



SIEBENQUELL

What God really cares about.



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Matthew 25:31-46 is a text we often reflect on towards the end of the church year. This biblical narrative depicts a powerful, dramatic scene. We often refer to it as the »Last Judgement«. However, this narrative wants to reveal the truth about life, about what remains when nothing else is left: love.

This Gospel poses a question as old as humanity itself: What did you do with your brother or sister. »For I hungered, and you gave Me to eat; I thirsted, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me«

Jesus' words give six ordinary deeds as the answer: the least among us should be given drink, fed, clothed, healed, sought out and comforted. In this way, Jesus opens an extraordinary perspective for us: »Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of the least of these brothers (or sisters) of Mine, you did it to Me.« Jesus establishes such a close connection between himself and human beings that he identifies with them: You did it to me! The poor are like God; they are the body and flesh of God. Heaven, where the Father dwells, is his children.

What the story urges us to take to heart is this: God is missing something, namely, love and being loved. God is there, at the very back of the line, begging for bread, for a home, for affection: he wants all his little ones to be fed, clothed, healed, sought after and comforted. If even one suffers, he suffers too.

This story gives us great comfort, for it reveals that the final and decisive argument will not be the evil we have done, but the good. The Lord's gaze does not rest on sins, weaknesses or mistakes, but on good deeds, on small gestures of kindness, on a glass of water we have given to another. God's scales are not focused on evil, but on good; they do not weigh our whole life, but only the good part of our history.

It is not evil that cancels out the good we have done, but it is good that cancels out, nullifies and trumps the evil in our lives. On the Lord's scales, one ear of good grain weighs more than all the weeds in the field. (cf. Mt 13:24-30)

Jesus shows that the »judgement« is divinely manipulated and clearly biased, since only exculpatory evidence is allowed. At the end of our lives, we will be judged according to love (John of the Cross), not according to guilt or religious practices, but according to the very human willingness to take on the pain of others.

At the end of the story, there are also those who were sent away. Their guilt? They chose distance: »Depart from Me«, you who have departed and been distant from your brothers and sisters. These people did nothing wrong to the poor. They did not humiliate or mock them. They simply did nothing for them. This is about the failure of solidarity, indifference, distance and the resulting freezing of relationships.

In contrast, the Gospel shows us the right way: Learn to care! Open your heart and your hands to the hunger and thirst, to the pain and misfortune of others. Without this, there is no paradise.

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