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Matthew 25:31-46

31. “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

32. ‘All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;

33. and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

34. ‘Then the King will say to those on His right, “Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

35. “For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;

36. naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.”

37. ‘Then the righteous will answer Him, “Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You *something* to drink?

38. “And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?

39. “When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?”

40. ‘The King will answer and say to them, “Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.”

41. ‘Then He will also say to those on His left, “Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

42. for I was hungry, and you gave Me *nothing* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink;

43. I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.”

44. ‘Then they themselves also will answer, “Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?”

45. ‘Then He will answer them, “Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.”

46. ‘These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’”

When Jesus returns, we will not be judged by what we have, but by what we have given.

During the Christmas holidays, the tradition of giving and receiving gifts demands much of our attention. For the Christian, we are to focus primarily on God’s greatest gift to mankind, His Son Jesus. So our most important gifts will be given to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

As Jesus says in verse 40: “To the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even to the least of them, you did it to Me.”

Now some people read this passage and get the idea that Christians are instructed to give to any stranger or pan-handler on the street. But that is not what Jesus is saying here at all. True, any surplus that individual Christians have, after all the needs of the brethren are met, may be given to needy outsiders. But the needs within the church come first; that’s what Jesus is teaching here.

This year as we consider the birth of Jesus Christ, and the tradition of gift giving, let us consider what we will give to the birthday boy Himself! The wise men gave the baby Jesus gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These were used to finance God’s will for the Christ Child to survive and come to His own. Our gifts should do the same for His body today, which is the church.

So what have you given to the Lord Jesus this year? According to Jesus in this morning’s passage, your eternity depends on what you give, and to whom.

Merry Christmas to all.