

# St Martins C3 – October 30, 2022

## Knowing God – The Just Judge

### Sermon Summary:

Looking back on your life, do you think you have made the most of the time and opportunities you have had? If you could have the time again, what would you do differently? Pondering on whether we have made the most of our lives, begs the question of whether we are accountable to anyone other than ourselves for what we have done with our lives. God has revealed that we do have to give an account of our lives to Him, one day. (Heb 9:27) **We will all face God's judgement.** That judgement is non-negotiable. It is just a fact of life.

The reality of a future judgement framed much of Jesus' teaching. (e.g: Matt 12:35-37) It was a clear understanding of the early church. (Rom 14:12) It is also logical. God is the one who gave us our lives and gave us opportunity and responsibility. Therefore, it makes sense that He would be the One who will ask us to give an account of what we have done with what He has given to us.

The reality of God's judgement, raises a couple of important questions:

### 1) What is God like as a judge?

Psalm 97:1-2 says that we ought to rejoice in God's justice, because with God's justice comes a restoration of God's goodness to us and the world around us. God will judge justly because He has all the knowledge and Holy character required to judge justly.

However, many raise the objection that a just judge would not send people to Hell. What God has revealed is that He doesn't want to send anyone to Hell. (John 3:16-18) God's judgement includes whether we want to be WITH Christ or not? If we want to live WITHOUT Christ in the present, then God let's us live without Christ in the future. Hell is simply the place where Christ isn't present. Hell is where you are left to be yourself, without Christ. So, the real question is, can you live with yourself (without Christ's influence) for eternity?

## **2) What will we be judged for?**

### **A) Aligning our lives with Christ's work on the cross.**

Only Jesus removes our sin and makes us righteous before a Holy God. You can't earn your way to Heaven by being good enough. We have to align ourselves with what Jesus did on the cross in order to stand holy before God on judgement day. (Col 1:21-22)

### **B) Aligning our lives with Christ's ongoing work in the world.**

God has called each of us to partner with Him in extending His Kingdom in the world around us. How well we point others towards Christ and honour Christ in all that we do, will be judged on judgement day. (1 Corinthians 3:5-15) If we live in such a way that all that we do points others to Christ, then we are building something that will last into eternity.

So, the big question for today is: **How does knowing that judgement is coming in these 2 areas of our lives in the future change how we live in the present?**

## **Suggested questions for discussion:**

*Do you think we live our lives with enough awareness of God's future judgement in mind?*

*If more people did live with this awareness, how would they live differently from what they do now?*

*Why does God send people to Hell?*

*Why does God allow people into Heaven?*

*What are some examples of things that we have done that will be burned up on judgement day, and things that we will carry into eternity?*

*How does knowing that judgement is coming (in terms of our alignment with Christ's work on the cross and our alignment with Christ's ongoing work in the world) in the future change how we live in the present?*

## Monday's Devotion – Treasures in Heaven

### Matthew 6:19-21

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

The treasures of heaven that are spoken about here are real and possible. As we will see this week, Jesus was very clear on the fact that God will carefully look at what we have done and reward us in eternity. This is the treasures of heaven Jesus is speaking about. The point here, is the rewards of heaven are things that will last and cannot be destroyed, so they are the things worth prioritising. As Jesus says at the end of this passage. “Seek first the Kingdom of God and all these things (earthly needs) will be given to you.”

Consider today the priorities of your life. Are they the priorities of heaven or priorities of this world? Earthly priorities maybe important right now and the rewards may be more imminent, but we cannot take them into eternity. The heavenly rewards are not yet seen, so it is a faith step for us to live for them now, but Jesus promises that it will all be worth it.

The final point this scripture makes is that our heart, (or the motivations of our lives), follows what we value or prioritise. So let us be careful what we value and how much value we put on the things of this world, because doing so can draw our hearts away from what is truly important.

## Tuesday's Devotion – Wheat and Weeds

### Matthew 13:41-43

*“The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.”*

This is the end of passage where Jesus is explaining the parable about the wheat and the weeds. The wheat are the righteous who have put their trust in Christ. The weeds are those who follow the devil and his ways.

The main point of the parable is that the weeds are not pulled out from among the wheat early on, because doing so will damage the wheat. The harvest of everything happens at the same time and then it's all separated out. God in His wisdom is giving time for the righteous to get established and flourish. He knows that the downside to this is that this delay also gives evil the opportunity to flourish, however, judgement or the harvest will come one day. We may want God's judgement to come sooner than later, but just as a farmer knows the perfect time to bring in the harvest, so does God.

Seeing evil flourish in the world grieves me, as I am sure it grieves you too. We need to keep in mind that it also grieves God. He does care. He will bring His judgement one day. Our focus ought not be on the weeds, but on multiplying the wheat. Or, to put it another way, extend righteousness in the world around us.

## Wednesday's Devotion – Charlatans

### Matthew 7:21-23

*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”*

This is an intriguing passage theologically. How can a person prophesy, drive out demons and perform miracles without the power of God? How can they have the power of God without being a Christian? If miracle workers don't even get into heaven, is there any hope for those who never participate in a miracle?

Here and in many other places Jesus warns that there will be false prophets, teachers and messiah's that will come. They will have the appearance of being genuine, but they will be puppets of the evil one, not servants of Christ. We are to be careful and discerning in our judgement of those who speak in the Lord's name. Similar to the parable of the weeds, there is a time where they will have an influence, but their judgement is coming.

The key line in this passage is “I never knew you.” Following Christ is about a genuine open and honest relationship. It is not about seeking God's power or doing miracles. If we want to avoid being judged as a false follower, we need to KNOW Christ. We need to let power flow from relationship, not be in the relationship to get the power. On judgement day, there is a big difference between the two.

## Thursday's Devotion – Positions please

### **Matthew 18:4**

*“Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”*

### **Matthew 20:26-28**

*“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

The context of the Matthew 20 passage is a request for two of the disciples to have places of authority with Jesus in His Kingdom in the future. Interestingly, Jesus doesn't deny that those places of authority exist, rather, He points out that His Father is the one who gives those places to those He chooses.

Responsibility and authority exist in God's Kingdom. There is nothing evil or bad with people taking on leadership roles in God's Kingdom. The point that Jesus is making here is that God's criteria for how He judges who gets those positions is different to ours. We might look for gifts, or charisma or talent, God looks for humility and faithfulness. Therefore, those who we think are not worthy in this world, may be the ones who are in authority in the next. The first shall be last and the last shall be first. How God knows we have a genuine heart to serve Him and not ourselves is when there is evidence around our lives of willing service to others, where we don't get any credit. We do what we do for God because it is the right thing to do, not because it is the most popular thing to do.

## Friday's Devotion –

### Matthew 25:21

*“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”*

The last two of the three parables in Matthew 25 are some of the clearest passages on the judgement of our works before God. God is watching what we do with what we have been given and will reward us accordingly.

In this parable regarding the talents, the main point Jesus is making is that God expects us to multiply that which we have been given. God won't judge us from trying and failing, He will judge us for not trying at all. The things of God's Kingdom naturally grow when we invest them into the lives of those around us, but if we keep the life of the Kingdom to ourselves, it is like burying our money, rather than investing it.

The other secondary point of this parable is also challenging. Those who do multiply God's Kingdom work in the present will be rewarded with the responsibility of multiplying more of God's Kingdom work in the future. (“I will put you in charge of many things”) The clear message is, be responsible with what God has given you in the present and He will give you much more in the future.

The obvious question to ponder on is, what has God given you and are you multiplying it? Serving God, doesn't only have an effect in the present, it determines how He uses you in Heaven.