

St Martins C3 – September 17, 2023

Come, Lord Jesus – The Judgment, Hell, and Right Now

Sermon Notes:

In this series we are looking at Revelation 20-22, today we explore what will happen on Judgment Day.

Read Revelation 20:11-15

A - The Judgment

There will be day when all people will be called to give an account of their life. On that day all people will stand before God and He will judge them.

Every person who has hurt and destroyed others will be judged. We should take great comfort in this. All evil will be made removed from the world. It is only a belief in God that allows justice to triumph.

Read 1 Corinthians 4:5

But it's not just others who will be judged. We will be too. The book of our life will be opened and everything we have done will be laid out, our good and bad, our actions and motives.

But that is not where it ends. There is another book, called the Lamb's Book of Life for all who trust in Jesus.

Read Colossians 2:14

For the Christian, Christ's judgment is not a punishment; it is a reminder that we are pardoned. However, if your name is not in the Book of Life then there is another fate that awaits.

B - Hell

Here are three views on the nature of Hell

- Hell is Conscious Torment
Revelation 14:9-11; Isaiah 66:22-24; Mark 9:22-24
- Hell is Conditional immortality
Matthew 10:28; 2 Peter 3:7; John 3:16
- Hell is Self-Consuming Futility
Romans 1:18-32; 2:1-5; Galatians 6:7

The nature of Hell may be uncertain but there are a few things which we do know for sure. Hell is Final, Eternal, and Awful. Hell's chief torment is disconnection from God

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9

C - What About Now?

- i – Get your name in the Lamb's Book of Life
- ii – Warn Others
- iii – Turn from Judgment Worthy Deeds

We need to live in awareness of the future reality and adjust our life for that moment. Don't live in fear of it but trust in the grace of God to carry you through that moment as He carries you through every moment.

Questions for Connect Groups:

What stood out to you from today's message?

What does this message tell you about God?

What does this message tell you about humans?

How do you feel about the Day of Judgment?

What would cause people to be fearful of this day?

What will Judgment Day reveal to us about the grace of God?

How do you know your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life?

What is your view on the nature of Hell?

How can we go about sharing the reality of Judgment Day in a way that doesn't turn people off?

What things in your life would you like to remove now so they don't face the fire of judgment?

What would you like to nurture that will receive praise?

What will you do as a result of this message?

Songs from Today:

King of Glory, Grace is On Our Side, Living Hope, That's the Power, Holy Ground

Monday's Devotion – Every Knee Will Bow

Read Romans 14:10-13; Hebrews 9:27; 2 Timothy 4:1

This week I read the story of an 86 year old devout Christian who was scammed out of \$20,000. As she stood in the court room where her perpetrator was sentenced she said she had found it hard to pray the Lord's Prayer as a result. Praying, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," stuck in her throat.

One thing that should give her solace is that one day all wrongdoers will not just stand in a New Zealand court room, but they will stand in God's court room. Knowing that God will one day bring all people to justice and humble them before Him helps us to not hold onto offense but release it to God.

As the 86 woman showed, sometimes that is hard, but she is praying for the ability to forgive and we can pray this as well.

The reality of the judgment is spoken of throughout the Bible, but particularly in the New Testament. It is an important point that is highlighted in the Christian Creeds.

"He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end."

Isn't it great to know that not only will all people be judged, and every knee will be forced to bow before God but the end result is God's Kingdom without end. Today, spend some time considering what that Kingdom will look like and commit to bringing it to earth now.

Tuesday's Devotion – Sheep and The Goats

Read Matthew 25:31-46; Ephesians 2:1-10

One of the teachings of Jesus shortly before going to the cross is a depiction of the Final Judgment. In it, people are separated like Sheep and Goats and are judged based on the things they have done.

In this scene, the judgment is made on people's care for the King based on their treatment of His people. Those who feed the hungry, give a drink to the thirsty, show hospitality to the stranger, care for the sick and visit the person in prison are declared righteous and welcomed into the King's Kingdom. Those who fail to care are cast into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.

Does this mean that judgment for all people is based on their works? A surface reading may indicate so, but there is something deeper going on here. Jesus is showing that a commitment to Him will manifest itself in the way that others are treated. Faith and works must go together.

Ephesians 2 makes it very clear that salvation is not and cannot be based on works. We do not have enough righteousness to earn our way into God's Kingdom. This is a gift of God's grace. However, part of accepting that gift of grace is to step forward into the good works that God has prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).

May you have confidence in your salvation today, apart from your works, *and* may you step forward and care for the least of the King's people as is right for all people saved by grace.

Wednesday's Devotion – All Can Be Saved

Read 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9-13; Romans 10:13-14, 17

Sometimes, when people talk about the reality of Judgment Day and Hell, they speak about it as though it is something God is happy about. They seem to take glee in there being a group that is out, as long as they are part of the group that is in.

Yet, Scripture shows us that God's love and kindness means that He does not want anyone to perish but for everyone to come to repentance. He wants everyone to come to a knowledge of who He is and to live in His truth. He wants His love to be given to everyone. He delights in the salvation of just one person.

Every person in our life can be saved by God. There is not one person who is too far from the grace of God. All who believe in Him and call on His name will be saved. That includes you despite your faults.

Part of our responsibility is to pray with perseverance and share the message of God with everyone in our lives.

Today, think about the people in your family, workplace, and your friends who haven't accepted Jesus. Cry out to God on their behalf and ask Him to reveal Himself to them. Then look for moments and opportunities to declare the truth of the gospel: God loves them and longs to be in relationship with them.

Thursday's Devotion – Lazarus and the Rich Man

Read Luke 16:19-31

One of the most interesting afterlife teachings of Jesus is found in Luke 16. It is a story of a rich man who lives in luxury, but has a poor man named Lazarus at his doorstep. When Lazarus dies, he is invited into the Heavenly banquet whereas the rich man is in anguish in the flames.

Many have seen this as a teaching of the nature of life after death. Others believe it is a parable. One reason to believe it is not a parable is because of the peculiar mention of Lazarus' name, which would be unique amongst the parables of Jesus.

However, the name Lazarus means, "God is help," so is likely symbolic. There are other things that point to it being a parable such as the way it begins (the same as the previous parable), the reversal of fortunes (a common trope in ancient parables), the way the poor man's name is mentioned but the rich man's is forgotten.

Nearly all commentators agree that this is not a television camera giving us a view of life after death but is a parable whose point is the great reversal that Jesus offers all who see Him as the Messiah prophesied by the Hebrew Scriptures.

The key point is not whether we are rich or poor or whether we have good things in this life or suffer, but whether we choose to put our trust in Jesus. For those who do there is a reward, for those who don't there is punishment and eternal destruction. Today, choose again to trust in Jesus and follow Him with your life.

Friday Devotion – Motivation for Godly Living

Read 1 Peter 4:1-8

When Peter talks about our motivation to live for God, He identifies two things. The first is our attitude towards suffering. Because we identify with Christ's suffering and embrace the difficulties that come from following Jesus we are not lured by the evil excesses of the world.

The second motivation is that all people will have to face God on the Day of Judgment. Peter reminds the Christians that even though it feels like others are getting away with destructive living they will stand before God's judgment seat.

The implication is that the followers of Jesus will stay away from the works of darkness because they also know they will stand before the judgment.

Knowing that the end will come does not just result in strict living, as though the Christian life is only about the avoidance of sin. Instead, it is the nurturing of the good things God calls each of us too. Peter's list in verses 7-8 is an interesting one. He first mentions prayer, then love and finally hospitality.

If we devote ourselves to these three things, we will fulfil much of what Christ has for us. Think today about devoting yourself to prayer, love and having a home that is open to others. When the Day of Judgment comes may you be praised for your obedience in these areas.

Spend time in prayer now asking God how you can fulfil what He is asking you to fulfil.