

**Gospel Verse**  
**Sunday, November 23, 2008**  
**(8:30 AM Mass)**

**“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’”**

■ **Mt. 25:34-36**

Oh, that's not easy stuff, is it? There really is an end of the world! And you can make a really good living on trying to figure out when the end of the world is going to come. But that's even more dangerous stuff. And the last...Oh, from the time of Jehovah's Witnesses, they are always waiting for the second coming of Christ. It could be any day now...1914 was the first time...as a matter of fact, there's a whole group called the Milleniumists that are convinced that this is the generation when Christ will be coming back.

In the 1970s we have the late-great Planet Earth. The book sold millions and millions of copies and Jesus didn't come back. And, just recently, they have this whole Left Behind series. As a matter of fact, somebody picked up on that and tried to make Jesus come back by returning everybody back to Israel. Not only is that bad theology, it's dangerous because we don't know. And we're not even supposed to know. As a matter of fact Jesus says don't even speculate as to when the second coming of Christ is going to be, when the end of the world is coming. Don't worry about that. That's for the Father. Even the Son, he says, doesn't worry about that.

But there is going to be an end of the world, at least an end of our world. And the end of our world is when we pass from this mortal existence into our everlasting existence that began at eternity and goes on to eternity. And there will be a judgment. Now, if you read different Gospels, the idea of judgment is very very different. If you read the Gospel of John, there is no judgment involved at all. There's not even any judgment of us. In the Gospel of John, Jesus (inaudible) and the Father (inaudible). All he wants you to do is come on in. The Father loves the world so much that he did not come to condemn the world or judge the world, but he gave his son to lay down his life so that all, all may be saved. You got to like St. John.

You got to be afraid of St. Matthew. We are constantly being judged in Matthew...he is forever dividing you into groups. Those on the right and those on the left. Those who make it and those who don't. We hate being divided into groups. I remember when I was a little boy there were always three reading groups – the Cardinals who were the really smart kids; then the Robins who were the middle kids; and then her were the Sparrows. I was always a Sparrow.

Well, today, we've got the sheep and the goats. The sheep are on his right side and the goats are on his left side. He is separating them according to a criteria. This is the final judgment. This is the final examination. And this is the preparation for the final exam. So, like any good teacher before the final exam he's going to call you in and say...and, of course, as good students, you're going to say, 'What's on the exam?' 'Teacher is this going to be on the exam?' 'What's going to be on the final examination, on the final judgment, on the time when we are going to be judged?'

Really, more accurately, and this is really true, I really believe at the end of our life when we face our God, our God will not be judging us. It will be we who will be judging ourselves. Do we choose to be joined or separated? And, whether we choose to be joined to God or separated from God there's quite a certain criteria.

Let me tell you what's not on the test, at least according to Matthew. What's not on the test is whether you were perfectly orthodox or that you had the right formulas or that you said the right words or that you

modeled the right creeds. There's a whole group of people that say you're not going to get into heaven unless you say this formula: I am sinner and I am lost and I take Jesus as my own personal savior and now I'm saved. That's not on the test. I'm sorry. God never said that was on the test. But, an awful lot of people are going to be saying those words. Oh, Lord, Lord, and Jesus said himself are not going to enter the kingdom of God. If everyone says the words Lord, Lord (inaudible) enter the kingdom of God. I don't care what you say. Or, are there certain laws that we have to abide by? It's not on the final. Isn't that interesting?

But he separates them into two groups, one on the right and one on the left. Why are in this group? Why are we on this side, they ask? The ones who are on his right, the ones who are inheriting the kingdom and prepared the foundation of the world he says, Come to me'...

By the way, do you see what happens to Jesus from the beginning to the end of this Gospel? He comes in on a throne as a King with all the angels all around him. He's got myriads of angels. He's got power just coming out of his hands and his arms. By the end of the Gospel we find him pretty broken. Pretty miserable. And he says to those on his right, 'Come into my kingdom'. 'I was hungry and you fed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. And I was homeless and you took me in. I was in prison and you visited me.' And the just are going to say, 'Are you sure?' 'Are you sure?' Because we don't remember doing that. We don't remember seeing you. I do remember feeding this guy once. I remember clothing this guy. I remember visiting the one who was sick and remember visiting somebody who was in prison once. And then Jesus says, 'You didn't see me? You didn't get it?' 'No'. Utterly un-self-conscious. They just did it. No thought of reward. No thought of punishment. They just did it. 'Oh, enter into the joy of my kingdom because what you have done for the least of my brothers and sisters you've done unto me.'

Now you're hearing those criteria four different times. Once, when the Lord mentions it. Once when the just mention it over again. Now they are in the kingdom. And, now for the goats - exactly the same words. 'I was hungry and you did not feed me. I was thirsty and you did not give me to drink. I was naked and you did not clothe me. I was in prison and you did not visit me. I was homeless and you did not take me in'. And the response is exactly the same, but the motivation is very different. The motivation of the sheep is indiscriminate. It's open. There are no criteria for doing good. The motivation of the goats was very different. 'That was you? I didn't know that! If I'd know it was you, I certainly would have had some clothes for you. If I knew it was you, Jesus, I certainly would have taken you in. If I knew it was you, Jesus, I would have fed you. If I knew you were coming, I'd have baked a cake.'

It's a criteria. It's a judgment. Who's in? Who's out? Who's worthy? Who's unworthy? Who's good and who's bad? And what you are doing when you're making that judgment is effectively cutting yourself out, out. That's a judgment. We end up in hell because we put ourselves in there. We have cut ourselves off from the rest of humanity because Christ dwells in ALL OF HUMANITY.

**If God is anything, God is a promiscuous and indiscriminate lover of all of humanity. If we are called to do anything, we are called to love all of humanity.**

At the end of her life, Mother Theresa said the most profound words she ever uttered. And they were these: "Wherever I go, I see people." People. I don't see Hindus or Christians or black people or white people or men or women. I see people. I see people. And I treat them all alike. I don't know if they are Christ. Their disguises are so good, so radical, that very often we don't see Christ in the ones we are serving.

I was talking to some of you who were working PADS last night. I'm not sure if you saw Christ in the people you were serving at PADS but you just did it. You just did it. And that's all He asks. That's all He asks. And then he invites us...there's room at the table for all.

The wonderful thing about Matthew is there's always an out. He's telling the story of the final examination for the rest of us goats.