

Have You Checked the List???

Luke 1:39-45

³⁹ A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town ⁴⁰ where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. ⁴³ Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? ⁴⁴ When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. ⁴⁵ You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said."

Mary and Elizabeth were related, but their friendship went far beyond mere genealogy. Their relationship serves to illuminate the importance of faith-based believers and their ability to love, encourage, and support each other in the body of Christ. It shows their ability to Trust in God's Word and Plan for their lives.

Today, in the spirit of Christmas, I'd like you to turn to Luke 16:19-24 of a story Jesus tells us concerning Lazarus and the Rich Man...

Luke 16:19-24

¹⁹ "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰ At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In hell, ^c where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' (NIV)

According to Matthew, Chapter 25, verses 31-40, ³¹ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: ³² And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: ³³ And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶ Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ³⁷ Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? ³⁸ When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? ³⁹ Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? ⁴⁰ And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. ⁴¹ Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave

me no drink: ⁴³ I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. ⁴⁴ Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? ⁴⁵ Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. ⁴⁶ And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Good morning my brothers and sisters. We live in an ever-changing society...

A society where acts of violence have continued to escalate. Covid-19 infections in the midst of a pandemic are growing in numbers, and we seem to be reaching unprecedented percentages of joblessness, homelessness, and finally hopelessness. We have completed an election process where the president has clearly lost the election; but refuses to concede. O yes, you may have noticed that many have lost loved ones and jobs. Many have lost their possessions, many have lost homes, and in some cases... many have lost their minds.

I stand here today, like many of you, as watchmen and watchwomen on the wall. I realize that even during the transition into a cooler season and a new administration; there is one who is making a list and checking it twice and that there's hope... Because we have learned that God will make a way Somehow...

I have come to the conclusion after reading this passage how to make our way into heaven. I've come this morning to ask you the question, "Have You Checked the List?"

I like to preach at the Annual Conference amongst my family members and colleagues, but that's not on the list.

I like to sing the Great Hymns and Spirituals every Sunday morning, but that's not on the list.

I like ride in a Rolls Royce from Rocky Mount to Spring Hope or to Raleigh...and on a rare occasion on a Maserati, as the cool air blows through my hair, but that's not on the list.

I'd like to teach Bible study and share the Litany, but I've grown to understand... that's not on the list.

I'd like to sing in the choir, but you know that's... that's just not **on the list**.

I'd like to serve on the Usher board, but that's not on the list.

I'd like to serve on the Steward board, but that's not on the list.

I'd like to serve on the Trustee board, but that's not on the list.

I'd like to serve as a Sunday School teacher, but that's not on the list.

Like anybody; I'd like to serve and arrive early at the Missionary meeting, but that's not on the list.

I'd like to serve as Minister, Clergy, and even Pastor, but you know what....that's simply not on the list.

I like to wear nice suits and ties along with the finest apparel that money can buy, but that's not on the list.

I've had the honor and privilege of working in the film industry and have owned businesses, but that's not on the list.

What if we grew this congregation to 10,000 members with an annual budget of \$20 MM dollars, only to meet Jesus face to face and tell him, that we've managed to grow in number, and lavishly spend the money only on ourselves. I'm inclined to believe that the Lord would tell us that our selfish plan didn't quite make the list.

But if we look carefully at Matthew Chapter 25:33-40, we might be able to find out truly what's on the list...You see, He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:³⁵ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶ Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ³⁷ Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? ³⁸ When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? ³⁹ Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? ⁴⁰ And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

I don't know about you church, but O' I want to see him, Look upon his face, there to sing forever of his saving Grace...On the streets of Glory, Let me lift my voice, Cares all Past, Home at last, Ever to Rejoice...

"Cause when I think about the Goodness of Jesus and all that he has done for me, My Soul..."

You may be here today, and say "How Can I make sure that my name is on the list?"

According to Romans 10:9 - If thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Jesus from the dead, thou shall be saved.

This week a young lady was lost. She said "I want to get saved, but I don't know how to do it? To the Glory of God, I shared Romans 10:9 with her and shared with her "That her name is on God's list." Beloved, if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior; your name is on the list. God Bless you and Heaven smile upon you, in Jesus Name. Amen.