A black and white, upside-down photograph of a city skyline with various skyscrapers and buildings. The image is inverted, with the top of the frame showing the tops of buildings and the bottom showing the lower parts of buildings and a cloudy sky.

MATTHEW

The Upside umog Kingdom

Matthew 25
Waiting for Jesus



Matthew 25:1-13

We need to be ready when Christ comes again

MATTHEW
The Upside down Kingdom



We need to be ready when Christ comes again

- This chapter contains three parables that each tell us what the kingdom of God will be like in the future eschatological sense.
- The two-part coming of the kingdom is called “inaugurated eschatology.”
- Jesus’ first coming ushered in the spiritual kingdom of God – defeating sin and death on the Cross.



We need to be ready when Christ comes again

- The complete physical kingdom of God (when He will conquer all His enemies, rid the world of evil, and reign on the throne) is still yet to come.
- The kingdom is both “already” here but also “not yet” here in all its fullness.



We need to be ready when Christ comes again

- This first parable continues the same theological point from the last chapter.
- The Second Coming would seem “delayed” compared to what His disciples were expecting, so they should always be ready.
- To emphasize the point, Jesus used a parable about a wedding.



We need to be ready when Christ comes again

- A wedding took place in two parts:
 - The betrothal - during which a bride was considered legally married but still lived in her father's house
 - The marriage - when the bride was actually taken to the house of the groom, accompanied by a procession of bridesmaids, groomsmen, family and friends.



We need to be ready when Christ comes again

- The wedding procession typically happened at night, with the bridesmaids carrying torches (lamps) made of sticks wrapped with oiled rags as they sang and danced.
- Some of these homemade torches could only burn about fifteen minutes before needing to be rewrapped with oiled cloth, so the bridesmaids would have needed extra oil.



We need to be ready when Christ comes again

- Sometimes the procession could be delayed .
- These foolish bridesmaids were unprepared for the delay. They didn't have enough oil to keep their lamps going.
- The expression of the groom – “I don't know you” – was an idiom indicating a breach of relationship. Because they had insulted his family, he no longer recognized their relationship.



We need to be ready when Christ comes again

- The point of the parable is simple: be prepared.
- It may seem as though Jesus is delayed in coming back.
- We always need to be prepared for His return.
- It could be a thousand years off, or it could happen any day now.



Matthew 25:14-30

As we wait for Him to return, we are to expand His kingdom

MATTHEW
The Upside down Kingdom



As we wait for Him to return, we are to expand His kingdom

- This parable is also about being ready for Jesus' return, but from a different angle.
- The parable tells us that our lives (time, talent and treasure) belong to God; we are just stewards of them.
- He expects us to invest our resources to build and grow His kingdom, not our own wealth, fame or power.



As we wait for Him to return, we are to expand His kingdom

- Jesus was telling His disciples that they weren't supposed to sit around waiting for His return.
- Jesus started the kingdom, and He will bring it to consummation.
- In the in-between, our mission is to expand the kingdom of God.



As we wait for Him to return, we are to expand His kingdom

- We are servants of Christ, stewards of His resources, not masters of our own.
- Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:19–20, “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.” Our time, our talents, our money, our families, our homes, our schedules ... all of it belongs to God. Paul continued, “So glorify God in your body.”



As we wait for Him to return, we are to expand His kingdom

- Each of the three servants was given a different amount of money, “according to his ability.”
- The master didn’t give them more than they could handle, but just what they needed, what he knew they could use and multiply.
- The amount you have been given doesn’t matter. What matters is what you do with what you have been given.



As we wait for Him to return, we are to expand His kingdom

- A talent was about 20 years' worth of salary for a day laborer.
- If we calculate that in today's terms, equating a day laborer with a minimum wage worker, it's about \$300,000.
- The first servant was given five times that, about \$1.5 million, and the second servant two times that – \$600,000.



As we wait for Him to return, we are to expand His kingdom

- Every one of us has been given an enormous allotment of time, talent and resources from the Lord.
- Every one of us has been entrusted with a fortune from the Lord.
- Jesus encourages us to dream big about what we could do with all the time, talent, and treasure we have.



As we wait for Him to return, we are to expand His kingdom

- The first two servants both invested their money and doubled it.
- But the servant who received one talent hid his master's money in the ground (pretty typical for that day).
- He was operating out of fear, not obedience.
- He was so afraid to lose what he had, he missed the opportunity to double it.



As we wait for Him to return, we are to expand His kingdom

- To the first two servants, the master responded with the exact same words.
- They weren't praised for their bottom line; they were praised for their faithfulness.
- It isn't the result but the work you put in that matters. It's not how many people you lead to Christ.



As we wait for Him to return, we are to expand His kingdom

- Those who invested their resources were invited to share in the master's abundance. They invested their talents for the master.
- The talents didn't belong to them, they were just stewards. But the master invited them to come share in his wealth.
- They were no longer just servants, they were part of the family, sharing in the inheritance like sons (Romans 8:17).



As we wait for Him to return, we are to expand His kingdom

- They had stored up their treasures in heaven by investing in the kingdom of God rather than their own kingdoms and the things of this world (Matthew 6:19–21).
- The Christian life is about investing in the kingdom, offering whoever you are and whatever you have as a living sacrifice for God (Romans 12:1-2).



Matthew 25:31-46

We will be judged on the two greatest commandments

MATTHEW
The Upside down Kingdom



We will be judged on the two greatest commandments

- This parable is about “the final judgment.”
- It isn't about a works-oriented theology but it is showing that what James said is true – faith without works is dead (James 2:14–26).
- If we love Jesus, we will care for His people (John 21:15–21).
- Loving God and loving people go together.



We will be judged on the two greatest commandments

- “The Son of Man” - the vision of the heavenly throne in Daniel, where the Son of Man was given all authority over all the nations by the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9–14).
- In this parable, Jesus sits on His glorious throne and judges all the nations. In rabbinic literature, the king and final judge is always God. Here it is Christ, another claim to divinity by Jesus.



We will be judged on the two greatest commandments

- Jesus used a normal part of everyday life metaphorically to make a point. There is nothing inherently evil about goats.
- In the ancient world, shepherds separated sheep from the goats at night because sheep liked to be in the open air and goats needed to stay warm.
- In Scripture, sheep are always representative of the people of God.



We will be judged on the two greatest commandments

- Here the sheep were not all Israel nor the goats all Gentiles.
- Individual “sheep” and “goats” will be separated out of every nation, including Israel.
- All the nations will be judged, including Israel, by how they loved God and loved their neighbors.



We will be judged on the two greatest commandments

- Devout Jews were required by the law to offer *tzedakah* (justice/charity) to those in need.
- The prophets and Proverbs tell us that acts of *tzedakah* are more acceptable to God than sacrifices (Proverbs 21:3).
- The law also requires that *tzedakah* be done generously, not with a begrudging heart (Deuteronomy 15:10).



We will be judged on the two greatest commandments

- Jesus gave a few examples: feeding the hungry, showing hospitality to the stranger, and visiting those who are sick and in prison
- These are just representative samples of all acts of lovingkindness toward anyone who is in need in any way, physically, emotionally or spiritually.



We will be judged on the two greatest commandments

- The way Jesus equated the treatment of the least of these with the treatment of Himself reminds us of what He said a few chapters earlier, that the greatest commandment is to love God and love our neighbor (Matthew 22:37–40).
- The way we treat our neighbor shows whether we really love Jesus, no matter what we say.



We will be judged on the two greatest commandments

- The way we treat others reveals whether we really love God.
- If we really love God, we will share His heart for all people.
- Not just those we naturally like or get along with or those in our family, our circle of friends, our tribe.
- That applies to even “the least of these.”

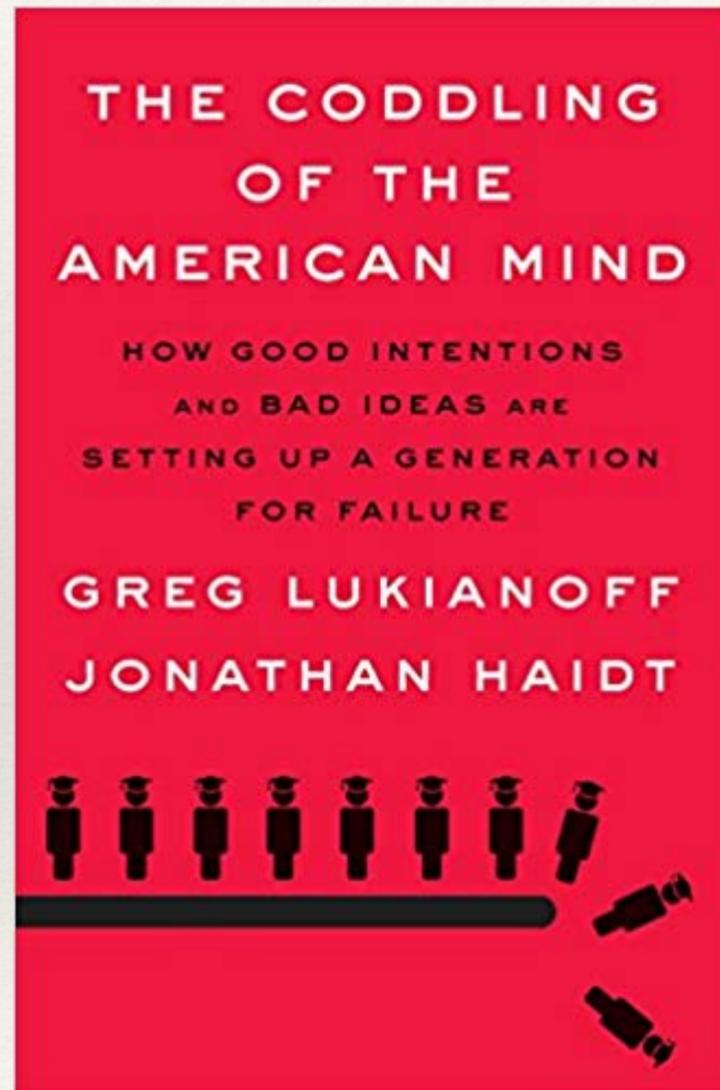


We will be judged on the two greatest commandments

- In Hebrew thought, a neighbor was a fellow Israelite.
- In the ancient world, there was often a division between “my people,” to whom I have a responsibility, and everybody else.
- Those who really love God don’t ask whom they have to love and serve (Luke 10:29) or how many times they have to forgive someone (Matthew 18:21). We are to love everybody.

Loving our Neighbor
and
Tribalism in Our World

Coddling of the American Mind



- The authors noticed something happening on campus.
- We now see this mindset spreading to society and even into the streets.
- First Amendment expert Greg Lukianoff and social psychologist Jonathan Haidt had some possible explanations they first published in *The Atlantic* and then expanded in this book.

First Untruth

- The untruth of fragility: What doesn't kill you makes you weaker.
- Nietzsche said, "What doesn't kill me makes me stronger."
- Kelly Clarkson also sang that, but millennials don't believe it.
- Antifragility - is different from fragile and resilient. An antifragile system requires stressors and challenges. Otherwise they become rigid, weak, and inefficient.
- The rise of safetyism - students can feel unsafe if you use the wrong pronoun.

First Untruth

- Safe spaces - this developed from “concept creep” where safety also included not having to face contrary ideas.
- Trigger warnings - these are issued in order to allow students to avoid anything that might be a trauma to them. They are counter-therapeutic.
- The iGen generation (internet Generation) suffers from far higher rates of anxiety and depression than the Millennial Generation.
- Jean Twenge says they believe “one should be safe not just from car accidents and sexual assaults but from people who disagree with you.”

Second Untruth

- The untruth of emotional reasoning: Always trust your feelings.
- Cognitive behavioral therapy - patients tended to get caught in a feedback loop in which irrational negative beliefs causes powerful negative feelings.
- Triad - “I’m no good,” “My world is bleak,” and “My future is hopeless.”
- Microaggressions - brief and common daily verbal indignities, whether intentional or unintentional.
- The slights are defined entirely in terms of the listener’s interpretation.

Third Untruth

- The untruth of us versus them: Life is a battle between good people and evil people.
- We may excuse the actions by someone in our tribe, but vilify actions by someone else in a different tribe.
- Attribute a bad motive to others and never cooperate with them. In fact, you should “cancel them.”
- Identifying a common enemy is an effective way to enlarge and motivate your tribe.

Resources

