

Lost Causes

Goat for Dinner

Text: Matthew 25: 31 – 40 (The Message) ... **Pre-Text Matthew 24: 1-3**

¹⁻² Jesus then left the Temple. As he walked away, his disciples pointed out how very impressive the Temple architecture was. Jesus said, “You’re not impressed by all this sheer *size*, are you? The truth of the matter is that there’s not a stone in that building that is not going to end up in a pile of rubble.”

³ Later as he was sitting on Mount Olives, his disciples approached and asked him, “Tell us, when are these things going to happen? What will be the sign of your coming, that the time’s up?”

I need give you a frame of reference for the main text... We sometimes get the impression that the disciples weren’t paying attention –because they were so often caught off guard – but they knew what was going on – here they ask Jesus the question **“When is this going to happen? What will be the sign of your coming?”**

Peterson note ... “Come is a gospel verb. The distinctive biblical and Christian message is not that God is but that he **comes**. And he’s going to come again, because that’s the very nature of God – to come. That’s his basic character- he comes.

We look for his coming in the sensational but he keeps surprising us in the ordinary. He comes to us in our pain, our doubt in our families, in our work. There’s no place where he may not turn up, no time when he may not sneak in. ... And every time he comes to us and we receive him, we’re further and better prepared to meet him at his final coming – the arrival that will complete everything we understand as history. “

Matt 25: ³¹⁻³³ “When he finally arrives, blazing in beauty and all his angels with him, the Son of Man will take his place on his glorious throne. Then all the nations will be arranged before him and he will sort the people out, much as a shepherd sorts out sheep and goats, putting sheep to his right and goats to his left.

³⁴⁻³⁶ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what’s coming to you in this kingdom. It’s been ready for you since the world’s foundation. And here’s why:

I was hungry and you fed me,
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,
I was homeless and you gave me a room,
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,
I was sick and you stopped to visit,
I was in prison and you came to me.’

³⁷⁻⁴⁰ “Then those ‘sheep’ are going to say, ‘Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?’ Then the King will say, ‘I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.’”

The Bible is its own best commentary – scriptures explain or reinforce other scripture

It’s clear that we are not saved by our good deeds or our best efforts to be good “For by are you saved not of works lest any man might boast. So there is something else going on here.

I. What we’re seeing here is God’s view of a life well spent vs. everyone else’s

Christmas 2014 is now a memory- but how did you react when December 25th ended?

When the:

- gifts were opened
- meal and family get-togethers finished ... **Relieved!!!!**
- When all the energy came to a sudden halt?

Post Christmas blues are common - some even experience emotional depression

But as Yogi Berra said - “It Ain’t over till it’s over.”

So to keep it going, and further distract ourselves, we shift gears for a **follow up Par- TE** – A New Years Eve celebration.

A celebration to forget the disappointments of the past ... We gladly wish each other a Happy New Year!

The Problem ... most people have no idea what **real** happiness looks like!

Christians should have a better handle on this but ...

We’re still human – we bleed just like everyone else when cut – weep at loss of a loved one, experience pain and rejection and disappointment just like everyone else.

But ... What if ... I offered you an antidote to this problem?

What if this year instead of concentrating on past failures and new resolutions - we decide to seek God’s direction - instead of our own?

What if ... we make Him the *pilot* of our life, instead of the copilot? Let Him to do the driving?

Proverbs 16 Gives an interesting perspective on this idea.

¹We can make our own plans, but the LORD gives the right answer.

⁹We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.

³³We may throw the dice, but the LORD determines how they fall

Do you see how God comes, shows up?

God's walk way of life isn't always easy because it's developmental – you're on a faith oriented learning curve – one which will teach you, not only about who you are, but who He is.



For someone who has never heard the words, 'I have cancer,' from a family member its hard to explain the emotions that run through you. Yet in the middle of this nightmare for our daughter Heather, God is showing His involvement in ways that have blown our socks off.

When we begin to understand this truth, **Romans 8:28** takes on new meaning

“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to **his purpose** for them.” NLT

God's way is a new and living way –it's about wonder and discovery of getting to know Him up close and personal, we start seeing things from God's vantage point

He steps into our lives in ways that are simply undeniable. Moving in ways that rarely if ever happen the way we would expect.

St. Jude's Children's Hospital mission statement:

To advance cures, and means of prevention, for pediatric catastrophic diseases through research and treatment. Consistent with the vision of our founder Danny Thomas, no child is denied treatment based on race, religion or a family's ability to pay.

St. Jude, it turns out, is the patron saint of hopeless causes

Read Guide Posts account:

⇒ Now you might be thinking but St. Jude didn't answer Danny's prayer – God did – and you're right

But God looks past what we don't understand, not holding it against us. He so often does works with a heart that is humble and open for the kind of business He's in.

He took a desperate situation for one man and turned into an island of hope for hundreds of thousands of children ... for with God nothing is impossible

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How wonderful that God doesn’t just save us and put us up on a shelf like some kind of trophy.

He has plans for us that not only make our lives meaningful but involves ministry to others in turn blessing and changing their lives.

Jesus made it so clear – when this life is over it won’t be homes, property, toys, degrees that matter.

Some of us are facing frightening challenges for the coming New Year. My family, is dealing with several life threatening situations but in the middle of it all is Jesus – calming the storm speaking words of re-assurance that He is the God of the impossible – the God who turns lost causes into living realities.

And that in the process – he is accomplishing amazing and wonderful things (Lisa)

Expect that this year God is going to lay a way to make a difference for someone else at your feet.

If you want to put a smile on His face and receive an abundant blessing at the same time – Listen and respond to your heart ... its God calling.