

Matthew 25:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Analysis

I was a stranger, and ye took me not in (ξένος ἦμην καὶ οὐ συνηγάγετέ με, xenos ēmēn kai ou synēgagete me)—The verb *synagō* means to gather together, to receive into community. They excluded Christ by excluding the stranger. This condemns ethnic/tribal Christianity that draws boundaries around 'our kind.'

Naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not (γυμνὸς καὶ οὐ περιεβάλετέ με, ἀσθενής καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με, *gymnos* kai ou periebalete me, *asthenēs* kai en *phylakē* kai ouk *epeskepsasthe* me)—The accumulation of negations creates relentless condemnation. These aren't extraordinary demands but basic human decency, which faith should intensify, not diminish.

Historical Context

Jesus's indictment mirrors the prophets' social justice oracles. Ezekiel condemned shepherds who fed themselves but not the flock: 'The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye... bound up that which was broken' (Ezekiel 34:4). Isaiah's famous rebuke: 'Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness... deal thy bread to the hungry... bring the poor that are cast out to thy house... cover the naked' (Isaiah 58:6-7).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does failure to welcome strangers reflect underlying tribalism or nationalism that contradicts the gospel?
2. What does systematic neglect of the vulnerable reveal about the reality (or unreality) of professed faith?
3. In what ways do Christian communities today exclude the very people Christ identifies with?

Interlinear Text

ξένος ἦμην καὶ οὐκ συνηγάγετέ με γυμνὸς καὶ οὐκ
a stranger I was and not in me naked and not
G3581 G2252 G2532 G3756 G4863 G3165 G1131 G2532 G3756

περιεβάλετέ με ἀσθενὴς καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ
ye clothed me sick and in prison and not
G4016 G3165 G772 G2532 G1722 G5438 G2532 G3756

ἐπεσκέψασθέ με
ye visited me
G1980 G3165

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