

Hi everyone

A man died and went to The Judgment. St. Peter met him at the Gates of Heaven and said, "Before you meet with God, I thought I should tell you -- we've looked at your life, and your really didn't do anything particularly good or bad. We're not at all sure what to do with you. Can you tell us anything you did that can help us make a decision?"

The newly arrived soul thought for a moment and replied, "Yeah, once I was driving along and came upon a woman who was being harassed by a group of bikers. So I pulled over, got out my tire iron, and went up to the leader of the bikers. He was a big, muscular, hairy guy with tattoos all over his body and a ring pierced through his nose. Well, I tore the nose ring out of his nose, and told him he and his gang had better stop bothering the woman or they would have to deal with me!"

"I'm impressed," St. Peter responded, "When did this happen?"

"About two minutes ago," came the reply.

Judgment is not a popular topic these days. It is not politically or religiously correct to talk about the Judgment of God. We have sanitised God in a package of tissues called love and forget that there is another side of God; another side of love and mercy and it is his judgment.

Paul wrote to the Romans in 14:10-12

Why, then, do you criticize your brother? Or why do you despise your brother? For all of us will stand before the

judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As certainly as I live, declares the Lord, every knee will bow to me, and every

tongue will praise God." Consequently, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

In Matthew's gospel, at the end of Jesus' ministry, he records three parables of Judgment (found in chapter 25). They are a warning to believers and unbelievers about the coming of Christ in Judgment when He returns. They ask the question "What shall we do while we wait for the Lord's return?"

There was great expectation that Jesus would return in the lifetime of the apostles, including Paul. The church was under persecution by both Jews and Rome. There was a great deal of suffering and death. These parables and the book of Revelation were written to give the church hope in the face of severe persecution.

The first parable is about the ten virgins: five were foolish and five were wise. Five took extra oil as they waited for the Bridegroom to come. This parable is one of readiness for God's people. The message was and is

- ***Be prepared for the coming of the King by having enough oil!***

- ú **By hearing and doing the words of Jesus (represented by the lamps (literally torches))**

- ú **By relying on the presence and power of Jesus (symbolised by having plenty of oil)**

- ú **Entrance into the Kingdom is how well does the Lord know you rather than how well you know the Lord.**

The second parable is about the talents given to three people. One talent was equal to 20 years of wages. It was a great amount of money entrusted to the Lord's servants. It was given according to the ability of each servant. The master was unwilling to ask more than what the servant could handle. There are a number of contrasts in this parable. The message was and is

- ***Be prepared to multiply what God has given us.***

ú **Work vs Laziness** (There is the contrast of the work of two compared to the laziness of the one. To what extent are we lazy in serving the Lord?)

ú **Good vs Evil (What is inside you à fruit)** (There is the contrast of what was inside the first two compared to what was inside the third. Fear in the third robbed him of his reward. What is inside of you that is robbing your reward or stopping you fulfilling the Lord's purpose for you?)

ú **Generous vs Harsh Master** (The contrast of seeing God as generous by the first two and seeing God as harsh by the third. Your perception and relationship with God will determine your response to His commands. How is your perception of God affecting your ability to serve Him)

ú **Acting vs Not Acting on beliefs** (The first two servants believed in the assessment of the master; viz they were worthy of His trust and had the ability to carry out the assignment given ie multiply what was given. For they knew that their Master was in the business of multiplication of resources. They acted on these beliefs. Many Christians do not fulfil their potential because they do not act upon God's belief in them or their belief in themselves. Do you act on what you believe or just have words but no actions?)

ú **Using vs Not Using one's abilities.** (We are all given abilities to use. We are all different and better at some things than others. We are not equal in ability but we are equal in our relationship with God. The third servant buried his abilities and so suffered the wrath of the Master. To what extent do you bury your ability and so not use it to its fullest extent?)

The final parable is about sheep and goats. It is primarily directed to unbelievers and their treatment of believers (*to the extent you do it to the least of these, my brothers, you do it to me.*) This is not a parable of doing good to the homeless, hungry and thirsty to get into heaven. It is not a work's based righteousness for the sheep did not know that they had been good to Jesus.

Separation at the end by God and his angels is a constant theme in Matthew's gospel. It is God who determines who goes in and who does not go in. But the message is still the same for both non believers and believers.

- ***Be prepared to reach out to those that are less fortunate than you while you wait.***

ú **Let God look after the eternal destiny of people.**

ú **Make disciples of all nations**

ú **Give practical help to fellow Christians who are in need or being persecuted, especially those overseas**

ú **Minister to people in need and offer them practical help.**

This is a sobering message as we get caught up with the tinsel and glitter of Christmas. Many aid agencies are asking for our money to buy goats or bikes or other community projects to help those in need. Consider ways that you can give to your fellow believers who are overseas and in need as well.

We have been back from India for 10 days and we are hearing reports of the Good that God did through us.

Pastor Devadas: Praise the Lord!!! We are so glad to share with you that one of our believers from sankavaram church who had been suffering from back pain for long time. She went many doctors for treatment but it was not cured. When sister Liz prayed for her God healed her completely. She was sharing in the church, she is now very happy. it was wonderful healing of God.

Rev Sambabu: Brother still we are hearing good news from the meeting places. some are healed, some are touched by the Holy Sprit, some are willing to accept Christ as their personal Saviour and some are intresting to read the Bible. What a blessing for the villeges. please keep these villeges in your prayers

We have pictures of ten pastors receiving their bikes. They are very happy.

Walking Free Ministry: We continue to minister to clients. We again have seen God turn around impossible situations and brought healing. One lady sat down with God, at my request, to ask Him about her marriage and where God was taking it. She was struggling to stay in the marriage. God spoke to her and gave her clear direction.

Another lady has been healed of her hurt in the marriage and the marriage and life could never be better.

One lad had struggled with deep depression and God has lifted it off of him. His psychiatrist and psychologist are amazed about what had happened to him in five months! They thought it would take at least a year, maybe two. Praise the Lord.

Healing Centre at Coolangatta: We are pressing in to seek God about starting a healing centre at Coolangatta. The Lord has shown us a great place that is cheap and has all that we need including a reception area, desks and chairs and air-conditioning. He is an amazing God. We need now 4 people each week to be available to pray. We hope to start in 2012.