

Persecuted but not forgotten...**you did it to me**

5/4/2014 P.R. Carberry

Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' 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.'**" Matt: 25:31-46 the "least of these" are called Christ's "brothers"; thus, the reference is to the righteous helping fellow disciples. Jesus said that those who cared for such individuals were not merely serving his brothers but they were serving Him. (...**you did it to me**).

In Matthew 25, the Lord gets pretty direct and judges the nations by separating them, which are made up of individuals, as sheep's and goats. The sheep are those who have lived a righteous life and it was shown in their works of helping others who were less fortunate. The goats on the other hand, are those that were apathetic, selfish and unloving, and when they came across the "least of these" they were indifferent and offered no help to those in need. When we give our prayers, support and help to those in need, who the Lord called "my brothers", we are doing it as if it was to the Lord. Eph. 5:30 "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

This parable from Matthew also describes a measure God will use to determine if our faith has indeed manifested itself with good works, which should flow from grace and love we received from God. James tells us that "Faith is dead without works". James 2:24. If one's life especially as a Christian, is marked by apathy towards those in need, then the love of Christ is either not in them, or it's dormant and hardened. If not, then we are being apathetic and we should pray and ask the Lord for more grace and love to show to the "least of these".

We are told that as Christians we should be eager to do good (Titus 2:14) especially to those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10). God has always been concerned with the poor and the needy. "He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God" (Proverbs 14:31). Our brothers and sisters are being persecuted for their faith. We are all members of the body of Christ. Help Joshua and help the least of these, so the Lord can say to each of us on that day... **"as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me"**