

copy sent Paul

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"THE FUTURE REWARDS OR PUNISHMENTS"

Matthew 25:46

Man in Debt to another had given a promissory note asking one privilege - write in date
Request granted - He wrote "Payable on the day of judgment" - Holder of note took it to a judge.
Man who held the note laughed - Thinking judgment long way off - Judge "This is your day of judgment
The note is due now." - day of I arrive for you - Verdict final.

INTRODUCTION
In our last sermon, we discussed the matter of crowns in the New Testament.

We talked about the rewards that one receives. We mentioned first, the crown of life. Which would be given to martyrs, and to people who did little things for the Master. We talked about the (incorruptible) crown that was presented because of self-denial. Thirdly, we discussed the crown of (rejoicing) - which is the soul winner's crown. And as we read Dan. 12:3 - they that be wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament. And they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever. Prov. 11:30 - He that winneth souls is wise.

And then we discussed the crown of (glory). Which will be given to those who do not by-pass God. Those who have a passion to please God. Those who look after his sheep.

And then finally we discussed the crown of (righteousness) which had to do with the presence of the Lord himself. Those who had fought a good fight and had finished the course. That here was a crown that the Lord himself would present.

Finally, we talked about Rev. 4:10-11 - in which the four and twenty elders are pictured. As falling down before him and worshipping. And presenting their crowns unto him. What is the greatest gift you can present or give your Master. Nothing less than your life. And when your earthly life is past, and you have gone to glory, then you will be able to lay these crowns at his feet.

As we continue the study of the future rewards and punishment, we have a solemn and final issue that is brought to the entire human race. In our text, Matt. 25:46 - and these shall go away into everlasting punishment. But the righteous into life eternal." The great day of dread decision and despair, in regard to one class is given. But there is respect for the other group. There will be a day when hope meets its fulfillment. And there will be perfection in eternity.

This great subject is introduced by a discourse by our Saviour in the 24th and 25th chapters of Matt. In the 24th chapter he describes the coming destruction of Jerusalem. In terms that are strong. That eminent destruction is upon them. The temple at Jerusalem. And the Disciples had asked him - tell us, when these things shall be. What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world. Now he answers the last of these questions concerning the end of the world, in the 25th chapter.

He describes first of all by parable of the (ten virgins.)

Second, by the parable of the (talents.)

Third, without a parable, he describes the (coming of the son of man) In V. 31 to 45. "When the son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him. Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations. And he shall separate them one from another. As the shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats. And he shall set the sheep on the right hand and the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them - on his right

hand, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

42-43 Then Jesus follows with a glorious invitation. "For I was hungered, and ye gave me to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and ye took me in. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came unto me.

44 And then the Disciples were wondering - when shall we be in such a condition ? and minister unto thee. And the King shall answer and say, verily, "I say unto you, inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he also say unto them, on the left hand, (depart) from me ye cursed into the everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels. For I was hungry and ye gave me no meat. I was thirsty, you gave me no drink. I was a stranger and you took me not in. I was naked and you clothed me not. Then they shall also say, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, thirst, a stranger, naked, and sick, or in prison - and did not minister unto Thee. Then shall he answer them saying, verily I say unto you - inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.

There is a story about (Martin Tours). He was a Roman Soldier and a Christian. One cold winter day as he entered a city, a (beggar) stopped him and asked him for alms. Martin had no money, but the beggar was blue and shivering with cold. Martin gave him what he had. He took off his soldier's coat, worn and torn as it was, he cut it in two. He gave half of it to the beggar man. That night, he had a dream. It was a Heavenly place - and all of the angels and Jesus in the midst of them. Jesus was wearing half of a Roman soldier's coat. One of the angels said to him,

Master, ~~while~~ you are wearing that battered old coat, who gave it to you. And Jesus answered softly - my servant Martin gave it to me.

Sometimes I wonder when we will learn the generosity which gives and helps men in the simplest things. It is then that we will know the joy of helping Jesus Christ himself.

And following this Scripture, Jesus gives this text. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment. But the righteous into life eternal.

There are three or four things that we need to say about this text, that will be helpful. First of all, there is a point of decision. And second, a point of division. And thirdly, a point of duration. Now all three of these suggestions are found in the text that we are going to confine this message too.

I. THE POINT OF DECISION.

This text tells us that there is a point that is established in the case - that we make a decision. Have you loved the king, now on the judgement seat. When the evidence is taken in your case - what will it read. Matt. 12:36-37. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof, in the day of judgement. And by the words, thou shalt be justified. And by thy words, thou shalt be condemned.

The justified presented in this passage, are those who have had the work of salvation. Where the question of pardon is concerned, is the only indispensable condition of justification.

Now unbelief is the ground of condemnation. And damnation of the unbeliever. This rejects all the love, the blood, the suffering, and the glorious work of Christ in his triumph over sin, and death, and the devils.

Faith accepts the great provisions of salvation. For without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6.

So the Christian here is a reality of our faith. In James 2:14-18, he says, what does it profit my brethren though a man say he has faith, and have not works. Can faith save him. If a brother or sister be naked or destitute of food, and you say, depart in peace. Be warned. Not withstanding you give them not these things. That are needful, what does it profit. Even, so faith, if it have not works is dead. Being alone.

But wilt thou know a man that faith without works is dead. Then he gives a fine illustration of Abraham who offers his son. Abraham was a man who had works when he offered his son on the alter. Now his works were carried out by faith and really made perfect.

Now this happened many years after Abraham had answered the call and of course, it reveals to us that Abraham was still living by faith. And it illustrates to us,

that he made a great decision, to be the covenant seal.

So the decision here - is before (men in this life) And before God at the day of judgement. It is not by merit but it is by evidence of the good works. And I may add, that an (obedient life) is evidence to ourselves. I John 5:2-3. "By this we know that we love the children of God. When we love God and keep his commandments."

Then, at the day of judgement there is nothing said here about some of these doctrinal beliefs that people seem to think are important. But it is going to be whether or not we love the Lord God, and this principle is going to be determined by your decision. And the end of this decision is going to produce a pure heart and a good conscience.

This is the grace, must live and sing
When faith and hope shall cease
Must sound from every joyful string
Through the sweet groves of bliss.

It is joyful to think of Heaven where all the soul is love - and where every Spirit is filled and fired with a joy and consciousness and a free full fellowship with God. And the Spirit of just men made perfect.

Love is the fairest flower that blooms. It's beauties never die. On earth, among the saints it grows and ripens in the skies. Such as this will be great

proof of a decision that has been made about the future.

II. THE POINT OF DIVISION

Now our text points out that there is going to be a division made in the matter of the future. These shall go away into everlasting punishment. Add to that, Rev. 20:14-15, and death and Hell will cast unto the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire! We are speaking about a solemn subject. This is the awful, awesome, final torment, that is given in the entire word of God. It's warnings, it's appeals, it's threats. It is given against the background of the great day of judgement, by Almighty God.

Hebrews, it is a pitiful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Our God is a consuming fire.

Ez. 33:11 As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. But that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways. For why will you die.

2 Cor. 5:11 Paul says, know therefore the terror of the Lord. We persuade men, we beseech men. So our Lord said, that if thy hand offend thee, cut it off. Cast it from thee. It is better to enter into eternal life crippled than to be cast into Hell where the fire is never quenched. And where the worms shall never die. Where the wailing and the gnashing of teeth. If thy foot offend thee, he said, cut it off.

cast it from thee. It is better to enter into life, eternal life, with one foot - than have two feet to be cast into Hell. Or if your eye offend you - pluck it out. It is better to enter into eternal life with one eye, than to have both eyes and be cast into Hell fire. Matt. 5:29-30.

Now this is the word of our living Lord about a division that is going to take place.

There will be awesome judgement of God upon sin. You never let anyone persuade you that our Lord came down to Heaven just to teach us a better example. We had all of the fine examples that we needed. We had Abraham and some of these other men who had lived on the face of the earth. But when our Lord saw the plight of our souls, and damnation coming - he came to deliver us from evil. To offer us remission of sin, by his blood. The awful tragedy we face as lost sinners brought him down from Heaven.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

There is a poem that goes -

I dreamed that the great judgement morning
Had dawned and the trumpet had blown
I dreamed that the nations had gathered
To judgement before the white throne.

From the throne came a bright shining angel
And stood on the land and the sea
And swore with his hand raised to Heaven
Time was no longer to be.

The rich man was there but his money
Had melted and vanished away
A pauper, he stood in the judgement
His debts were too heavy to pay.

The great man was there but his greatness
When death came, was left far behind
The angel that opened the records
Not a trace of his greatness could find.

The gambler was there, and the drunkard
And the man that had sold them the drink
With the people who had sold them the license
Together in Hell they did sink.

The moral man came to the judgement
But his self-righteous rags would not do
The men who had crucified Jesus
Had passed off as moral men do.

The soul that had put off salvation
Not tonight, I'll get saved by and by
No time now to think of religion
At last, he had found time to die.

And oh, what a weeping and wailing
As the lost were told of their fate
They cried to the rocks and the mountains
They prayed, but their prayer was too late!

The Bible says, and whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was
cast into the lake of fire. They are solemn words about a division. Time and time
again, in the pages of God's book, we have separation and division between the lost
and the saved.

There is an example of this in the parable of the tares. Let them grow together
said the Lord, the wheat and the tares. But, at the end of the age, God will send forth

his angel and burn the tares with a fire that is never quenched. And after he has gathered the saints, his children, and his wheat to be with him. Matt. 13:24-30.

Matt. 13 - There is also the parable of the fish caught in the net. The good fish are kept - but the bad fish are thrown away. So shall it be, said Jesus, at the time of the great division, and the separation between the good and the bad. Between those whose sins are forgiven, and those who die in unforgiven sin.

It says as in the days of Noah, he was taken out, and the judgement of God fell on the earth. So, it is going to be in the coming of Christ. Two shall be sleeping in a bed. One shall be taken and the other left. Two shall be grinding at a mill, one taken and the other left. Two shall be working in the field, one shall be taken the other left. Matt. 24:37-41. Now this is going to be a great division and a great separation. The story of the five virgins who entered the Kingdom of Heaven. And the five foolish maidens who were left outside. And the door was shut.

The shepherd is going to divide his sheep and the goats. The saved from the lost.

And we find that it says in the text, these shall be turned away into everlasting punishment. That eternal abode of damnation in which Dives died and he lifted up his eyes in torment. In the flames and the fire of his sins unforgiven. He died without God. And there was a great gulf fixed between. So the residents of one cannot pass

to the other. It is going to be a division that will be eternal. In Heaven, God has washed away the sins of his children. They will stand perfect without spot and without blemish, because their names are written in the lambs book of life.

There are some people who would have you to believe that this thing (will never) happen. But there are some Bible terms that help us to know.

For example, Bishop S. M. Merrill, mentioned one time the New Testament idea of Hell. And he used two or three of the terms that we are familiar with.

✓ The Old Testament word sheol Sometimes relates to the state of the dead. Sometimes it expressed the state of the body and the state of the soul. It does not express duration - but it means in general, the (unseen) world. The state of the departed souls.

✓ Tartarus occurs but once. 2 Peter 2:4. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell or to Tartarus and delivered them into change of darkness - to be reserved unto Judgement. This is the prison of the fallen angels.

✓ Hades - it occurs (11 times) in the New Testament. And it is translated Hell 10 times. And grave once. It is the Greek of the Hebrew sheol.

And when a passage is quoted in the New Testament from the Old - containing sheol, it is rendered Hades.

There is some difference of application, but on the whole - there is an agreement. It means the unseen world, the place of the departed souls. And expresses nothing as to their character or condition. It always relates to the soul in a disembodied state. And never to the body.

So that it should never be rendered grave. There are other Greek words that express the receptacle of the dead body. Such as a tomb or spulcher. But this word admits nothing material.

The only application is to the state of the dead - between the death and the resurrection.

Gehenna - now this occurs in the New Testament 12 times. And with a single exception, James 3:6, it occurs in the discourse of our Lord alone. Now the Jews primarily understood this word. The original meaning of this word means the valley of the Hinnom. This was a place in the valley south of Jerusalem. Once the seat of idolatrous worship. Where stood the image of Molock. The Canannites. And afterwards Israel in their back-slidden state. Perform cruel rites before this idol.

King Josiah destroyed this worship and polluted the place - and it became a receptacle of the filth of the city. And it was a place where they worshipped the idol - and everything here was opposed to God.

And we find that Jesus called that place of torment Gehenna or Hell. And this place was the place where the heathen burned their children to a fire god Molech. God cursed this place. And it became the dumping ground for the filth of Jerusalem. In this place of Gehenna, the worm never died. It ate on the filthy mass. The fire was never quenched - burned the endless waste. The gnashing of teeth never ceased. As the jackals fought with one another over the dead carcasses. That were carried out and placed in that horrible place. This is the Gehenna of Hell. This was what our Lord, who speaks of it, even Jesus says - is going to be a division. A separation. And those that are in this condition are going to be fixed. No man can ever be saved beyond death. No lost man will ever be saved beyond the grave. No individual who has met this great division will have another chance.

During World War II in the midst of an air raid in London, a fire was raging out of control. And there was a cry of the dying. Buildings were falling. There was an evangelist of Christ preaching the Gospel of the Son of God. When he preached a skeptic broke into his sermon and said, "listen Preacher, this is Hell." The bombing of London. But the Preacher replied, sir this is not Hell. And I will give you three reasons why.

First, I am a Christian, and there are no Christians in Hell.

Second, there is a church right around the corner - and there are no church houses

Third, I am preaching the Gospel of the Son of God - and there is no preaching of the Gospel in Hell. About three weeks later, the same evangelist was standing in an open air meeting in Hyde Park. Preaching again. When he gave the invitation, the first to come forward was this skeptic. When he took the Preacher's hand, he said Preacher, I'm the man who said the bombing of London was Hell. You answered me so well and so true, it convicted my heart. And I have come forward to turn to Jesus as my Saviour and to accept him now. There is no goodness and no hope for any man in torment. Because in eternity, there will be a separation of the sinners from the Christ.

Hence, we have the point of decision that must be made. And secondly, we have the point of division that is clear - that this will be the final state of the individual.

The division is certainly clear - with the parable of the rich man and the beggar. Because the rich man confesses himself, tormented in a flame, and begs a drop of water to cool his tongue. Now he had had many good things in life and Lazarus - evil things. But he is now tormented, and Lazarus is comforted. Besides all of this, between us and you - there is a great gulf.

The rich man despairing for himself - then makes an appeal to Abraham on behalf of his five brothers at his Father's house. The doctrine of the future, eternal punishments and rewards, is a solemn subject. As Abraham answers, they have Moses and the prophets let them hear them. And if one went from the dead and preached - though one has already rose from the dead. And they turn their backs on him.

Now you can see very easily what your destiny is going to be. There are the sheep and the goats - the righteous and the wicked. And all that are in their graves - the just and the unjust. The solemn and fearful doom of the wicked. Is to a lake of fire and brimstone - prepared for his Devil and his angels. Now some of us shrink from the awful sentence - we cannot believe that a good God who is merciful be thus.

But remember this, Prov. 1:24-30 says, because I have called and ye refused. I have stretched out my hand and no man regardeth. But ye have set at naught all of my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calmity. I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you - then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer. They will seek me early, but they shall not find me. And they shall hate knowledge. And did not chose the fear of the Lord. They will none of my counsel - they despised all of my reproof.

That is the story of a stubborn fight against the efforts of God who is good and who has love. And God will have nothing else to do but to laugh at your calmity. You have mocked him.

And you have rebelled against him.

III. DURATION

This is the last point - we'll have time to just give a moment too. And these,

shall go away unto everlasting punishment - and the righteous into life eternal.
Now this translated, a word that is used probably sixty times or more in the
New Testament. The enduring life of the blessing. Everlasting. For God so loved
the world that he gave his only begotten Son. That whosoever believeth in Him,
should not perish, but have everlasting life. Eternal life.

If the saved live forever - then the damned live forever. If there is everlasting
life in Heaven, there is everlasting life in the fires of damnation and Hell. And the
lost go to everlasting punishment. The future rewards and punishment are so clear in
this text.

You consider the duration of this - then there is urgency for you to know that
there is no probation period. If you are ever going to receive forgiveness, you must
receive it now. Rev. 22:10-11. We read that the time is at hand - he that is unjust,
let him be unjust still. He which is filthy, let him be filthy still. He that is
righteous - let him be righteous still. And he that is holy, let him be holy still.
Behold, I come quickly - and my reward is with me. To give every man according to
the work that shall be. As the tree falls, so must it lie.

To think there is going to be something after death for you is to cheat your
soul.

The hardening in sin - and the thing that we have to do is to overcome this
disposition of which we have of disobedience. And God has given his Almighty power
to bless us with.

And I feel there is one thing that we are assured of. That at the day of judgement, it will appear that God has done all that he could do. Consistently with his moral government and his freedom of human will, to save every human being - for he is no respecter of persons. What knowledge did we need that he did not reveal.

What law did we require, that he did not enact.

What warning did our condition demand that he did not give.

What grace did our guilt require in order to obtain pardon and salvation.
That he did not present in his son Jesus Christ.

What light did we need that his word did not offer. What power do we want that his spirit cannot bestow.

These is well defined in the context of our text. Now this final punishment is called a second death - the final separation from God. The fountain of all life. The source of all blessing. Into the lake of fire and brimstone where there will be punishment day and night.

Now the issues of the righteous life are clear in this text. It is life eternal.

Life it makes no difference how you consider it. It is a thing that we greatly enjoy. To have a consciousness of being. And enjoyment, a satisfaction, and realization of a thousand things that may minister to our enjoyment. But there is nothing like life that we find joy in.

And then comes that great benediction of the Heavenly Father, who comes and washes us in the blood of the lamb, as pure as wool - as white as snow. And growing in his likeness and image. And then we receive an inheritance that will be incorruptible - undefiled, and fade not away. That will help to make Heaven complete.

There will be no draw-backs in Heaven. No longer will we have graves and plots in cemeteries. No longer will we have eyes filled with human tears. No longer will we see the highways of our land stained with human blood. No longer will we be bereaved by the things that trouble us here - like disease and death, and failure.

But the arrangements have been made by God to go on through eternity.

The question is, will you accept this opportunity of eternal well being. Will you strive to escape the torments to which sin exposes you. Will you listen to the calls of your Father. Who says, that he is able to make all things new.