



Grain

“...and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Matthew 25: 32-33

Field

“And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president [pastor], who succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need.” Justin Martyr

Submitted by Reverend Peter Heidi, Albany, WI

Thoughts by Reverend Peter Heidi, Albany Lutheran Church, Albany, WI

For centuries, the reading from Matthew directed the ministry of the Church. Its influence is evident as early as Justin Martyr’s *Apology*. Yet, for all of the good work Christians were doing, many people continued to die from starvation, imprisonment, and sickness.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the adage, “Nations are known by the care they give the poorest of their society.”, was popular. This passage from Matthew was also quoted frequently to show what we, as Christians, might do to demonstrate our faith and care in the face of such a crisis. Much was done, but many of the underlying issues of the poverty and oppression that worsened the damage were never addressed. We just put a bandage on it. So, were we sheep or goats?

Truly, if in the final judgment we are judged on how well we measure up to these benchmarks, most of us will be living in eternal torment. Thankfully, as important as this catalog of tasks is for the church and for each of us, remember that this judgment is of the nations. It may only be when the rigors of nationalism are set aside, allowed to eternally burn in the fires prepared for the devil, that we will be able to care for one another as children of God, in the kingdom of heaven that begins right here and now. Then the neighbor, whom God already loves, will know our love as well. And then, in the mercy of almighty God, we can know the forgiveness for what we have done and what we have left undone.

Dennis, Sheila and Matthew Linn have made presentations which led to their book entitled *Good Goats*. The name came from a comment made after an early presentation, “So, what you are telling us is that we are good goats.” Maybe we are not so much Good Goats as we are Baa-aa-aad Sheep.

Thank you to Pastor Heidi for his thoughts. Happy Monday!

Prayer

Highly recommended.

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy