

30 Hour Famine Sunday
Seeing Jesus in the Eyes of the Hungry and Persecuted.
Matthew 25:31-46

Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Alone.

Everything after that is THANKFULNESS.

THANKFULNESS is lived out in actions especially for those in need.

World Vision International

Hunger Facts

More than 1 billion people experience hunger on a daily basis.

A child dies from hunger-related causes every 7 seconds.

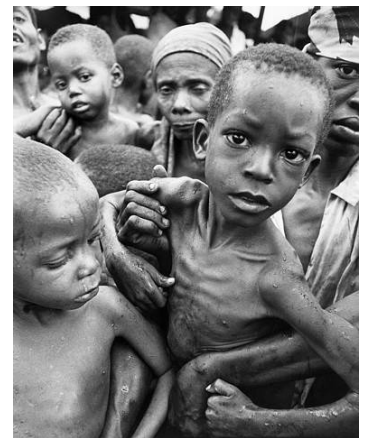
If we filled up this sanctuary to the max: 400 people. that means we could fill it up 31 times a day with the children dying of hunger related causes~~~

Hunger is one of the leading child killers in our world, contributing to more than half of all child deaths:

- Every year, nearly 5 million hungry children die.
- Even if a child is just moderately underweight, she is four times more likely to die from an infectious disease compared to a well-nourished child.
- Worldwide, approximately 145 million children are underweight and at risk of dying — simply because they don't get enough nutritious food.

Sources: UNICEF, United Nations Development Program

Don't we have enough food?



Intuitively you might believe a lack of food is the real issue. That would be farthest from the truth.

"Enough food is available to provide at least 4.3 pounds of food per person a day worldwide: two and half pounds of grain, beans and nuts, about a pound of fruits and vegetables, and nearly another pound of meat, milk and eggs"

The UN says that the major cause of hunger is poverty itself.

They then cite other related causes including the following:

- Land rights and ownership
- Diversion of land use to non-productive use
- Increasing emphasis on export-oriented agriculture
- Inefficient agricultural practices
- War
- Famine
- Drought
- Over-fishing
- Poor crop yield
- Lack of democracy and rights

These are the reasons most cited by Unicef, Politicians, Liberals.

Let's add a couple of more causes-directly from the Word of God:

Human Evil

Human Selfishness

Human Indifference

Human Lust for power

So What is the greatest enemy to world hunger and persecution?

Matthew 15 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? 18 But what comes out of the mouth

proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

The evil that comes from within is the greatest perpetrator of hunger and persecution worldwide!

Why? Hunger is a tool of controlling people. Persecution is a means to eliminate a different worldview.

Consider the issue of hunger for a moment:

I recently read numerous articles that stated that it is a scientific fact that **Wheat belt of North America** is subdivided into winter wheat and spring wheat areas.

The southern area, where hard red winter wheat is grown, includes parts of the states of Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Nebraska, and Colorado.



Hard red spring wheat is grown in parts of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota and in the Canadian provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

These regions alone can grow enough wheat, soybeans and corn to feed the entire world continually!!!!!!

The world does not have a food problem.

The world has a heart problem!!!!

When we live life without the power, worldview and hope of Jesus Christ then the old nature of fear, selfishness and lust for power take over.



While most churches don't talk about the Biblical view of original sin that does not change sins reality.

In the Old Testament **Psalm 51:5** King David says:

*51:5 Look, I was guilty of sin from birth,
a sinner the moment my mother conceived me.*

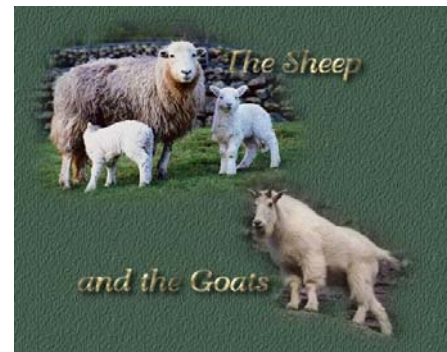
So if we are sinners (evil) from conception and Jesus says that the real source of evil is within us, then what is the solution?

Jesus' word to us in Matthew 25 is the solution.

These are encouraging words and frightening words.

Let's take a close look:

***Matt. 25:31** “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.*



Who is the Son of Man in these verses? Jesus!!

He is claiming, and rightfully so, that he is the final judge of all the nations.

The Bible only reserves the right of final judgment to God.

So what is Jesus claiming? “I am God!”

34 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of

the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ 40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

Those on his right are those who did two things:

1. They believed, put their faith, transferred their total trust to Jesus and what he has done for us as the one and only Lord and Savior. Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

2. Their faith, trust, drove them to thankfulness which resulted in sacrificial actions on behalf of the needs of others.

Hunger-Fed them.

Thirsty-gave them water.

Strange-welcomed me.

Naked-clothed them.

Sick-visited them.

In prison-visited them.

These actions of love take time, inconvenient, didn’t fit their schedules, and were often costly.

But they did them anyway and they did it all the time as their lifestyle.

3. Notice that those on his right are shocked: *When did we do this for you?*

They didn’t see Jesus. They didn’t know it was him. They weren’t expecting thanks for what they did.

4. Jesus responds: *'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'*

OH OH!!!!

Do you realize what Jesus is saying?

Once we claim Jesus as our Lord and Savior the way we respond to the needs of others, regardless of who they are, is in fact a personal response to Jesus.

(Repeat)

Jesus in separately links right beliefs and right actions. You cannot have one without the other!

Matt. 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'

Whoa! That's harsh!

After all these folks claimed to believe in Jesus, after all they called him Lord which means "boss."

Jesus however calls them "cursed."

He consigned them to "hell" with the Devil and his angels.

Either we better get rid of these verses from our Bibles or we better understand what they mean.

Listen:

42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' 45

Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’

Is Jesus serious?

I’ve always been taught that all you need to do is repent, receive Jesus as Lord and Savior and you’re going to heaven!

What in the world is Jesus saying?

He is saying that faith in him must result in the kind of thankfulness that moves us to respond in practical ways to the needs of others.

BIBLICAL FORMULA:

FAITH IN JESUS=THANKFULNESS=PRACTICAL CARE FOR OTHERS.

If you live in thankfulness that results in a lifestyle of caring for others real needs then you are blessed and welcomed into the kingdom of God.

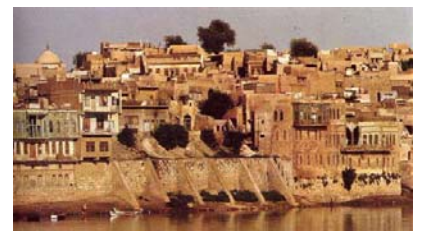
If you don’t have a heart of thanks that results in a lifestyle of caring for others then vs. 46 applies to you:

46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Not only do we care for the practical material needs of others but we also publicly stand with Christians who are persecuted and oppressed.

Friday evening I received this update from International Christian Concern (ICC).

Hundreds of Christian families are fleeing from the Iraqi town of Mosul following the murder of eight Christians in the past two weeks.



Unknown assailants killed the father and two brothers of Father Mazin Isha. Father Isha, a priest of a Syriac Catholic church, had himself been kidnapped in 2007 and released upon payment of ransom.

According to ICC sources in Iraq, the killings are related to the upcoming general election on March 7.

Kurdish and Arab political parties are vying to win the election in Mosul.

Christian minorities are caught in the political struggle between the two parties.

This kind of persecution is going on daily around the world to those who trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Jesus expects us to be concerned.

Jesus expects us to pray to them daily.

Jesus expects us to publicly stand for them.

Jesus expects us to support them. s

Jesus expects us to rescue them whenever possible.

The truth of the church in America is this reality: Most American Christians rarely think or pray for their persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ overseas. It is often just a simple “out of sight, out of mind.”

However, when we fail to pray, to be concerned, to work for justice on their behalf then we have failed Jesus!

This means we have to be **INTENTIONAL**.

FIND A PLACE IN YOUR HOME YOU FREQUENT OFTEN:

KITCHEN REFRIGRATOR

BATHROOM
FAMILY ROOM TV.

Place on the refrigerator, TV, or bathroom mirror a 5 x 7 card that you update each week that says:

**Pray for the starving children in Haiti
as a result of the earthquake.
Pray for the Christians in Mosul,
Iraq who are persecuted.**

Add any details you want.
Pledge before the Lord Jesus,

**“Every time I see this 5 x 7 card and the
reminders to pray on it, I will stop and pray.”**

For most of us this is the only way it is going to happen.
But, when you pray great and wonderful things happen for those
starving and under persecution.

Yellow Card:

This will I will pray for the hungry and persecuted everyday.

**I will sign up for the International Christians Concerned free newsletter
by email. <http://www.persecution.org/suffering/index.php>**

**I will support a child in need through World Vision or one of the other
Christian overseas ministry.**

Pray together for three minutes for the starving and the persecuted.