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Central Congregational Church
“For the Glory of God and the Good of our Neighbors”
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The Litmus of Love

Matthew 25:31-46

Series: Sinners in the Hands of a Loving God
(Summer Reading Series)

Central Passage

Matthew 25:31–46 (ESV) — **31** “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. **32** Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. **33** And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. **34** 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. **35** For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, **36** I was 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, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? **38** And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? **39** And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ **40** And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ **41** “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. **42** For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, **43** I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ **44** Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ **45** Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ **46** And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Central Thought: As we are all “sinners in the hands of a loving God,” our eternal destiny will be determined by the quality of our love for the least and the last – especially in the family of God – as we give an account before King Jesus.

❖ Jesus is the King and the Judge of all the earth! (vs. 31-34a)

Daniel 7:13–14 (ESV) — **13** “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came **one like a son of man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. **14** And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

❖ Jesus identifies with the least and the last – especially among his followers. (vs. 34b-40)

Proverbs 19:17 (NLT) — **17** If you help the poor, you are lending to the LORD— and he will repay you!

❖ Jesus’ uses our loving action toward the least and last as the Litmus Test of his final judgment of each of us.

Luke 16:24–26 (ESV) — **24** And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ **25** But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. **26** And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ (See also the whole parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19-31)