

November 22, 2020

The Missing Words

Grace, Mercy and Peace be to you from God our Father, from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. Well as I mentioned in the lead up to the gospel reading, this is the last Sunday in the church year and so it seems appropriate that we deal with the last parable recorded in the gospel of Matthew, the last parable that deals with the last day. We have seen two previous parables from Matthew chapter 25 that deal with the last day. The first was the parable of the 10 bridesmaids and the message is, you also must be ready. We must have oil, or the word of God to light our path, to be a lamp to our feet. Last week it was the parable of the talents and the message there is that God gives us his property, or his possession, which is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit builds faith in our hearts, empowers us to be His disciples, gives us the spiritual gifts, so that we might bear spiritual fruit. All of this ties together and prepares us for the final parable. A parable about the King Jesus returning. The first two lead up to this. Are you ready? Have you used your gifts? Now this is not about works righteousness again. It is about faith alive, the Holy Spirit working through us, empowering us to use those spiritual gifts to bear fruit in the Kingdom to bring glory to a God; to expand His Kingdom.

And so, Jesus says; “When the Son of Man comes in His glory.” Now let's just stop there for a minute. We hear that word glory a lot, but what does glory mean? I found the definition to be fascinating. The definition of glory in the Greek language is and I quote: “the manifested character of His perfection.” So manifested character, that's Jesus; God made manifest, God in human form and it's the character of His perfection. Now what's interesting is when we read when the Son of Man comes in His glory; that phrase *His glory* is actually made up of three Greek words. And if we read them just as they are written; they literally mean: the glory of Him. The glory of Him, who's Him? Well Jesus answered it, the Son of Man. This is the designation from Daniel Chapter 7. For the Messiah, who comes down from heaven. So, when the Son of Man, the promised Messiah, comes in the glory that He has is and all, the Angels with Him; (and think of that it's not just the Cherubim the Seraphim, it is all the Angels of heaven coming with Him) He will come and sit on His glorious throne. What is so significant about a throne? Well there's two things, two significant things. A King sits on a throne. A judge sits on a throne. This is the position of a King or a judge. What is in front of the King, in front of the judge? All the nations before Him. So, this is not just a king, since all the nations are before Him including all the kings of all the nations. This is the King of kings. This is Jesus. This is God in the flesh.

What does He do? Then we read that He separates like a Shepherd the sheep from the goats. He puts the sheep to His right. He puts the goats to His left. Those who are on the right, understand the symbolism, they're to be the at the right hand of the King. It's a place of honor, it is a place of victory. Please remember, have we done

anything that victorious? No, we have fallen victim, slaves to sin, but Christ is victorious! He paid the price of our sin, and He gives to us His righteousness. We didn't earn this place of honor or victory. Christ did it all for us. We are there 100% because of Him.

Then the King, the King of kings, says to these on the right; that would be you and me, and the prophets of old, and the apostles, and everyone who put their faith in Jesus. Whether it's Old Testament faith, looking forward to Him; those at the time of Him; or us, looking back to Him. The King of kings turns to us and says, 'come you who are *blessed* by my Father.' And again, that word blessed, we think of it so much as, you know somebody giving us some money or something like that; but blessed literally means, to give the good word. God the Father is giving a good word to us. What is that word, or should I say words? We are children of God, children of the heavenly Father, the redeemed, co-heirs with Christ. God the Father blesses us. He gives those good words to us, and Jesus says to us; those given these names by God, these positions by God. "Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." So, this is literally from Eden to the end. In the garden of Eden, God gave the promise of the coming Messiah, to Adam and Eve. And now we're looking at He's here.

And now what does He say? "For I was hungry you gave me food, thirsty gave me drink. I was naked you clothed me, I was a stranger you welcomed me, I was sick, I was in prison you visited me. What will those on the right say? "Lord when did we see you hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, prisoner or do any of those things? I want you to listen very carefully, and I mean listen very careful because this verse seems to have been lost in this day and age. Are you ready? "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me. The title of the sermon is The Missing Words. What are the missing words? We seem to have lost those two words, "my brothers."

Everybody wants to say, we have to do it to the least of these. It's a familial thing. To the least of these, my brothers. We're talking about the family of God. We're talking about those words of blessing of God children of God. Children of the heavenly Father co-heirs of heaven with Jesus. This is a family affair. This is 1st Corinthians 12:27 "Now you are the body of Christ. Each one individually, members of it. Or 1 Corinthians 12:26, If one part suffers, or is hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick or in prison, we all suffer together. This concept of the believers being the body of Christ, the family of God, is borne out in Romans 12:4-5; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:20-23; Ephesians 3:6; and on and on and on. We are the body of Christ, the family of God; and these actions giving food, giving drink, welcoming, clothing, visiting, these are the actions of God's people for His family. For "my brothers."

When we look in the Old Testament, is this not what we saw? The people cared for the Prophets. When David was hungry, the priest fed him. It was Elijah who went

to the window. And isn't this the instructions that Jesus gave to His twelve disciples when He sent them out? Don't take an extra pair of clothes, don't take extra shoes, don't take food, don't take these things with you. God will provide it for you. How? Through the body of Christ, the church, the believers. And so, the twelve went out and what happened? The people, those who put their faith, hope, and trust in Jesus; cared for them.

It's what we see in the early church, in the book of Acts, the same sort of thing. As the apostles went out and were now beginning to sow the gospel to the Gentile nations, the Gentiles who put their faith, hope, and trust in Jesus they fed the apostles. And the Apostles fed them. They gave them drink, they welcomed them, they clothed them. In fact, think about it, when Paul was in prison they went and visited him. It's what we are called to do today.

We talked a little bit about this last week sermon. It's all about faith, true faith. It's not works righteousness, but true faith is never alone. It is always accompanied by the works of God's people for God's family. When we look at James 1:27 "what is true religion, visiting the orphans and the widows within the body of Christ. In fact, in James chapter 2 verse 15 he says, "What good is it, if you see a brother or a sister lacking food and you say to them, 'go in peace, be warm and be filled?' His point is, you say you have faith, show me your faith, I'll show you my works. If I see a brother or sister in Christ and they don't have clothes, they don't have food, I'm going to get him clothes, I'm going to get him food. As we go to the end of the book of James, in James chapter 5 verse 14. Dealing with those who are sick, what's supposed to happen? Call the elders the elders are going to go and visit. This is exactly what Jesus says. This is doing it to the least of these my brothers.

Then after that dialogue with the sheep on the right, the King of kings turns those on the left and He says, "depart from me you cursed into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, in prison, you didn't do a lick. What will the response say? When? When did we see you hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick or in prison? Now listen to what is said. "Truly, I say to you, this is the people on the left as you did not do it to one of the least of these you did not do it to me do you see the two words that are missing? My brothers. Here is the family of God they are his brothers. And what they did for their brothers and sisters in the family of God, was being done to Jesus; because it's being done out of faith and love for their Lord and Savior. They see each other as parts of the body of Christ. It's a family thing. But notice He does not refer to those on the left as His brothers. No, they rejected Him. It's a family thing for them too. It's just not the family of God. It is the family of man. We see this all too often that the family of man cares very little for each other. Oh, they'll say they are so concerned, but in the process, they just destroy. They hide behind good words, what they think are good actions. It's really all about them. What does Jesus say to them? "Depart from me you cursed."

When we look at this, those missing words, “my brothers,” is huge. What are the people on the left guilty of? First and foremost, the lack of faith. But they are also condemned for the sin of omission, because they did not do what they should have done. And notice that on the right, those who have faith, who have the Holy Spirit who works faith in their hearts; they take that faith, they take that power of the Holy Spirit, they take the gifts of the spirit, and they bear fruit. They commit righteous deeds. Does that save them, these righteous deeds? No, it is a badge of their faith.

When we take these three parables and we put them together; we see a very simple message. Parable one: be ready. Parable two: use your talents. Parable three: serve each other, the body of Christ; because in so doing we are serving Christ, Himself. Think about them. So often, we hear people say, ‘well a Christian, if you were really a Christian you would do this.’ I have used this so many times and coming back to a person and saying, ‘you know if you were really a Christian, and were a part of the body of Christ, you're right. That's what I would do. But my question is, ‘are you a part of the body of Christ? Are you just some sheister trying to get me to give you something, or do something for you? We have a lot of people who come to the church office and that's what they want. When I hesitate on giving them something, right away, I'm the bad guy. But when I take them to this, and then say, ‘I'd love to help you, if you are part of the body of Christ.’ ‘I'll see you in church on Sunday, and we'll take care of you.’ And you know what? To this day, not one of the people I've said that to, have come.

You see, Jesus gives us a beautiful thing here. He helps us in looking at this world around us and takes the focus to ‘go and make disciples of all nations, go share the gospel with them.’ That is our responsibility to those who aren't the body of Christ. If they come to faith, and they come into the body of Christ, then our responsibility is care for the body of Christ. So, look at each other in the pews today. We really are brothers and sisters. In fact, we are even more than that. We are parts of the body of Christ. There's a leg here, an arm there, a finger there, maybe a hair there. But it doesn't matter. We are all a part of the body. If a body doesn't care for itself, well then think about what happens just in a normal body. If you don't care for your body, start to overeat, and start to drink too much, you take drugs, you do this you, do that. What happens to the physical body? It gets diabetes, it gets liver problems, heart problems, lung problems, you name it problems. Eventually, it dies. But if the body takes care of itself, the body tends to work pretty well. I would contend, if the body of Christ takes care of itself, by golly, it'll live eternally.

In our Saviors Name, Amen.