

“I’m here to offer my heart”

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Matthew 25.31-46
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Matthew in this passage gives us a warning on how to direct our lives while we are waiting for the second arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For Matthew, love and mercy are two characteristic elements of people who actively wait for the Kingdom of God. To the surprise of many people, the criterion by which they will be judged is not whether they confessed Christ as their Lord and Savior, nor the forgiveness of their sins, nor baptism, nor justification. The only criterion for entering the Kingdom of God is, according to Matthew, how they treated the most vulnerable people of his time.

It is true that for the readers of Matthew, the little ones could also be the missionaries who went out to preach the Gospel in the name of Christ, and who needed the solidarity of those who received them. But in v. 45, the term from the original Greek to define the least ones is not adelphoi, which is the term that was normally used to define brothers and sisters in the faith. The Greek term used instead is elachiston, which has a more general meaning that can include all those whose need requires our help, regardless of whether they are Christians or not.

The moment of judgment will come and there, symbolically, like a shepherd, the Son of Man will separate the sheep from the goats, creatures that, although sometimes similar, eat from the same grass and have been created by the same creator, have attitudes very different and are not part of the same flock. The Kingdom of God will be only for the “sheep.” The “goats,” as in all good apocalyptic discourse, will inherit the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

The Kingdom of God has no place for the lukewarm (Mt 5:37). There will be only sheep and no goats. However, the pastor is the only one who has the right to separate them because he is the only one who knows how to distinguish them. They themselves do

not know who they are, because both sheep and goats are surprised by the results of their actions or lack thereof. The only guarantee to inherit the Kingdom is God himself. He is not worrying about whether you are a sheep or a goat. God knows who we are. Our concern should be whether we loved and had mercy when we found the helpless, or whether we closed our hearts when we could have given him help.

Love and mercy are very internal characteristics of the human being that we need to develop. They require an attitude, a way of seeing the world that allows us to look beyond what we understand, beyond what makes us feel safe. This attitude is not an exclusive characteristic of Christian communities. It is a spiritual gift that is developed with dedication and humility, it is a gift that connects us and continually relates us to everything created, and that challenges us to listen to the cry of those who suffer. Anyone, Christian or not, is endowed with this gift to be able to extend a hand to the less fortunate, thus showing compassion and a deep desire to transform reality for everyone.

Love and mercy are feelings that open hands, pockets, hearts; They create impossible things, they heal, they give strength and they can transform the world and the community. Love and mercy can lead us to develop intimate relationships with those who suffer, and thereby transform mere actions of assistance into actions that seek to alleviate the causes of suffering.

What I mean is that of course it is important to look for ways to relieve pain, but if we do not attack the source of that pain, our efforts will never be enough. Hunger, war, violence in the streets, schools and homes, climate change, the migratory crisis, inequality, the lack of a decent health system, human trafficking, lack of housing, exploitation and cruelty towards animals, the problem of education; These are just some of the diseases that we suffer as humanity.

So, when we see how human and earth suffering is not the will of God, but the result of human sin. The earth was created to bear fruit and fruit in abundance. If we live

consciously about our relationships, we will be able to counteract suffering much better and avoid it in the future.

For this reason, the church must also educate about the importance of stewardship and the responsible use of the resources that God has made available to us to live in abundance.

It is not just about giving the fish, nor about teaching how to fish. It is seeing why the sea lies polluted, or there are no longer fish to catch.

For Christian people, every act of love and mercy is done in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. There is much to do, and much of it is in our hands. Love and mercy constitute the force that will drive our path. It is Christ who infuses it into his church, for the good of his Kingdom.