



**Spring 2025**

**Elisha:** Seeing the Hand of God at Work

**To be used with Session 3:** God's Hand in Meeting Others' Needs

**Sermon Title:** We Honor God When we Serve Others

**The Point:** God blesses us as we serve others.

**Scripture:** Matthew 25:31-46

**Connection with the Study:** To complement the Bible study "God's Hand in Meeting Other's Needs," this sermon focuses on the parable of the sheep and the goats. In this passage, Jesus made it clear that a defining factor of those who truly know Him is their service to others, for which they are in return blessed by God. They are contrasted with those who claim a relationship with God but do not serve others. Jesus stressed that our service to others, or lack of it, clearly indicates our desire to serve Jesus Himself. God works through us to meet the needs of those around us, and our response to those in need is in essence our response to Him. By serving others, God is honored, needs are met, and we are blessed.

**Introduction:** The way we serve others, according to Jesus, is a direct reflection of our service to Him. In this parable, Jesus said that He will separate us by our acts of service as a shepherd separates sheep and goats. But why does a shepherd do this? Some basic research reveals that sheep and goats are very different with very different habits. While sheep tend to stay close to and follow the shepherd, goats tend to be more independent, going wherever they please. Goats become territorial and push sheep away from good fields. In other words, although the same shepherd is watching over both of these groups, they have very different behaviors. Only the sheep are actually in relationship with the shepherd. Only the sheep hear his voice and respond. It is no wonder that Jesus used this parable to contrast those who truly know Him against those who are rebellious and not truly a part of His flock.

### **1. Those who Serve Others Honor God (Matt. 25:31-34).**

A beautiful truth we learn from Scripture is that Jesus will one day return to this earth to reign in glorious majesty! In this passage, we get a glimpse of what that return will look like, and what He will do upon His return. For those who have devoted their lives to Jesus—those who have accepted him as Lord and Savior—He has extraordinary news: these people are blessed by the Father, and will now inherit the kingdom. This group are co-heirs with Christ as Scripture promises and will finally reap the promise of an eternal life spent in the presence of Christ, worshipping and serving Him.

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Jesus referred to this group as sheep. This was not a new idea. In John 10, Jesus referred to Himself as a shepherd and His true followers as sheep. A fascinating fact about sheep is that they don't really think for themselves, but simply go where the shepherd tells them to go. They are true followers, and they listen to and obey the shepherd's voice, trusting His leadership and decisions.

## **2. God Rewards Us for Our Service (Matt. 25:35-40).**

After separating the two groups into sheep and goats, Jesus said something that surprised the sheep. When Jesus stated that the good they have done for others was really done for Him, the sheep did not understand His meaning. They did not see how it is that they have done any of these things for Jesus Himself. What we must understand is that, when we serve others, this is a service to Him. It is not just "being kind" or "doing nice things;" our service to others becomes an act of worship and obedience to Jesus Himself.

The fact that the sheep did not realize this proves their sincerity. They did not serve the needs of others as an attempt to receive blessings; it was merely an overflow of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The sheep served in humility expecting nothing in return. As a result, they were given everything that comes with eternal life in Christ.

## **3. Those who Fail to Serve Others Dishonor God (Matt. 25:41-45).**

Service is not an option. It is not just an occasional aspect of Christian faith, but it is at the very core of what we believe. Jesus made sure His disciples knew that He Himself did not come into this world to be served by others, but to serve others (Mark 10:45). Disciples of Jesus were not to be known by their intellect, their strength, their positions of power but by their love and service to others.

If there was ever a person who walked this earth and had the right to be served, it was Jesus. He accepted the worship of others when they chose to worship Him. Yet His ministry, and in fact His entire existence on this earth, was built on His constant service to others. The actions of Jesus are not of a God who is too good to be bothered with our needs, but a God who spent much time healing and caring for those He encountered. When we ignore this fact, when we choose not to serve, we dishonor God and deny Him the glory that is due Him.

**Conclusion:** When Jesus dismissed the goats to eternal punishment at the end of this parable, they were confused, questioning what Jesus is even talking about. It appears that they didn't know what it was that they had or hadn't done to deserve this fate. We also can become quietly complacent, to the point that we don't realize we are not fulfilling the call to service that is for every believer. As we spend time in the Word and with fellow believers, we must ask ourselves how we are serving others. It is for us to daily assess how and where we are serving like Jesus served. Let's be among those who are safely and securely in God's will and among those who bring Him honor through service.

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