

Matthew 25:45

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

Analysis

Verily I say unto you (ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, amēn legō hymin)—The Hebrew amen emphasizes absolute truth and authority. This solemn pronouncement carries Jesus's full judicial weight as Son of Man (v. 31).

Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me (ἐφ' ὅσον οὐκ ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων, οὐδὲ ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε, eph' hoson ouk epoiēsate heni toutōn tōn elachistōn, oude emoi epoiēsate)—Elachistos (least, smallest) describes society's most vulnerable and overlooked. The double negative ouk... oude (not... neither) reinforces total identification: Christ so fully unites with His suffering people that neglecting them is rejecting Him. This isn't mere metaphor but mystical reality (1 Corinthians 12:12-27, the body of Christ).

Historical Context

Jesus's teaching radically elevated the status of the elachistos. Greco-Roman society practiced patronage; benefactors gave to those who could repay with honor. Jesus inverts this: 'When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind... thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just' (Luke 14:13-14). The early church's care for widows, orphans, and the destitute scandalized pagans and drew converts (Julian the Apostate complained Christians cared for even non-Christian poor).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's complete identification with 'the least of these' challenge prosperity gospel theology?
2. What does this passage teach about the inseparability of loving God and loving neighbor (1 John 4:20)?
3. In what practical ways should this judgment scene reshape Christian priorities regarding wealth, time, and compassion?

Interlinear Text

τότε ἀποκριθήσεται αὐτοῖς λέγω Άμην λέγω ὑμῖν

Then **shall he answer** **them** **I say** **Verily** **I say** **unto you**
G5119 G611 G846 G3004 G281 G3004 G5213

ἐφ' ὅσον οὐκ ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν

Inasmuch **as** **it not** **ye did** **to one** **of these** **G3588**
G1909 G3745 G3756 G4160 G1520 G5130

ἐλαχίστων οὐδὲ ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε

of the least **it not** **to me** **ye did**
G1646 G3761 G1698 G4160

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 21:13 (Parallel theme): Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

Proverbs 14:31 (Parallel theme): He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

Proverbs 17:5 (Parallel theme): Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

Matthew 25:40 (Parallel theme): And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Acts 9:5 (Parallel theme): And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

Psalms 105:15 (Parallel theme): Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

Zechariah 2:8 (Parallel theme): For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.

Genesis 12:3 (Parallel theme): And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Numbers 24:9 (Parallel theme): He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.