

Name: _____

Date: _____

THE PARABLE OF THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

“And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’” (Matthew 25:40)

Objectives

<i>Knowledge of God’s Will</i>	God will judge us regarding how we help others in their time of need.
<i>Knowledge of God</i>	God is righteous and just.
<i>Good Work</i>	Serve God by serving our brothers and sisters, which can be done by overcoming our apathy and growing in love.

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Mt 25:31–46)

A. The Final Judgment

The previous parables all contain teachings regarding how to prepare for the kingdom of heaven. This parable, however, concerns what will happen during Christ’s second coming. It warns us what to expect: separation by the Lord between those considered blessed (those who will inherit the kingdom) and those considered cursed (those who will depart into everlasting fire).

B. Lessons Learned from the Sheep

The sheep were not simply those who followed God; they were those who were willing to help the least of Christ’s brethren. The sheep helped the outcasts, the excluded, and those looked down upon by society. The parable teaches us the importance of helping our brothers and sisters who are in need. And even more important than helping with their physical needs is helping them with their spiritual needs.

C. Lessons Learned from the Goats

Contrary to the sheep, the goats are described as those who did not equate loving and serving their brothers and sisters in need with the same love they had towards God. Rather, they were apathetic – indifferent, with no concern for others. They saw their needs, but did nothing, and indirectly caused harm by neglecting to help them.

Life Application

1. Overcoming Apathy

This parable shows us that the opposite of love is not hate, but apathy. The goats were not condemned for acting with evil intention, but for their lack of action. When Jesus Christ sees the suffering of His brethren, He considers it His own suffering. So, when we show care and concern for our brothers and sisters, we are showing care and concern for Jesus Christ Himself. Knowing this, we should avoid apathy. Instead, let’s take the initiative and be proactive in looking after the needs of our brothers and sisters.

2. Growing in Love

In order to be called sheep, we must not only overcome apathy, but we must also grow in love. Philippians 1:9 tells us that we can always increase in our love for others. But love is active, not passive. It is displayed in our speech and our conduct. Just as the sheep in this parable saw a need and actively offered help, we must proactively demonstrate our love for our brothers and sisters.

