

# Generosity

31 “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of 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 took Me in; 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 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ 40 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.’ 41 “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting 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 take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ 44 “Then they also will answer Him, 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, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch 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 everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” **Matthew 25:31-46**

## Context:

1. The scribes and Pharisees have given up trying to **humiliate** and **discredit** Jesus publicly
  - They have begun a plot to put Jesus to **death**
  - Jesus has limited time to prepare his disciples for his imminent death
2. All of Jesus words of **condemnation** are directed at the scribes and Pharisees
  - We must not use these condemnations to bash those who don’t have a **relationship** with God
  - These condemnations are very specific: they are directed at those who should know better

## The two disciples

1. Faithful
  - a. The faithful disciple uses the daily blessings they have received by God to be a blessing
  - b. Notice:
    - They don’t bless others in order to get **credit**
    - They don’t bless others in order to get to **heaven**
    - It is the very nature of a true disciple to be generous without considering the **cost** or calculating the personal **benefit**
2. Unfaithful
  - a. These unfaithful disciples are the scribes and Pharisees
    - Jesus is not referring to those who are not **followers**
    - This warning is about those who claim to be followers of God, but **horde** their power and wealth for their own benefit
    - Such behavior is **contrary** to the nature of a disciple who has known God’s blessing

- b. The scribes and Pharisees have known the generosity and love of God, and yet, remain **unmoved** by it.
- The giving of the scribes and Pharisees was **calculating**.
  - They gave for personal effect: to be **recognized** and to receive credit.
  - “...if we had known it was you...” How telling is that of their despicable lack of generosity?
  - It is almost as if they were **blaming** God for their circumstance, for not telling them to whom they should and should not give.
  - The scribes and Pharisees operated by **legalisms** (defining the limits of their responsibilities) as opposed to living their lives by **love** (which does not recognize any limitations on its generosity)

**Meaning:**

1. A disciple will...
  - not be judged by the **knowledge** we amass or the **wealth** we have attained
  - be judged but by how **generous** we are to those in need.
2. It is in the nature of God to be absurdly generous.
  - We have been on the receiving end of this generosity.
  - Disciples are transformed by God’s generosity and become generous without desire for recognition, and without even being cognizant that we are doing something that is contrary to our **selfish** nature.

**Notice:** the help a disciple gives is not only financial. Not everyone is able to give financially, but we give as we are able, of our **time** and of simple acts of **mercy** and kindness.

*“More than any other institution, religion deserves our appreciation and respect because it has persistently encouraged people to care deeply—for the self, for neighbors, for humanity, and for the natural world—and to strive for the highest ideals humans are able to envision,”* Bruce Sheiman, author of **“An Atheist Defends Religion: Why Humanity is Better Off with Religion than without It.”**

**Just give:** Giving becomes natural and uncalculating of the consequences for those who have been transformed by the grace of God.

**Story:** *“While ministering in Africa, I met a Christian worker who raised his 6 children on \$10 a month. He told me the story of how children in his village were going blind because of a disease that could be prevented with medicine that only cost 50 cents. He began to pray and ask God to send a rich person to their village to help give the money for the medicine, but no one ever came. As he kept praying, the Lord told him he should give the money to buy the medicine. But with 6 children and only a \$10 a month salary, he couldn’t see how he could do this. But he and his family prayed and decided that every month they would buy the medicine to help one child. When I last spoke with him, he’d been doing this for 7 years and had saved 84 children from going blind. And his family saw God meet all of their needs.”* Brian Kluth, author of the book, “40 Day Spiritual Journey to a more Generous Life”