

Before the Bench

Scripture Reading — Matthew 25:31-46

*“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”
Matthew 25:40 —*

The confession in the Apostles’ Creed that Jesus will return “to judge the living and the dead” puts us on edge. Not too many of us like evaluations. We dread our yearly physical. We put off the yearly job review with our boss. So even more intimidating is a comprehensive life review when we stand before the all-knowing Lord. And it’s even more shocking to discover that this judgment at the King’s return is based on our deeds!

How can this be? What happened to salvation by grace through faith?

Jesus’ parable offers insight. When we stand before our Lord, the issue of our relationship with him is not forgotten. In fact, the real question is whether we have taken him so seriously that we begin to see his image in others and to act as he would. For the grace that saves us also renews us. It opens our eyes to see the hurts of needy people and to show them God’s love.

On Judgment Day, Jesus doesn’t just throw our good deeds on one side of the scale and our bad deeds on the other. That would be salvation by works, not grace.

But Jesus will look to the way his grace has so penetrated our hearts that it has made a difference in our lives. And he promises that God will remember for eternity every act of service performed by his power and to his glory.

Prayer

Lord, help me not to wait until your return to do a life review. Help me to begin now. Make me an instrument of your peace to others, in your name and for your sake. Amen.

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