

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Thursday, November 19

Study

Matthew 25:40

⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,^[a] you did it to me.'

This is Jesus' teaching concerning the final judgement. There is an interesting mix of grandeur and insignificance. Jesus is talking about the end times when he will come again to judge the earth. *All* of the angels will be with him and he will be sitting on his throne. *All* the nations will be there and Jesus will be separating anyone who has ever lived into two sets. The ones who inherit the kingdom of God and the ones who are given to the eternal fire. The setting is almost too much for us to fathom. This is the grandeur of the passage. But what is this eternal judgement based on? Christ's final judgement has everything to do with those who are described as hungry, thirsty, estranged, naked, sick, and imprisoned. These people are insignificant...aren't they? What do people who are down and out have to do with Jesus enthroned in heaven determining the eternal outcome of every one who has ever lived? First, the people God chooses to spread his gospel do not always experience the best of life. Consider Paul, who was a servant of Christ, recalling his ministry experience, "Three times I was beaten with rods. Once, I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from my own people, danger from gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea..." (2 Corinthians 11:25ff). He goes on to talk about even more suffering. You see, if we can't welcome a man like Paul and hear the gospel from people who are down and out, then there is no way we would be able to see the gospel in a man who is crucified for our sake. Jesus was "down and out" *for our sake*. Secondly, when we see the gospel in a man, Jesus Christ, who suffered death on a cross for our sake, God grants us compassion for our neighbor. We ourselves were in such a bad state that Jesus had to die. Our neighbor is no different even if it was their own sin that led to their sorry state. We would all be down and out if it weren't for Christ. A child of God doesn't hold his or her status over against another who is struggling. Instead, they lend a helping hand and a listening ear. This is how such grandeur and insignificance fit perfectly together at the final judgement. Because of the gospel, the sheep receive those that the world deems insignificant.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we come to you with great reverence. You separate the sheep and the goats. We come to you with the eyes of faith to praise you for your grace towards us in Jesus Christ. Help us to see clearly those the world might label insignificant in Jesus' name, Amen