

MESSAGE NOTES:

Matthew 25:31-46

The Sheep and the Goats

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

⁴⁴ "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

⁴⁶ "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

STUDY GUIDE:

STEP ONE: Icebreaker (Optional):

- Who is your favorite actor/actress and why?

STEP TWO: Prayer & Scripture Reading

- Ask someone in your group to pray to open your time together.
- Ask another person to read **Matthew 25:31-46**.

STEP THREE: Discuss Questions

1. What was challenging, encouraging, confusing, or stood out most to you from this past weekend's teaching?
2. What's the significance of Jesus separating the nations/peoples in vs. 32?
3. Read verses 34-36. How do these verses show that people do not get into the kingdom based on what THEY do but based on what God has already DONE?
4. How does what the righteous do to the "least of these" show evidence that they belong to Jesus?
5. Read verse 40. What's the significance of Jesus identifying with the "least of these?" How might this play out practically?
6. How can you realistically assess whether you are meeting the real needs of the "least of these?" Who are some examples of the "least of these" currently within your sphere of influence?
7. Read verses 41 and 46 which talk about "eternal fire" and "eternal punishment." Think about the ultimate justice of God. How can you reconcile a loving God with the reality of hell? What is God's way of avoiding Hell, and why is this actually gracious that He tells us of this horrific reality?

STEP FOUR: Prayer

- Ask someone in your group to close in prayer.