



Links Players

Righteous Integration

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Matthew 25:31-33 ESV

“That’s good.”

“That one we’re going to need to see.”

We hear these comments, sometimes with a twist of banter, in any casual round of golf. Why do we give gimmes when the object of the game is to get the ball into the hole?

“I know you can make that putt,” is a nice sentiment, but not always true. The average 80s shooter only makes sixty-four percent of three-footers. Yet, I see a lot of gimmes given in that range, while others are tight-lipped and believe all putts should be putted into the hole. There is a divide among golfers, sometimes creating tension among friends and competitors.

The story about the King who will separate the sheep from the goats represents a divide among people as well (Matthew 25: 31-46). On one side will be the sheep who unknowingly served Jesus through offering food, drink, clothing, and care to strangers.

The other side is reserved for those who had no part in helping the hungry, sick, and poor. These people may have an absence of faith in Jesus. But they may also be religious people who are stuck in keeping their commitment to Jesus separate from other parts of their ordinary lives.

At first glance, this passage gives the impression that if we don’t serve the poor and needy then we will not be blessed or have a place in the Kingdom of God. I don’t believe this is Jesus’ main intention in telling this parable. Rather, might Jesus be revealing the importance of our heart’s intentions?

Are we choosing dos and don’ts as a way of earning points to earn a place in God’s Kingdom? Are we segregating our love for God from the world around us because it feels easier?

There are many nuggets we can take from this parable. For today, let’s ponder the concept of living an integrated life. According to Skye Jethani, “The righteous do not segment their lives into

categories of “sacred” and “ordinary;” they do not view some activities or people as important to God and others as unimportant.”

Are we like sheep (righteous)...allowing our love for God to flow into and out of all areas of our lives? Agreeing or disagreeing with another person should not be the barometer for how we share kindness and compassion.

May we consider two things: In what ways are we integrating our faith in Jesus into more parts of our lives? And, in what areas might our faith still be segmented to the boundaries of religious activities?

Prayer: Lord, help me today see and respond to the areas of my life that still need redemption and integration.

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