

repay you, simply because Jesus has called us to love one another as he loves us, totally with no strings attached.

I'm sure Jesus didn't give his life so that I can declare; 'I'm save by faith not works' and then ignore living in community with his brothers and sisters. I'm sure Jesus died on the cross that I might die to myself and live, giving myself for his brothers and sisters. I'm sure Jesus wants us to be a community who shares life together, loving each other, caring for each other, meeting each other's basic needs as our starting point. For it is in loving the least of Jesus' brothers and sisters that we express love for Jesus.

In a worship service we don't really express a deep practical love for

Jesus, it is where we are reminded of all that Jesus has done, is doing and will continue to do for us, so that we have what it takes to go and live as a community who put Jesus' words into action, starting with caring for the most vulnerable, the least, because Jesus started with loving the least – you and I.

I'm not here to condemn you, but this is Jesus mirror for us to look at ourselves individually and as a community. Jesus doesn't what any of us to be surprised when he returns, that's why he's given us a clear way to examine ourselves, so we're actively loving each other just as Jesus loves us, in everyday down-to-earth practical ways.

Doing what Jesus says because you know we can trust him with our lives.

Let us pray.

Jesus thank you for these parables of warning. Thank you that you don't let me fall into complacency or apathy but that you have given us a means to keep focused and alert, loving each other as we are loved by you. Seeking daily to do the Father's will that his kingdom comes through the way we live. Jesus fill us each with the Holy Spirit that we might be daily growing in being doers of your word and not just passive hearers. Jesus we look forward to your return, come Lord Jesus come.

23 November 2008

Jesus Judges. Matthew 25:31-36



The Gospel reading for today is the final of three parables from Jesus regarding the Kingdom of Heaven and Judgement. Please note I didn't write these stories, they come from the very lips of Jesus.

Each story ends with a division; the wise and the foolish, the good, faithful servant and the wicked, lazy servant, and today there is a division between the sheep and the goats. What we have here is a huge warning.

Yes there will be a day where your life is judged and there are only two outcomes, a very, very bad one, or an extremely good one. There is no middle ground. The fact that there are three parables is to heighten our attention. Stop, reflect, think hard about this, your life is in the balance.

You will be judged and I certainly don't want to be

one of the foolish, one of the wicked, lazy servants, one of the goats. I'm sure none of us want to be judged a goat.

Please note, I didn't write these stories to be particularly negative, they come from Jesus' lips. Why?

They certainly shake me out of any complacency, because yes judgement is coming. And it will come unexpectedly, and then it will be too late to change your mind. Now is the time to be getting your life in order. Tomorrow is too late.

With the first two parables I can easily align myself with the wise and the good, faithful servant, but this third story gets me to stop and think a bit more deeply. The disturbing thing is that those who end up being judged as goats appear to be surprised. "Lord, when did we see you hungry, or

thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?" (Matt. 25:45)

Lord what are you talking about, we're the good people. What did we do wrong? I'm a good bloke! There is a note of surprise because the King has said; "Depart from me, you who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41) These are alarming words, and they don't come from my lips, they come directly from the lips of Jesus.

I hope you don't hear this as me being overly negative, but rather Jesus speaking a word of warning, so that you are living ready for Jesus' return.

If I'm driving down the road at 200km/hr and get caught by a speed camera, it's too late to change, I should have taken notice

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

Pastor: Tim 0427326553

Edmund 0429041957



Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

of all those signs which told me that between Monarto and Murray Bridge the speed limit is 100km/hr.

When Jesus returns it will be too late to change. Now is the time. Now is the time to get ready. Now is the time to be living ready. Tomorrow is too late.

The obvious question is how do I live ready? By what measure do I examine myself so that I'm ready, that I'm in tune with the King when he comes to judge?

Jesus in the 'Sermon on the Mount' said these sobering words; "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21) Who are the people who are ready?

Jesus emphasises his point with the parable about the house built on the rock and the house built on the sand. Again there is a distinction and a dramatic outcome. The

house on the rock did what when the inevitable storm came? Stood firm. Notice they didn't start building at the onset of the storm. What happened to the house on the sand? Disaster.

What was the difference? The first person; 'hears Jesus' words and puts them into practice.' (Matt. 7:24) While the second

'Do the will of the Father'

person; 'hears Jesus' words and doesn't put them into practice.' (Matt. 7:26) They both hear Jesus' words, but only one of them goes and lives by them. Builds their life based on what Jesus' says, trusting Jesus with their life. That's living ready.

After all that's what salvation is; trusting Jesus with our lives enough to do what he says. When we say that we are saved by faith not by works, that's what we mean. We take Jesus at his word. We trust him, so if Jesus says

it I do it. I know I can trust Jesus with my life, after all he hasn't withheld his life from me. He's made himself known being born our brother. He's given his life for us on the cross rather than leave us under the curse of sin. He took that horrendous punishment upon himself. And being God, he just might know something about how to live life to the max.

If I say I'm saved by faith not by works and then go off and ignore Jesus, go off and do the very opposite of what Jesus says, then I'm fooling myself. I'm a goat.

Jesus hasn't given his life that I might slander others with careless gossip. Jesus hasn't given his life that I can have affairs and freely discard my marriage doing whatever I like sexually, indulging in pornography. Jesus hasn't given his life that I can go off and indulge in idolatry; like Freemasonry, like building my life around what I can consume. Jesus hasn't given his life so that I can continue on

playing god and not changing the way I think and act. Jesus hasn't given his life that I just live for myself and ignore the rest of his family. 'I'm alright, so the world is fine' isn't Jesus' creed.

In these three parables alarm bells are ringing seeking to shake me to the core. Tim, don't fool yourself with empty words, do what Jesus says. Trust Jesus with your life enough to do what he says. Otherwise I'm just empty, good-for-nothing words, and I'd be a real goat.

One commentary I read this week said that; 'except for visiting the imprisoned, the deeds Jesus lists are standard righteous deeds in Jewish ethics. Providing for the poor, giving hospitality to the stranger and visiting the sick were basic to Jewish piety.' What struck me is that here we have a basic norm for showing love toward other people. This is basic, where we start from and it is all so doable for everyone.

When the King speaks to the righteous he says; "Truly I tell you whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matt. 25:40) I think Jesus is here emphasising our life together as church, as his community of brothers and sisters in Christ.

It's doing things for the

Did for the least of my brothers and sisters

least; Jesus is never into big noting himself, but calls us to serve one another as he has served us. But here he emphasises the least of these 'brothers and sisters of mine'.

Coming to a worship service, singing well, looking good, giving plenty in the offering isn't highlighted. Maybe that's just the very things those who were surprised were doing as they ignored the needs of the person right next them.

The Pharisees missed Jesus standing right there in front of them, as they faithfully worshipped weekly, gave 10%, read the bible diligently, memorising it and went out week nights discussing it, while walking past the widow and orphans.

Warning bells are ringing. Nowhere has Jesus called me to play religious games, but rather to love real people in very real down-to-earth actions. Give the thirsty a drink of water, not a hearty

greeting wishing them well and then moving on. Not sitting next to them, ignoring their needs doing my religious ritual so I can feel good about myself for another week. Invite the hungry home and give them some food. Inconvenience myself and go and visit one of the many shut-ins in our church community.

It really strikes me that Jesus, not me but Jesus, puts an emphasis on loving his brothers and sisters and characteristically loving the least, those who can't