

**“crude monosyllable”**

**There is a crude monosyllable that should move us to tears and to action.**

**TR: Yet for many of us, the temptation is . . .**



**. . . to fiddle around with one distraction after another.**

**TR: C.S. Lewis said something along the lines of . . .**

**“the true tragedy of Nero”  
is not that someone fiddles  
while the city burns,  
but that he fiddles  
while the city is  
“on the brink of hell”**

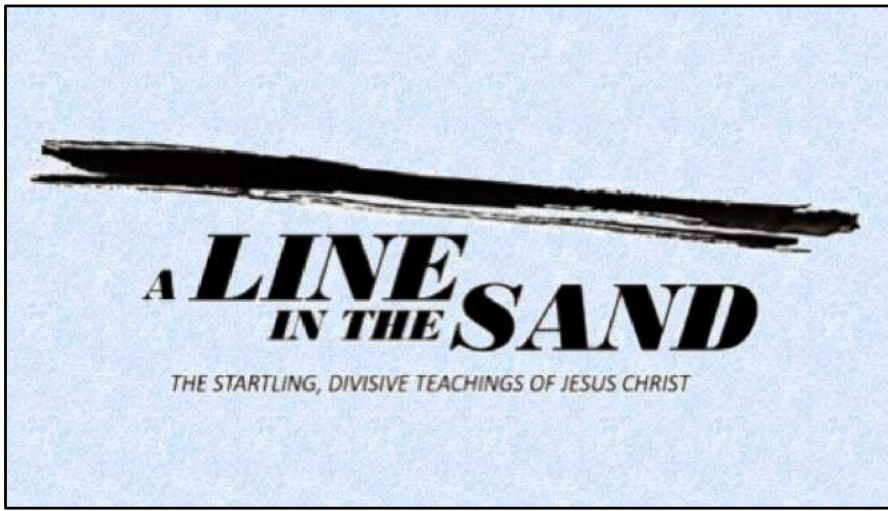
C.S. Lewis adapted by D.A. Carson

## **READ SLIDE**

**-- Imagine us being caught up in dueling fiddles or banjos or pianos . . . while the children’s wing was burning to the ground along with the kids.**

**-- We would never let that happen. Yet, the trend to not commit to ministry because we’ve got too many travel plans and “we’re so busy” seems to amount to nothing more than fiddling while others are on the brink of hell.**

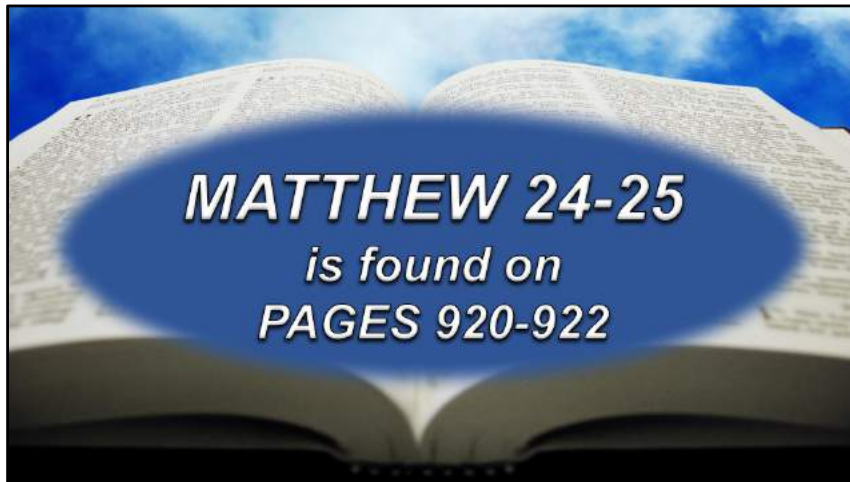
**TR: Jesus repeatedly drew what we call . . .**



**. . . a line in the sand, but for me, they have felt more like a stab in my heart.**

**-- These challenges have made the reality, that we've died with Christ in baptism AND our choice to take up our crosses daily and die with Him, into a practicality that we can't spiritualize away.**

**TR: This reality to practicality is again made clear in our text for this week . . .**



**. . . found in Matthew 24-25.**

**-- Mostly the end of 24 as a lead into to chapter 25.**

**-- Intro Sermon Notes Page**

**-- (First service: Note attempts to clarify slides for NEWAYGO campus)**

**TR: Though we have one more study next week in this series, today we focus on Christ's drawing of . . .**

THERE IS A **"FINAL"** LINE

. . . the FINAL line.

-- Throughout Matthew 24-25, what is often called the Olivet Discourse, we see this theme.

TR: Look at the end of chapter 24 . . .

Matthew 24:42-43

**“Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.  
43But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into.”**

ESV

**Verse 42 . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 44 continues . . .**

Matthew 24:44

**“Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”**

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: The Final line will come . . .**



**THERE IS A “FINAL” LINE**  
**- with unexpected timing**

**. . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Even as we know we will die, but we don't know when we will die.**

**TR: This final line is critical for us to think about because of the consequences that come from being on one side or the other of the line.**

Matthew 24:50-51

“ . . . the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know <sup>51</sup>and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. **In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

ESV

In Matthew 24:50 we read . . . READ SLIDE  
TR: Matthew 25:11 . . .

“Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ <sup>12</sup>But he answered, ‘**Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.**’ <sup>13</sup>Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

ESV

## READ SLIDE

-- I thought of Matthew 7:21-23: *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

TR: Down a few more verses . . .

Matthew 25:21 (see also verse 23)

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. **Enter into the joy of your master.**’”

ESV

... to verse 21 ... READ SLIDE

TR: But on the other side of the line, there isn't joy but rather

...

Matthew 25:30

**“And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”**

ESV

**. . . as verse 30 says . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: On Jesus' side of the line we have the hope of . . .**

Matthew 25:34

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you** from the foundation of the world.’”

ESV

... inheriting the kingdom prepared for us.  
TR: But for those on the wrong side of the line ...

Matthew 25:34

“And these will go away into **eternal punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life.”

ESV

... these will go away into eternal punishment.  
TR: It is critical that we stop fiddling around and grasp the urgency of this final line because it comes ...

## THERE IS A “FINAL” LINE

- with unexpected timing
- with **greatest** of consequences

**. . . with the greatest of consequences.**

**TR: And contrary to what some popular teachers of our day might say, Jesus makes clear in verse 31 and 32 . . .**



Matthew 25:31-32

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.  
<sup>32</sup>Before him will be gathered all the nations, and **he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.**”

ESV

... that there will be a separation of humankind.

READ SLIDE

TR: Let me add verse 41 to our notes to underscore that this separation will be ...

Matthew 25:41

“Then he will say to those on his left,  
‘Depart from me, you cursed, **into the  
eternal fire prepared for the devil and  
his angels.**’”

ESV

. . . eternal.

-- READ SLIDE

TR: Why must we think about more this summer than jet skiing, biking, swimming, baseball?

## **THERE IS A “FINAL” LINE**

- with unexpected timing**
- with greatest of consequences**
- with permanent effect**

**Because there is a final line with permanent effect.**

**-- The crude monosyllable of hell is real and once people are sent there, there is no parole.**

**-- There's not even any solid evidence that it will end sometime . . . it is an eternal damnation.**

**TR: But, we are not dead yet and our choice of which side of the line to stand on is not final yet . . . your past answer does not have to be your final answer.**

**HERE'S HOW TO CROSS THAT LINE:**

*an honest prayer  
of repentance from our sins  
and faith and trust  
in the person and work  
of Jesus Christ on the cross.*

**Here's how to cross the line.**

**-- We are all on the side without Jesus. No one is born on His side, we must be born again to it.**

**-- To cross that line is as simple as . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: Let me review the sample prayer provided in the 8 Simple Drawings booklet . . .**

**Dear Lord Jesus,**

**I now understand that I was created for a life with purpose and meaning under Your rule.**

**I confess that I am a sinner and have rebelled against You. I cannot perfectly keep the Law so I cannot earn my own salvation.**

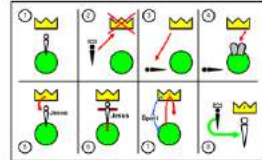
**So right now I am turning away from my rebellion and sin and turning to You in faith and trust.**

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: The prayer continues . . .**

**I accept the work that You did and will do for me through Your life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming again.**

**Please, come be my Savior and send Your Holy Spirit to live within me, as You have promised You would. Amen.**



**READ SLIDE**

**TR: I wanted to make sure you all understood what it takes to cross the line, so that the rest of the teaching today wouldn't be misunderstood.**

## Galatians 2:16

. . . yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but **through faith** in Jesus Christ, so we also **have believed** in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified **by faith** in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

ESV

**As the Apostle Paul taught us . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: But, how do we KNOW we've crossed the line? Can't someone just say those words out loud and even be baptized but not really have crossed the line?**

HERE'S HOW WE **KNOW**  
WE'VE CROSSED THAT LINE  
TO THE **RIGHT** SIDE:

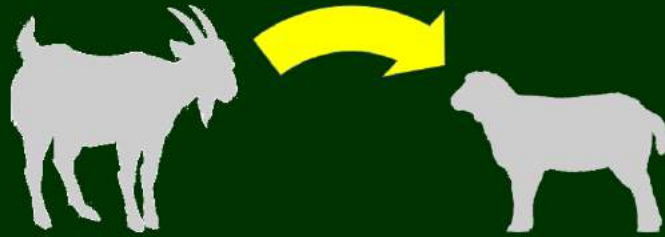


This is a question that hits home to me because I prayed at a freshman in high school but I wasn't sure it "worked."

TR: It helped a year later when someone explained to me that there are three ways that we **KNOW** that we are saved, having crossed the line to Jesus' side.



- 1. The Word's Promise**
- 2. The Spirit's Presence**
- 3. The Changed Produce (Fruit)**



**There's . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Promise . . . Presence . . . Produce**

**TR: In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus draws the line and puts the emphasis on the “produce” or the fruit of a changed life.**

HERE'S HOW WE KNOW  
WE'VE CROSSED THAT LINE  
TO THE RIGHT SIDE:

- by being **faithful**, not giving in  
to passive dissipation and  
drunkenness

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Look back to chapter 24:48 . . .**

Matthew 24:46-47

**“Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. <sup>47</sup>Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.”**

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**-- On Jesus' side of the line is the servant whom his master finds doing what he has been assigned to do.**

**-- There will be the reward of even more challenging work (isn't it interesting that we work so we can retire but God's servants work so that they can do even more important work?)**

**TR: Contrast this with verse 48 . . .**

Matthew 24:48-50a

**“But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ <sup>49</sup>and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, <sup>50</sup>the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him . . .”**

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**-- On the side without Jesus are the wicked servants, the only who are not faithful but passive.**

**-- They are abusive of others and dissipate their energies on drinking and such.**

**TR: As I read this, another teaching of Jesus came to mind, from Luke 21 . . .**

Luke 21:34

**“But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.”**

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Some of the changed produce that we will see in ourselves if we have truly crossed the line is . . .**

HERE'S HOW WE KNOW  
WE'VE CROSSED THAT LINE  
TO THE RIGHT SIDE:

- by being **faithful**, not giving in  
to passive dissipation and  
drunkenness

. . . a faithfulness to actively doing what God has called us to do

. . . READ SLIDE

TR: A second evidence that helps us know we've crossed the line to the sheep side, rather than the goat side, is . . .

HERE'S HOW WE KNOW  
WE'VE CROSSED THAT LINE  
TO THE RIGHT SIDE:

- by being **prepared** for a long delay, not foolishly presumptuous

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Here I'm summarizing the key lesson from Jesus' parable of the bridesmaids at the beginning of chapter 25 . . .**

**Matthew 25:3-5**

**“For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup>but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup>As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept.”**

ESV

**The imagery comes from the Jewish custom of the groom to go to the bride's home for the actual wedding and then return to the groom's home for the time of celebration, what we might call the reception. These virgins or bridesmaids as we might call them, were waiting for the bride and groom to return for the celebration. Jesus contrasts the wise and foolish virgins.**

**-- READ SLIDE**

**-- The announcement comes that the bridegroom is almost there and they trim their lamps . . . except the foolish ones' don't have enough oil. Told by the wise to go buy more, they leave.**

**TR: Pick it up in verse 10 . . .**



**“And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.”**

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**-- We don't want to allegorize this parable by making the oil equal the Spirit, or buying more oil to mean getting more of the Spirit . . .**

**TR: Rather, we easily understand Jesus' big point . . .**

**HERE'S HOW WE KNOW  
WE'VE CROSSED THAT LINE  
TO THE RIGHT SIDE:**

- by being **prepared** for a long delay, not foolishly presumptuous

**. . . we must be prepared for a long delay and not foolishly presumptuous.**

**-- I think part of this being prepared is being ready to deal with suffering in this life.**

**-- Too many have such a shallow faith that they don't endure.**

**-- And, they imagine that their "profound questions" give them the right to turn away from God.**

**TR: Foolish virgins are blasphemously presumptuous . . .**

**". . . omniscience is an incommunicable attribute of God. To act as if we have both the capacity and the right to know everything we want to know approaches blasphemy: we are not God."**

D.A. Carson

**. . . thinking we have a right to know everything.  
-- As D.A. Carson said in a recent journal article . . . READ SLIDE  
TR: Wise virgins are more like John Newton, who endured  
because he was prepared through REALLY knowing Jesus, not  
just about Him.**

*John Newton (who wrote Amazing Grace):*

**“Dear Sir, How unspeakably wonderful that all our concerns are in the hands that were wounded for us. Yours sincerely, John Newton”**

**In a brief note he wrote, we read . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Are we prepared for a long delay . . . even one filled with suffering?**

**TR: Another aspect of the changed produce we see in the lives of someone who has crossed the line to the right side is . . .**

HERE'S HOW WE KNOW  
WE'VE CROSSED THAT LINE  
TO THE RIGHT SIDE:

- by being **profitable**, not  
slothful in the multiplication  
of what's been entrusted to us

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Here we are thinking of the second story in Matthew 25.  
Jesus tells, beginning in verse 14 . . .**

Matthew 25:14-15

“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.”



ESV

### READ SLIDE

- Bags of gold, with each talent weighing about 75 pounds.
- Each of the good servants returned a 100% profit or return on what the Master entrusted to them.

TR: But, down in verse 24 we see how the wicked servant's “produce” was radically different than produce of those on Jesus' side of the line.

Matthew 25:24-25

“He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, <sup>25</sup>so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’”

ESV

**READ SLIDE**  
**TR: Verse 26 . . .**

Matthew 25:26-27

**“But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? <sup>27</sup>Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.’”**

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: People who have by faith trusted Jesus will know this and show this by . . .**



HERE'S HOW WE KNOW  
WE'VE CROSSED THAT LINE  
TO THE RIGHT SIDE:

- by being **profitable**, not slothful in the multiplication of what's been entrusted to us

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: One last teaching story of Jesus, found at the end of the chapter, teaches us . . .**

HERE'S HOW WE KNOW  
WE'VE CROSSED THAT LINE  
TO THE RIGHT SIDE:

- by being **mindful** of Christ's brothers and sisters, not surprised that we are ministering to Him

. . . that we can know we are on the right side of the final line by . . . READ SLIDE

TR: This is the story of Jesus separating the sheep from the goats, based on the need to do so as a shepherd (again, let's not allegorize).

**Matthew 25:37-39**

**“Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? <sup>38</sup>And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? <sup>39</sup>And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’”**

*ESV*

**After the separation, the righteous, on Jesus’ side of the final line, will answer him and say . . . READ SLIDE  
-- Both the sheep and the goats seem slow to make the connection between Jesus and His followers.  
TR: Down in verse 40 and then 45 we read . . .**

Matthew 25:40, 45

“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.’”

“Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to **one of the least of these**, you did not do it to me.’”

ESV

## READ SLIDE

-- Some take to mean how we deal with the poor. Social justice is a big deal in the Bible but the more consistent NT theme is the unity between Jesus and His bride, the Church.

-- When Saul was attacking the church, the risen Christ says to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

TR: Teaching like this, lines in the sand that strike at our very excuses, teach us . . .

**HERE'S HOW WE KNOW  
WE'VE CROSSED THAT LINE  
TO THE RIGHT SIDE:**

- by being mindful of Christ's brothers and sisters, not surprised that we are ministering to Him**

**. . . to remember that being on Jesus' side of the line is demonstrated by treating even those considered the least of His brothers just like we would treat Him.**

**-- As we distance ourselves from those who we don't know (strangers) – isn't it easy to only talk to our friends at church,  
-- . . . or those who have no food or drink or enough clothing, or those who are facing persecution for their faith, we must ask ourselves, "Is this how I want to treat Jesus?"**

**TR: As we talk about how we can know we've crossed the line, we must remember that . . .**

**We are justified  
by faith alone,  
but faith that justifies  
is never alone.**

**. . . READ SLIDE**

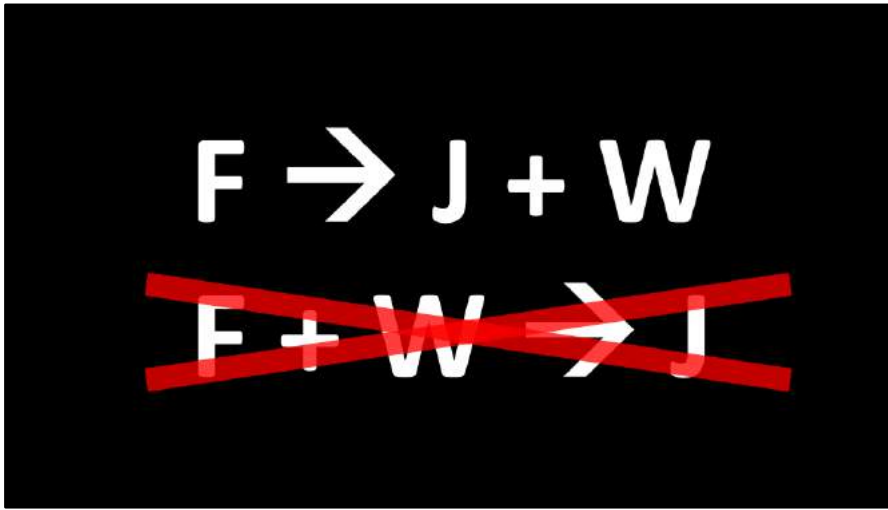
- As James 2 teaches us, faith without works is useless. True faith will be active in works.**
  - Being actively faithful rather than passively wasting time always accompanies saving faith.**
  - Being patiently prepared rather than foolishly presumptuous will always be part of the produce of those on Jesus' side.**
  - Saved sheep will always seek to be diligently profitable, turning their backs on sloth and disobedience.**
  - Goats will only look for photo-ops, doing good when others will notice or when they think it matters. On Jesus' side of the line, each believer will be mindful of all other believers.**
- TR: Let me remind you of the two formulas that compete in the minds of those who say they follow Jesus . . .**

$$F \rightarrow J + W$$

$$F + W \rightarrow J$$

**Faith leads to Justification + works OR Faith + works leads to Justification.**

**TR: The Bible's theology is clear on this . . .**



**. . . the one formula is from God, while the other is wrong.**

**-- So don't think of being a bit more faithful, a bit more prepared, a bit more profitable, a bit more mindful IN ORDER TO CROSS THE LINE!**

**-- That is NOT how it works.**

**-- We cross the line by faith, and we KNOW, over time, that we crossed the line because the fruit, the produce of our lives, has changed.**

**TR: Jesus draws the line . . .**





. . . the final, eternal line in the sand.

-- The line will have an unexpected timing, the greatest of consequences and a permanent effect.

-- We must not fiddle around while people are on the brink of hell.

TR: Jesus' words challenge our . . .

**“atrophied hope”**

**OR**

***faithful, prepared,  
profitable, mindful hope***

. . . atrophied faith, as one person called it.

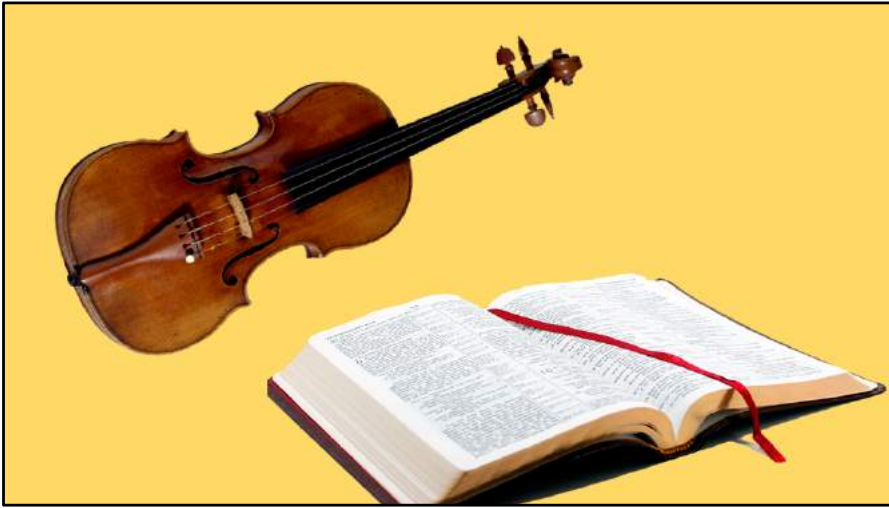
-- Looking with His disciples at the end of the storyline of the Bible, Jesus stirs us to the core of our beings.

-- We have a new heaven and a new earth to cherish and a hell to be feared. Atrophied hope, atrophied faith forgets both.

-- And, having forgotten them, it will not produce the fruit of a faithful, prepared, profitable, and mindful hope.

-- Yes, we can use these four points to evaluate our lives, but any deficiency should drive us back to Jesus and not to our own abilities.

TR: There are only two sides of the line . . . only sheep and goats . . . which are you?



**And for those of us who believe we are sheep, are we fiddling around while others are on the brink of hell?**

- Instead of LEADING those in our protectorate, do we only try to be PLEASING to them?**
- Husbands to wives, parents to children, pastors to churches?**
- No one has ever loved as Jesus did and does. Yet, He LEADS us by drawing a line in the sand.**
- A line that shatters the worldly tolerance of easy-believism and shallow faith.**
- We can know that we've crossed the line by PROMISE, PRESENCE, PRODUCE.**



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