Grace and Peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Today is the last Sunday of the liturgical year. Now we receive a parable that challenges us to grasp our own vocation as we celebrate our baptism as we try to embody Christ in every moment and to engage with every part of the world as Christ’s redeemed creation.

The parable of the sheep and the goats has been used to instill fear of God’s judgment, that we might go away into eternal punish-a long time. However, consider that Jesus’ is trying to urge his disciples to share God’s generous saving grace with everyone. We have talked about how Jesus’ parables consistently offer a simple setting and story taken out of real life, but behind these parables is a world of rich meaning that we can contemplate our whole lives. That’s why Jesus’ parables are important texts for the postmodern church that is hungry for 1) story, for 2) connection, and 3) for meaning for our faithful lifelong questions.

Mother Theresa was amazing. A priest came to see what she how she led people to help others in a leper colony. Normally a priest would get a tour of their facility and all they were doing to help others. Mother Theresa took it beyond a tour. She asked the priest if he would like to see the face of Jesus then gave him a washcloth and bowl of water to cleanse the lepers. When someone would ask Mother Teresa how she was able to love people in the most desperate situations, she would respond by holding up her hand and speaking one word for each finger: “You; did; it; to; me,” referencing Matthew 25. She called this the [**“Gospel on five fingers.”**](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10153690945090723) ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me.’ Mother Teresa described her ministry as caring for “Jesus in his most distressing disguise,” that is, by caring for the poorest of the poor. Her words honor the spirit of the parable Jesus tells, in which even the righteous struggle to recognize the presence of the divine king in those in need. Today’s gospel passage reminds us not to look away from the faces of those in distress, remembering that Christ’s own face might be hidden there.

There is a story by Gregory the Great in Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers:

There lived a certain monk of very venerable life named Martyrius who on one occasion went to visit another monastery. On his way he met a certain leper, whose members were all afflicted with elephantiasis, who was trying to return to his dwelling, but could not through weakness. His house, he said, was on the road along which Martyrius was going. The man of God had compassion on the weakness of the poor leper, and so he spread his own cloak upon the ground, and, placing the leper upon it, wrapped him securely in the cloak, and lifting his upon his shoulders, brought him along with him. As soon as Martyrius reached the entrance of the monastery, the man he thought was a leper leaped down from his shoulders, and Jesus Christ, true God and true man, appearing in that form in which the Redeemer of humankind was known on earth, returned again to heaven. And when the holy man went into the monastery, the abbot said to him, “Brother Martyrius, where is he you were carrying?” Martyrius answered, “Had I known who it was, I would have held him by the feet.” And he told them that while he was carrying him, he had felt no weight. And it is not to be wondered at that he could not feel his weight who upheld him who was carrying him.

How are we loyal servants of our King, the King of Kings-Christ? Paul tells the Ephesians he regularly thanks God for them, praying for their spiritual growth and desires that God might grant them a spirit of wisdom, enlightened hearts, a deep sense of hope, and a knowledge of the riches they have through God (Ephesians 1:17-19). These are the prayers that I have for you who gather for worship. I am always thankful for you as I pray for your spiritual lives while you help others. The same way Mother Theresa serves those in need the mission of St. Paul is to feed the hungry thinking each time when we serve “you” “did” ‘it” “to” me.” As we embody the works of Christ Jesus words invite us to ponder the deepest foundation of our purpose and presence having faith and hope God’s kingdom is being practiced on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.