

Passion Into Action

AFFECT: The Method

Matthew 25:31-41, 45-46 (NRSV)

Pastor Alf preaching

This is the third and final sermon in our generosity series. It concludes today, Covenant Sunday, when we'll bring forward our pledges for 2019 as an act of worship to God.

In week one, we focused on Jesus' Story of the Good Samaritan. Last week we looked at how the Apostle Paul and the early church put Jesus' words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," into practice. This week we return to Jesus and look at the final story of His public ministry. It is His last lesson, His climactic

point, His parting teaching. It is not a parable really, but a real description of our real future. All humans will gather in one place, a kind of cosmic Woodstock, the biggest mass meeting of all time, to greet the Lord when He returns and participate in the separating of the sheep from the goats.

1. Read Matthew 25:31-46.
 - a. Who is at this "biggest mass meeting of all time"? (See verse 32 especially) So it's not just Christians but all people? Discuss.
 - b. Who separates the sheep from the goats? (See verse 31, 33, and 41 especially)
 - c. What activities are lauded and what *lack* of activities are punished? Do you think the list is illustrative, or exhaustive?
 - d. What is the reward? What is the punishment? (See verse 46)
2. For the sheep, the news is good; they provided food, drink, hospitality, clothing, and care for the Son of Man. For the goats, the news is bad; they did not provide for Jesus. That is not the shock of the passage. What is the surprise? What is the twist that Jesus introduces? What do both groups ask Jesus? (See verses 37-39 and 44)
3. And what is Jesus' response to their questions? (See verses 40 and 45)
 - a. How is this text similar to and/or different from The Good Samaritan story (Luke 10:25-37) we studied two weeks ago?
 - b. If we want to follow and serve and love Jesus, what is He saying with this story about the sheep and the goats?
 - c. Who is the face of Jesus? Who is His proxy on earth? Does that make sense to you? Why would He draw that comparison? Are there other passages that support this idea? Check out Mt. 5:1-9, 43-47 or Mt. 7:12 for example.
4. What does all this have to do with pledging? Why would I focus on the sheep and the goats for Covenant Sunday and the wrap-up of our generosity/stewardship focus?
 - a. Did you know that MDPC *vet*s 130 or more local, national, and international outreach ministries each year and sends money and men and women to feed, clothe, and welcome "the least of these;" to provide medical care in remote, impoverished villages; to offer visits and Bible studies in prisons; to ultimately spread the Good News of Jesus that offers forgiveness, restoration, and hope?
 - b. Join us on a mission trip. Join us on a vetting visit.
 - c. I ended my sermon talking about "The Butterfly Effect." Every single thing we do matters. How will you positively alter the world through your commitment of time, talent, and treasure?

