

Christ the King Sunday

SEEING THE COMING KINGDOM

Matthew 25:31-46

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Michael Hoy

31 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." 37Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" 40And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." 41Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; 42for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me."

44Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” 45Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” 46And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’

DIAGNOSIS: Kingdom Out of Sight

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *Not Seeing the Least*

It's not like you have to look very hard. They're all around us, the least of these, the needy majority. And they're getting more major, more numerous by the day. In part, that's because they've been neglected—not simply by “big brother,” though that too, but by us as brother/sister, who seem to miss seeing them. It could make one's blind eye's cry; but for sure the cries of the least are heard and their tears are felt—by the Judge.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *Having the Least of Sight*

This crowd is so massive that it takes a massive number of excuses to let us off the hook (or so we hope). The worst of the excuses, but the one we basically employ, is not seeing the need—which really just means we have been looking out for ourselves. “When did we see you? Surely a glorious Judge like you would not have been missed!” But we have missed him in the crowd of the very least we have neglected. We don't see (trust, let alone repent of) how we have turned a blind eye not only to these “least,” but to the Judge who stands with and for them as well (as if there were nothing or No-One really to hold us accountable like this).

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *Out of the King's*

Final Sight

But come-uppance comes, sure enough. And when it does, it's too late to make excuses or claim reasons for our blindspots. It's not just the needy ones who are on hand to hear the weak case we have to present. It's the One who made himself friend of the crowds, that's making the final call on accountability. And we don't measure up in his sight when all is heard and seen.

PROGNOSIS: Thy Kingdom Comes! Out of Sight!

Step 4: Initial Diagnosis (Eternal Solution) : *The King Who Sees the Least*

Yet it is those who do not measure up as worthy in life for whom this Judge has come. You may not have known it from seeing him; he did not appear as Judge, but as one-cast-aside-crucified-supporter-of-the-needy. It is this One who said to the least, "I'm with you, and you're with me—all the way through cross and grave." Here's the One for those without a hope of being seen as favorable in life.

Step 5: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Solution) : *Having the Sight of the Least*

Those without hope, who are themselves least and in need, place hope—all of it—on him. They see Jesus as the One who is with them in the midst of their immeasurable lives. And in the presence of this One's brilliance, they are astounded in the final analysis: "When did we see you? We didn't recognize you." How could we when all we have to see is our historical dustbin-filled lives, longing for release, together with our needy, neglected brothers/sisters who were our chosen companions, placing all our hope not in ourselves or on the high-and-mighty, but on the One who made himself a companion with us? Yet it is precisely this One who rules over history—ours and all of it.

Step 6: Final Diagnosis (External Solution) : *Having the Least in Sight*

It is by this faith that trusts in this One, by faith in this compassionate soul-mate for the needy, that we employ our lives in service to one and all in need: hungry, thirsty, stranger, uncovered, ill, and imprisoned. We won't need to look far to find them; it's right here, right where the least didn't expect it! Here is the kingdom of the King! And here is the joy in seeing all in whom he may be found!