

It seems that there will be much confusion on the Last Day. Everyone, except Jesus, appears to be confused in our text. The sheep are confused, so are the goats. “Wait a second, Jesus,” they both say, “I don’t understand.” The sheep have difficulty understanding what Jesus means by, “*You did these things to Me.*” And the goats cannot comprehend His words to them, “*You did not do these things to Me.*”

But one thing that both the sheep and the goats agree upon is this: they are in the wrong place. The sheep say, “No, Jesus, we do not deserve this place on Your right.” And the goats say, “No, Jesus, we do not deserve this place on Your left.” But there will be no switching of sides. Jesus knows who are His sheep. And He will separate from them all unbelievers and hypocrites, and only the sheep will have the place on His right. Yet now, in these days before the end, everyone, including the goats, have that place on His right.

In Bible days, to be seated on someone’s right, especially the right hand of a king, signified privilege and honor. Jesus is a King, the King of kings. And everyone, every sheep, every goat, is blessed to be on His right.

There is no one now who is on His left. For to no one now does Jesus say, “*Depart from Me!*” Instead, what He will say to the sheep on the Last Day, He says to all people now, “*Come.*” “*Come to Me and I will give you rest.*” “*Come, let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.*” “*Come and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins.*” “*And he who comes to Me, I will never cast out.*”

Jesus does not speak these inviting words only to those who are sheep. He speaks them to all. He invites all to come to Him. Yet it is the sheep who hear His voice and follow Him, who come to Jesus for rest for their weary souls, who come for forgiveness, for life, for salvation itself.

Understand this, that sheep are not better than goats. Sheep and goats alike are infected with sin. Do you think you can tell who are the sheep because they appear holier than everyone else? In Jesus’ day the Pharisees appeared to be the sheep because they appeared to be holier than everyone else. I agree with you that you can tell the sheep...but not much. They can be as stubborn, if not more so, than the goats.

No, it is not for us to place people into categories. “Well, he is a sheep, and she is a goat.” Or vice-versa. I am not called to preach to sheep or to goats. I am called to preach to sinners. I am commanded by Jesus to absolve the sins of all who repent; to baptize all nations; to teach the baptized; to comfort the sick and the dying. In other words, it is not for me, nor for you, to determine who are the sheep and who are the goats among us.

Jesus knows His sheep, but I don’t. But I do know sinners. And I know that Jesus loves sinners. That He died on the cross for sinners. And that there is hope for every sinner in Jesus.

Jesus is the one who will separate people one from another. But only on the Last Day. Now today everyone is in the place of privilege and honor. Everyone is on Jesus’ right. Because Jesus Himself took the place on the left. He lowered Himself to the place of shame and dishonor. He

was nailed to a cross. He heard the words from His Father in heaven, “*Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire!*” He suffered that agony and punishment for every sinner.

Jesus did this for you, my friend. And so you, no matter who you are, have the place of privilege and honor on Jesus’ right. God declares you righteous in Christ Jesus. He declares that your sins are forgiven. He does not first check your label, sheep or goat. He forgives you no matter who you are.

What a privilege! What honor! To be shown such grace and mercy by God Himself. And so you, here and now, are on Jesus’ right.

But pastor, will I still be on His right when it really counts on the Last Day? It counts now! Why do you think the Holy Spirit brought you to Jesus in your baptism? Why do you think He brought you here today to hear His words of forgiveness, of comfort, of assurance? Why do you think He will not fail to continue showering these heavenly treasures on you even unto the day you die? Is it not because the kingdom was prepared for you from the foundation of the world?

Do you deserve all this? Of course not. I deserve the place on Jesus’ left, now and forever. And so do you. Sheep know this. They believe this. They confess this. But here’s how it is... Jesus does not give you what you deserve. He took that awful place from you. And He places you where you do not deserve to be – on His right, now and forever.

And so, Come, Lord Jesus. Come in all Your glory. Come with all Your angels. Come to say to Your precious sheep: “*Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*” Amen.