

November 26, 2017  
Sermon for The Last Sunday of the Church Year  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
Matthew 25:31–46

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Matthew 25:31–46 (ESV)

<sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? <sup>38</sup> And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ <sup>40</sup> 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.’ <sup>41</sup> “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ <sup>44</sup> 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, and did not minister to you?’ <sup>45</sup> 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.’ <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Grace, Mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

Have you ever been someplace where people had prepared for your arrival? Perhaps you went on a business trip or to a conference. At the registration table was a packet of information for you, with a nametag.

They prepared for your arrival. Things are personalized for you! You've heard stories of how hotels and resorts plan for the arrival of a celebrity, a politician, or someone famous. The resorts stock the celebrity's favorite luxuries or their favorite wine, beer, and spirits. If the celebrity likes a certain type of fabric for his bedding or a certain type of exotic food, these hotels and resorts make sure they have it on hand. The celebrity knows the resort has prepared for his visit.

In the Gospel for today, we hear of Jesus' coming to judge the living and the dead. Usually texts that focus on the end of the world tell us to prepare for Jesus' coming. The Bible tells us how Jesus will return like a thief in the night, how He'll return like a king from a long journey, how He'll return in some other unexpected way. We're given signs that His return is soon and we should prepare.

Today, we hear that *Jesus* has made plans *for us* when He returns. To those on His right hand, those who are faithful and are counted righteous, Jesus says, "*Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*" (v 34).

What an amazing thought! Before God made the heavens and the earth, He already had you in mind. Before the waters were separated to form the dry land, the sea, and the sky, Jesus had you in mind.

More than that, Jesus prepared His kingdom for you.

Jesus Prepared a Kingdom for You before the Foundation of the World to provide you with comfort.

Most people find a discussion about the end of the world to be frightening. There are end of the world movies coming out all the time. I personally don't like them. However, Hollywood is feeding on our fears. Fears and concerns about the theory of global warming, destruction by a rogue asteroid, nuclear war, disease and pestilence.

As frightening as the end of the world may be, God's judgment, righteous though it may be, is even more fearful (vv 31–33).

The Ten Commandments show us that we deserve to be judged and receive condemnation. Apart from Christ, no work we do is considered good or pleasing to God. Just one example condemns us, from verse 43:

*“<sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.”*

We don't have a leg to stand on. We'd probably answer like the people in the parable: *“Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ 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.’” (45-46)*

And it's not an asteroid, Martian attack, or nuclear war that we should be afraid of. It is Jesus' judgment at the end of the parable that should be the real fear behind the end time. Jesus, the judge says: *"And these will go away into eternal punishment, ..."* (46a)

But this verse ends with words of love, hope and comfort. Jesus continues: *"but the righteous into eternal life"*. (46b)

Jesus did not decide to save some and damn others. The place of eternal punishment was prepared for the devil and his evil angels for rebelling against God. Hell was not made for people. Punishment was *not* prepared for mankind from the foundation of the world. Jesus doesn't say depart to the eternal fire prepared for you. Remember what verse 41 says: *"Depart...into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."*

Jesus *"desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim 2:4).

From the very beginning, God's intentions were always that humanity would live in eternal fellowship and blessedness with Him. No one was ever predestined to hell. All were created to live with God and to rejoice with Him in His creation. Those who go to hell go there by their own choosing, for they have rejected Jesus and God's original design for all people in Him.

Therefore, Christians can eagerly anticipate Jesus' return because of what He *has* prepared for all of us!

Jesus' lengthy conversation on His return comes just days before His death.

Everything that followed had been planned, prepared, by God from the foundation of the world. Maundy Thursday, where Jesus instituted His Holy Supper, and by what He would do on Friday, Jesus prepared us for His kingdom.

Christ has taken the punishment we deserve upon Himself in His death on the cross. Your sins, all of them, were paid for.

Now you have received His righteousness. Every act of love He has done is counted as yours (vv 35–40).

So His kingdom, prepared from the foundation of the world, is also yours (vv 34).

Our Lord tells us that He prepared a kingdom for us to comfort us. We need not fear His return. Because He has forgiven all your sins, you will be found at His right hand. You will receive the kingdom that He has prepared for you. And He loved you so much that he planned your salvation and your reward before the foundation of the world.

You are a guest your Lord has been waiting to receive for a long time, in fact, before time began.

In my mind, I hear the trumpet sounding at the end times with the old black and white western movies I used to watch. All would seem lost as the bad guys were gaining the upper hand, and then you hear the thunder of hooves, a cloud of dust and the trumpet sounding. The good guys would look up and cheer! The Calvary had arrived! The bad guys would often turn tail and run because they knew that they didn't stand a chance.

Well, there is another Calvary mentioned in the book of Luke. You have to use the old King James translation, but it's there nonetheless.

*“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, ...”* (Luke 23:33a, KJV)

My fellow Good Friday Christians, our Calvary has already arrived to save the world. Jesus has done it all and the devil and hell with all of satan’s evil minions can’t stand before Him.

Yes, there might be fear and uncertainty, but the victory has already been won for you!

You who call upon the name of Christ for your salvation will be welcomed as one of *“the righteous into eternal life”*.

Listen as Jesus says to you: *“Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”*

Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

S.D.G.—Soli Deo Gloria

## **Sermon Outline**

### ***Jesus Prepared a Kingdom for You***

*Matthew 25:31-46*

- I. Most people find a discussion about the end of the world to be frightening.
- II. Eternal punishment was *not* prepared for people from the foundation of the world.

- III. Christians can eagerly anticipate Jesus' return because of what he *has* prepared.