

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10

Psalm 75, Matthew 25:31–46

I've spent a good portion of the last week trying to make these Scriptures less convicting.

There's the clear reality of God's right and fair judgment—we are judged even by our dear, beloved, came-as-a-babe, Jesus. Now the King, raised in glorious majesty and power to the very throne of God, judges us with utter fairness to the very heart of who we are and what we've done or omitted.

Then there's the implication that it's us, his disciples, who are judged on the evidence of our faith. In this whole discourse of Jesus with his disciples, it's the Master's servants, the bridegroom's virgins, and now those who call him "Lord"—all surprised in one way or another by the return of the one for whom they waited or had forgotten. They are either found ready, making good use of their talents, attentive to the needs of the least of Jesus' brothers and sisters, even while he was absent or unseen. Or they are found complacent, forgetting who they were waiting for, fearful and self-preserving, and ultimately neglectful even of those who were hungry, thirsty, strangers, imprisoned!

Which am I? Which are we? The law and the prophets—everything we ought to do and say as individuals and as a church—are summed up in this: love God, love your neighbor. And what kind of love did Jesus demonstrate and call us to? And who is our neighbor? We will likely NOT recognize Jesus in our hungry, sick, neighbor, nor in the stranger or the prisoner. But he expects us to love them in word and deed anyway.

Jesus told these stories as a warning. May the knowledge of his coming lead us to repentance, and to be the sheep of the Shepherd into eternity.

Simon Fowler – Simon has been attending Park Street Church since 2001 (if you include two years commuting from London). He lives in Somerville and is passionate about 1) relational thinking & practice and 2) why people (individual & groups) do what we do and how we change. Simon would like to know why people keep spelling colour wrong.