

**Remember Me When You Come into Your Kingdom
(I was Hungry)
Lakeshore Baptist Church, Waco, TX
10-6-19
Jeremy K. Everett**

Matthew 25: 31-46

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the 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 people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by 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 something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, ⁴¹ you did it to me.’ ⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal 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 nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just 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 eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” ⁱ

- I. NCH
 - a. **15th St. Plumbing- fix the system** (tell as I get settled into the pulpit)...brief
 - b. **NCH- Elders**
 - c. **NCH- Chicken bones**
 - i. Causes of hunger- Underemployment, education, race, mental health, **Tradeoffs**

II. Faith tradition- Matt. 25

Most Christians are probably familiar with Jesus' teachings, *“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”*

This is the only apocalyptic scene in Matthew and Jesus was painting a picture of a very different type of kingdom.ⁱⁱ Jesus the King has returned and He is sitting on the podium this time. This is the final hearing, all people are gathered, and Jesus begins separating them... the sheep and the goats, the righteous and the accused.ⁱⁱⁱ To the astonishment of the people gathered, the criterion for judgement is not confession of faith in Christ. **Nothing is said of grace, justification, or the forgiveness of sins. Instead, what matters is whether or not a person has acted with love and cared for the needy.** These acts are not just “extra credit,” but constitute the decisive criterion for judgment^{iv}. **Essentially, when the people respond or fail to respond to human need, they are in fact responding, or failing to respond, to Christ.**^v

The calling of the faithful is clear: **Feed the hungry and you will live.**

Regretfully, we have not lived up to it. 40 million people in the United States live in poverty.^{vi} 13 million of them are children.^{vii} 4.6 million are senior adults.^{viii} 41 million Americans are considered food insecure.^{ix} The term we use when describing hunger^x And every county in the U.S. has reported food insecurity among a percentage of their population.^{xi}

We have **scapegoated** the poor to justify not living up to our calling. To scapegoat and push the poor out of our minds, we've had to **dehumanize** them. We have worked hard to **classify the poor as lazy**, to divide them as

deserving and undeserving. We have developed theologies of prosperity to lift those who are rich in order to demonize those who are poor.

Thus, it becomes **morally defensible for some children to have an abundance of food while others have a bag of chicken bones in the fridge.** We can just blame the parent for being **lazy or an illegal.**

- III. People of Hope
 - a. Jesus
 - b. WHRI-Veggie prescriptions
- IV. Inspiration
 - a. **Wilberforce**
 - b. **Granddaddy and Civil Rights**

Whether we like it or not, we too will be judged based upon Jesus' command to feed the hungry. **After all, our economic hardships** are not evenly spread out among society. Rather, it is the **same family** struggling with ***bouts of hunger*** that also does not have ***affordable health care***. It is the **same family** sending their ***children to schools where graduation rates*** are well below 50% and ***college readiness*** is in the single digits. It is the **same family** that have lacked ***livable wage paying jobs for generations***. They are our **scapegoats**, sent to live in deserted urban neighborhoods and rural trailer parks we avoid.

But this practice is antithetical to the scripture we read in Matthew. After all, the accused in Matthew are those that ***did not see the hungry and give them food***. The ones that ***did not provide shelter for the stranger, or clothing for the naked***.

Instead, Matthew calls us to not only **see the hungry as humans, but to see the hungry as Jesus**.

So ***together*** we repent for our collective scapegoating, our indifference, our lack of trust in God. ***Together***, we Remember our brothers and sisters in poverty who live as strangers in our kingdoms.

And ***together*** we will put flesh on the words of Jesus:

“For I was hungry... and you gave me food...” Amen.

Benediction:

Go forth, spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry then your light will rise like the noonday. Amen.

Go in peace.

ⁱ Matthew 25:31-46, NRSV

ⁱⁱ The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, Volume VIII. P. 455

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, Volume VIII. P. 456

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^x Food insecurity is measured by the U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module, which has been in widespread use for nearly 20 years. It asks questions about respondents' reports of uncertain, insufficient, or inadequate food access, availability, and use because of limited financial resources, and about the compromised eating patterns and consumption that might result. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) uses the responses to classify households into four categories: high food security, marginal food security, low food security, and very low food security. Households with high or marginal food security are called *food secure*, and households with low or very low food security are called *food insecure*.

To define hunger for this report, we chose a precise and readily available measure called *very low food security*, which occurs when eating patterns are disrupted or food intake is reduced for at least one household member because the household lacked money and other resources for food...

Thus, when we use the word 'hunger' we mean households experiencing *very low food security*.^x

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