

Read: Matthew 25:31-46

God is your judge...and that's good!

Matthew 25:31,32,46

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Do you know what a judge is? A judge is someone who typically sits in a courtroom and decides whether a person is innocent or guilty, whether they have done right or wrong. They typically send the guilty to jail, and the innocent they let go free. That's what a judge in a courtroom does.

The Bible says that God is a judge and the last day of this world will be judgment day because God is going to judge everyone. In today's reading, Jesus wants you to picture him "separating the sheep from the goats." He's going to judge whether people are good or bad, whether they've sinned or not. He is going to bring the good people into heaven, and he is going to lock the bad people away forever in hell.

Did you catch the problem? We are sinners. We have all sinned. A lot. Every single day. God tells us he wants us to be perfect. We're not even close. If we stand before God, our judge, on the last day with all these sins, we would all look like goats, wouldn't we? Oh-oh! How scary!

Thankfully, God did something for us. Instead of leaving us like that, he sent Jesus to wipe away every last one of those sins. The Bible says that when you were baptized, you were "clothed with Christ." This means that when God looks at you, instead of seeing our sin, he sees Jesus. He sees sheep, not goats. To be a sheep is to be loved by Jesus. The Good Shepherd gave up his life to give life to sheep. You and I were made sheep, because the shepherd appeared to take our "goatiness" away.

That means on judgment day, we can stand before God, our judge, and not be scared. Not because of how good we are, but because of everything Jesus has done for us. God can now look at you and see a perfect child, with no sin. He judges you to be a sheep whom he will welcome into heaven.

Until then, what do sheep do? Jesus says, they busy themselves serving others—thinking of others first and giving up what's important to them to consider what is important to others. May we be busy sheep who share Jesus with everyone, so that they might join us in heaven too.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What is a judge?
- Jesus will judge sheep and goats on the Last Day. Because you believe in Jesus, which one are you?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why don't we need to be afraid of judgment day?
- Agree/Disagree: To be ready for judgment day means you must be really good and stop sinning.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Explain why it's good to know that God is our judge?
- Why do you think God gives us these details about judgment day?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, keep us always connected to Jesus and his saving Word that we might remain strong in the faith and ready for your return. Give us the courage to share your saving gospel with others. Amen.