility of Jesus Christ: **Philippians 2:5-8:** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

R. T. France: Their failure to recognize whom they were helping is eloquent testimony to the condescension of the king who is present incognito in his humblest follower.

c. The church is the body of Christ: V 40: 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."

1) Who is Jesus talking about serving? “the least of these My brothers”! Who are Jesus’ brothers? He’s told us!
- **Matthew 12:46-50:** While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother & his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, & who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother & my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother & sister & mother." [Followers of the Lord Jesus Christ!]
- **Gal 6:10:** as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, & especially to those who are of the household of faith

The righteous serve & love other believers in Christ: **John Piper:** Love is the overflow of joy in God that gladly meets the needs of others.

- **1 John 4:7-8, 19-21, 3:16-18:** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, & whoever loves has been born of God & knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love . . . ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," & hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother . . . ^{3:16-18} By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, & we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods & sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed & in truth.

2) When you love & serve other brothers & sisters in Christ, you are loving & serving Jesus Himself:

- **Matthew 10:40, 42:** Whoever receives you receives me . . . ⁴² whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

- **Acts 9:3-5:** Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, & suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"
⁵ And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

3) How are you doing this?: Food/drink/clothe distribution on Tuesdays (lots of unbelievers; some believers); Visiting Sister Lena; Providing for each other; Visiting Dave & Kay – coming to the funeral – making meals; Taking children into your home, loving them like your own, & bringing them to church; Brother in Kenya who needed a bike; Taking care of a single mom’s children (driving everywhere, getting up early!); Tanya: prison ministry; Deacons serving/leading; Bob: ministry for the grieving; Christian Discipleship; Veronica: taking in her friend’s baby when her friend was in a car accident; Sister Lena: taking in a stranger – sharing her own bed.

4) Is this kind of love & service even possible without a regular commitment to the local church?

- Let’s do it more! Let’s pray to grow! Oh Father, please help us love each other! Please help us love Your people!

- **Isaiah 58:7-8:** Is it not to share your bread with the hungry & bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, & not to hide yourself from your own flesh? ⁸ Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, & your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

- **John Piper (Story about Doug Nichols):** (Action International Ministries, focuses on ministry to millions of street children in the big cities of the world) He writes to me every now & then, & almost always includes some sword thrust like this in a P. S. at the bottom of his letter: “In the last ‘one minute’ that it possibly took you to read this letter, 28 children died of malnutrition & diseases that could have been easily prevented. 1,667 die every hour, 40,000 children die daily! Please pray with ACTION for more missionaries to take the gospel to these children.” Doug was found to have colon cancer in April of 1993. Doctors gave him a 30% chance of living after his surgery & colostomy & radiation treatments. During horrible civil war between the Hutus & the Tutsis, he got on a plane & went to Rwanda with a team of people, including some from our church. His non-Christian oncologist said he would die in Rwanda. Doug said that would be OK because he is going to heaven. The oncologist was distressed & called Doug’s surgeon to solicit help in restraining Doug from going to Rwanda. The surgeon, who is a Christian, said that Doug was ready to die & go to heaven. When we got word here that Doug was going – with his cancer & his colostomy – to Rwanda, some of us on the staff gathered in the prayer room to pray for him. I recall being led

very specifically to Isaiah 58:7–8, which we prayed for Doug. "Is [the fast I choose] not to share your bread with the hungry & bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, & not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily." We prayed very specifically that the feeding of the hungry & the housing of the homeless in Rwanda would not kill Doug Nichols, but would heal him. From Rwanda, Doug called his oncologist & said he was not dead. And when he got back he had a battery of tests that resulted in the assessment NED: no evidence of disease. God alone holds the future for Doug Nichols & his remarkable faith & ministry, but for now Isaiah 58 lives bodily in Doug's life as he pours himself out for the children.

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9. Those Who Are Cursed Failed To Serve Jesus By Failing To Serve Other Believers

Matthew 25:41-45: Then He will say to those on His left, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil & his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry & you gave Me no food, I was thirsty & you gave Me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger & you did not welcome Me, naked & you did not clothe Me, sick & in prison & you did not visit Me." ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, & did not minister to You?" ⁴⁵ 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."

William Hendriksen: Not a single sinful deed – such as idolatry, murder, adultery, theft, etc. - is mentioned. Only sins of omission are enumerated, sins of neglect.

- a. The cursed (wicked) don't serve Jesus & His people:** They don't feed, welcome, clothe, or visit anyone!
- b. The cursed (wicked) are deceived:** They don't realize they haven't done this! They are blind & dead in sin!
- c. They are cursed:** Depart from Me! What a horrific reality! Cursed! They're sent into the eternal fire, forever!

Tom Ascol: Jesus says that the eternal fire of hell was "prepared for the devil & his angels" (Matt. 25:41). People were made for God. Hell was made for the Devil. Yet people who die in their sin, without Jesus Christ as Lord & Savior, will spend eternity in hell with the one being who is most unlike God. It is a tragic irony that many who do not believe in the Devil in this life will wind up spending eternity being tormented with him in hell.

10. Those Who Are Cursed Will Endure Eternal Punishment But The Righteous Will Receive Eternal Life

Matthew 25:46: And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

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Remember the love of King Jesus: He came feeding the hungry (5,000!), yet thirsted on that cross for you, that you might taste & see that the LORD is good! He came welcoming everyone, but was cast out as a stranger & forsaken so that you might be brought near to God forever! He was stripped naked on that cross & crushed, so that you might be clothed with His everlasting righteousness! He came healing the sick & died so that you might live forever! He was arrested, put in prison, & executed as a criminal, so that you might have eternal life & freedom!

Christ Jesus Comes To Judge As King
Before Him All Your Works He'll Bring
For Those Who Love And Serve And Sing
And Do For Christians Anything
You Really Did It For Your King
Inherit Heaven, Praises Ring
But Those Who Failed To Serve And Sing

They're Cursed And Into Hell He'll Fling
Our Only Hope Is Christ The King
Who Died And Rose, Salvation Bring
By Faith Alone We're Just And Sing
To Do Good Works, Every Good Thing
To Christ Our All We'll Always Cling
Forever Praise Him Worshiping!