

Are the Persecuted My Problem?

Matthew 25:31-46

Key Idea: Jesus challenges us to respond to suffering, especially the suffering of the persecuted.

I. Introduction

When we think of judgment, we often picture a courtroom or divine scales weighing our lives. But in Matthew 25, Jesus paints a very different picture: one where the way we treat others—especially the vulnerable and suffering—reveals the true state of our faith.

Today, I want to ask you a simple but urgent question: *Are the persecuted my problem?* To answer it, we'll reflect on three questions from this passage.

II. Is There Hope for Our World?

Our world is full of suffering: hunger, thirst, sickness, imprisonment. These are not abstract categories; they are real experiences for millions today, especially those persecuted for their faith.

Let me share just one example: In northern Nigeria, Christian families displaced by Boko Haram have been forced to live in caves, without food, shelter, or safety. This is not history—this is happening *today*.

And yet, Matthew 25 reminds us that hope is not lost. Jesus is coming again in glory. God is still on His throne (Isaiah 44:6, Revelation 1:8). That's our first anchor of hope.

So, is there hope? Yes—but often, that hope must come *through us*.

III. How Can I Know If My Faith Is Real?

Jesus often speaks of two kinds of people: wheat and weeds, sheep and goats, builders on rock or sand. The division isn't based on knowledge, but on response.

In Matthew 25, the sheep are those who saw suffering and acted. They fed the hungry, welcomed the stranger, cared for the sick, visited the imprisoned. Not to earn favor, but because compassion had taken root in them.

The goats, by contrast, responded with indifference. And that's the danger for us, especially in a comfortable culture. Indifference is easy. Compassion takes courage.

So how do we know if our faith is real? Ask yourself: *When confronted with suffering, do I respond with compassion or do I turn away?*

IV. Will There Be a Day of Reckoning?

Jesus says, *When* the Son of Man comes, not *if*. Judgment is certain. And the evidence isn't our good intentions or beliefs alone—it's our actions.

This isn't salvation by works. It's salvation evidenced by love.

What do your actions over the past year reveal? Have you prayed for the persecuted? Have you learned their stories? Have you acted?

V. Conclusion: Are the Persecuted My Problem?

Yes. Absolutely yes.

Not because we are saviors, but because Jesus says what we do for the least of these, we do for Him.

Here are a few simple steps you can take:

- **Learn:** Visit www.SpeakFreedomTexas.org and www.21wilberforce.org
- **Pray:** Make time weekly to pray for the persecuted.
- **Give:** Support organizations helping those in need.
- **Speak:** Share what you learn with others. Be a voice.

Let us be the kind of people who, when Jesus returns, are found not asleep or indifferent, but awake, compassionate, and faithful.

Amen.