

## **“Matthew 25”**

*We Are Sent- week #2*

or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you? 40 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.' 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. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' 45 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.' 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Matthew 23:23 ESV - 23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

### **Q2**

Ephesians 2:10 ESV - 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Read Luke 16:19-26 in your Bible

### **Q3**

Acts 4:32-35 ESV - 32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Matthew 22:37-40 ESV - 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the critical last days before his crucifixion, Jesus taught his disciples important truths using many parables- stories that illustrate a spiritual lesson. In the book of Matthew, we find one parable which warns us that there will be some who gain entrance to God's presence while others are cast out. When we look at the scripture account we find those who do enter the kingdom have lived lives characterized by acts of love to the poor and needy. All of us are called to this mission of loving our neighbor and pursuing justice and mercy. But we may not have considered the sobering consequences of neglecting to do so. Let's explore the important context of Jesus' words and understand their revelatory implications.

### **Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)**

Have you ever been part of a missions team or a ministry team? If so describe your experiences.

## **STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)**

### **Q1. Read Matthew 25:32-46; Matthew 23:23**

Matthew chapter 25 contains three parables; the last we often refer to as "the sheep and the goats". All three parables warn us that there are those who gain admittance to God's presence and those who will be cast out. Upon what basis were the "sheep" admitted and the "goats" cast out? In verses 37 and 44 both groups ask the same question. What did they ask? If neither the righteous nor the accursed recognized Jesus as the recipient of their actions, what might that reveal about the motives underlying how they acted toward the poor and needy- which group would have acted differently if they knew that it was Jesus standing before them?

In Matthew 23:23 the Pharisees were tithing what was visible (herbs) but neglecting matters of the heart such as justice, mercy and faithfulness. What are some of the ways we might be focused on how well we perform in the eyes of others rather than caring about the benefits we can bestow through our actions?

## Q2. Read Ephesians 2:10; Luke 16:19-26

God created all of us, even the most ordinary, to be on mission in this world. How does Ephesians 2:10 say this? Sometimes we are spiritually blind to the opportunities that lie at our doorstep. In Luke 16 we find the story of the rich man and Lazarus. It appears that even though Lazarus was in plain sight, the rich man did nothing to help him.

It is easy to vilify the rich man, but if we were to review our week, how many times did we fail to see the needy at our own doorstep? God knows the names of the needy and the destitute, the “Lazaruses”, but we more likely label them as “the homeless” or “illegal aliens” or some other broad term.

If you approached someone in obvious need and asked them their name before you offered money or food how would that affect how you view them and what would it do for them? What are some of the things that prevent us from reaching out to comfort those in need in this way?

## Q3. Read Acts 4:32-35; Matthew 22:37-40

If we see ourselves on mission to do good works, and our eyes are open to the people in need around us, both locally and globally, we will be ready to put God-fueled mercy and compassion into action. Can you identify the attitudes, actions and results of believers who lived like this in Acts 4:32-35?

When you think of our Five Cities community, what would you say are some of our greatest needs? Is there any one area of need that particularly moves your heart?

In the church God has assembled people with a variety of resources. We can think of these as the three “T’s”; time, talent and treasure. Some of us have more time than money to give. Others are happy to contribute funds, while still others may have the skills and abilities that will meet the needs of the hurting. Which would you say you are best able to provide?

During the month of May, New Life is making several opportunities available for you to be a part of. If you don’t know where to begin to bless your community, go to [newlifepismo.com/sent](http://newlifepismo.com/sent) and find out what’s happening and where you might join in!

## WRAP-UP

It is far too easy for us to allow fear or busyness or self-focus to blind us to the needs of those around us. God’s heart breaks for the poor and needy and if we are aligned with Him, our hearts will also be broken. Our mission is to love God and love our neighbor, be they near or far. God may have gifted you with time, talent or treasures that you can spend for His kingdom work. If you are not already involved, ask God to reveal how He wants you to be His hands and feet to those in need.

## Memory Verse

*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.'*

*- Matthew 25:40 ESV*

*Challenge- We are sent to bring hope and light to the whole world. World Vision is an international Christian organization ministering to the poor and oppressed. Visit their site to find out how you can help. [Worldvision.org](http://Worldvision.org)*

## PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more space)

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## Bible Verses

### Q1

Matthew 25:32-46 ESV - 32 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. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 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. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 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,