

SERMON SUMMARY (by OpenAI)

Ministry in the Margins: How Small Acts Have Eternal Impact

By Pastor Bryan Hudson, D.Min.

Matthew 25:31 *“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of 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 took Me in; 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 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ 40 And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”*

1. Introduction: Jesus will separate those who served from those who did not.

Dr. Hudson opens with Matthew 25, where Jesus describes the Son of Man returning in glory, separating people like a shepherd divides sheep and goats. This passage reveals **how God evaluates lives**—not by spectacle or prominence, but by compassionate actions taken toward “the least of these.”

Jesus lists personal, human-scale acts:

- Feeding the hungry
- Giving drink to the thirsty
- Welcoming the stranger
- Clothing the naked
- Visiting the sick
- Ministering to the imprisoned

The righteous are surprised—they don’t remember doing these things for Jesus. But He replies:

“Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”

This text reveals Christ’s heart for people and His identification with the marginalized.

2. Two Levels of Ministry: Macro & Micro

Dr. Hudson explains that Jesus operated at two simultaneous levels:

A. Macro (Big Picture)

- The “40,000-foot view”
- God enthroned in heaven
- Christ coming in glory with angels
- The sweeping rule of God over all creation
- Jesus doing “big things”—miracles, world-changing acts

This is the majestic, transcendent dimension of Christ’s ministry.

B. Micro (Personal & Individual)

- Jesus noticing one hungry person
- One thirsty person
- One stranger
- One sick or imprisoned person
- One woman touching His garment
- One boy with a small lunch

The same King who rules the universe also sees individual people in need.

"Jesus sees you right where you are."

Christ never stops seeing the **person** while seeing the **big picture**.

The Problem With People Who Only See Macro

Some people only want big, impressive ministry. They become "legends in their own minds." But without micro-vision—tenderness, compassion, awareness—you cannot truly minister to people.

3. What God Actually Pays Attention To

Dr. Hudson stresses that we live in a culture fascinated by entertainment, showmanship, and spectacle. But:

- God is not impressed with big platforms or big productions.
- God does not measure greatness the way people do.
- God pays attention to **people and their conditions**, especially those who are suffering.

Illustration: Prison Ministry

Prison ministry strips away props, technology, and fanfare. You can't take your laptop, phone, Apple Watch, or screens.

You go in with:

- A Bible
- A simple watch
- Glasses
- A few notes
- And **Jesus in your heart**

This is **micro-level ministry**—core, simple, compassionate.

God pays attention to that.

4. A Big God Who Sees and Uses Small Things

A. God Sees Small Things

Luke 12:6–7 – God cares about sparrows and numbers every hair on your head.

Jesus regularly highlights small acts of faith, not big personalities.

B. God Uses Small Things

Biblical examples:

- A boy's small lunch (loaves & fishes)
- Rahab's small but courageous lie to protect the spies

- David's sling and five smooth stones
- Samson's donkey's jawbone
- The woman's touch of Jesus' garment
- Gideon's 300 soldiers
- A man loaning Jesus his donkey

All small acts. All with massive impact.

C. God Uses Simple Things

Especially in ministry to the marginalized—juvenile centers, prisons, people at the margins of society.

Simplicity reveals Christ most clearly.

5. Ministry in the Margins: The Meaning of “Margins”

The sermon uses the metaphor of a book:

- The **text** is the main content—where “most people” live.
- The **margin** is outside the center—where people feel unseen, unwelcome, or displaced.

Some people live in the margins because:

- Society pushes them there
- They don't fit expected norms
- They experience hardship, injustice, or lack
- They aren't embraced by the “main text”

Jesus, however, identifies with people in the margins.

He says:

“I was hungry... I was thirsty... I was a stranger...”

He does **not** say “*they* were hungry.”

Jesus dignifies the marginalized by identifying with them personally.

Christ's Identification With the Marginalized

Jesus Himself:

- Was never literally sick or imprisoned
 - Was never homeless in the modern sense
- But He **chooses** to identify with those who are.

Why? Because if you are trapped in the same condition yourself, you cannot lift someone else out.

He identifies so He can elevate.

6. The Problem in American Christianity

Dr. Hudson warns against a version of Christianity obsessed with:

- Power
- Privilege
- Proximity to the wealthy
- Cultural influence

- Celebrity preachers
- “Macro-only ministry”

The Gospel calls us back to the heart of Christ—a heart that sees the hungry, thirsty, undocumented, imprisoned, and sick.

As his grandfather preached:

“You got what you wanted, but lost what you had.”

7. Macro & Micro Together in Scripture

Examples:

- **Proverbs 16:9**
 - *Macro*: A man plans his way
 - *Micro*: The Lord directs his steps
- **James 2:14**
 - *Macro*: Faith
 - *Micro*: Works

Both are required.

8. Sheep vs. Goats: A Call to Be a Sheep

A. Sheep Characteristics

- Gentle
- Stay close together
- Easily follow the shepherd
- Respect boundaries
- Stay where God places them
- Ready to inherit the kingdom because they’ve been walking with the King

B. Goat Characteristics

- Wander into danger
- Break boundaries
- Independent
- Do their own thing
- Resist leadership
- Not oriented to the flock
- Self-willed

This explains the behavior of many people.

C. Why Sheep Inherit the Kingdom

Not because God “picked” them that day, but because:

- They were already aligned with Christ
- Their lives consistently reflected His compassion
- Their hearts were shaped by love, not self-service

“Be a sheep and not a goat.”

9. Final Exhortation: God's Kingdom Is Love in Action

Jesus separates people not by:

- Religion
- Church attendance
- Public image
- Size of ministry
- Amount of Bible knowledge

But by **compassion expressed toward others**.

Two realities:

1. **The unrighteous (goats)** face judgment for indifference and self-service.
2. **The righteous (sheep)** inherit the kingdom because they carry the King's heart.

"Faith works through love." — Galatians 5:6

10. Closing Prayer Themes

- Gratitude for the Word
- Correction and reorientation of our attitudes
- Desire to reflect the compassion of Christ
- Awareness that God sees even sparrows—and certainly sees us
- Thankfulness for people who care and serve quietly
- A commitment to be **sheep**, not goats
- A call to draw close to Jesus and His heart for the marginalized

One-Sentence Summary

This sermon teaches that while God is great and majestic (macro), He pays the closest attention to small, compassionate acts done for people in the margins (micro), and those who consistently walk in such compassion—His "sheep"—are the ones who inherit His kingdom.