



Week 3 ReAction

Opening Prayer

God of Engagement, give us the opportunities to show someone that you love them, through our words, our deeds, and our outreach. Amen.

Check-in

How was your week? Where have you seen God at work in your life since we last met? Today, our scripture is about sheep and goats... what experience do you have with livestock? Are you a full-blown cowpoke? Or is your interaction limited to the petting zoo at the park? Ready, go.

Scripture: Matthew 25:31-40 NLT

³¹ “But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his 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 creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’

³⁷ “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? ³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

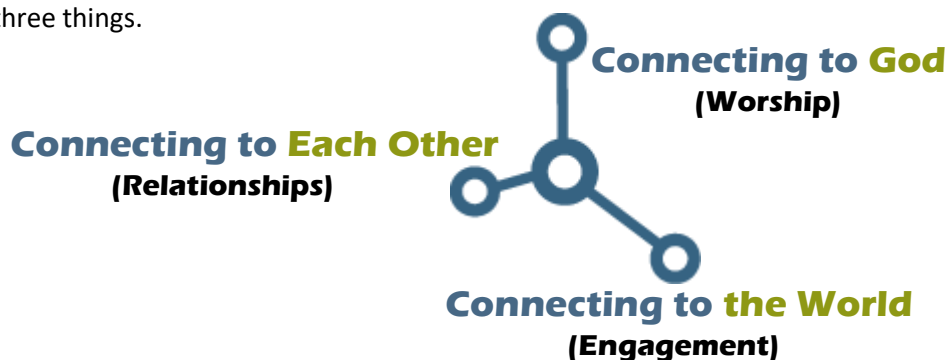
⁴⁰ “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus is speaking to his disciples about their call to reach out to those in need, to remember that a primary part of their mission is to meet the practical, real-world needs of the world around them.

What strikes you about this scripture? How would you have felt if you were one of the disciples hearing these words? What do you find difficult?

2. Our first week we talked about who we *are*: We are a faith community where you belong. Today we're talking about what we *do*. And we've conveniently created our icon to represent these three things.



Learn it. Love it. Wear it. (It's all on our new t-shirts... get one! Anyway...) If it doesn't fall into one of these three categories, we don't do it. And the third of our three pillars, Connecting to the World, or "Engagement," is exactly what Jesus is talking about in this scripture. He tells the disciples about the "kingdom" he prepared for us from the beginning of the world. He's saying, "I love you. I want to spend eternity with you. I gave you the greatest gift I could think of. But that's coming. For now, you have an opportunity to respond, to *react*, to that gift by serving those in need. You have a chance to create some of that kingdom here on Earth. Will you?" So, one reason we are so focused on engagement is: it's a response to how good God is to us.

Sometimes it's easier to see the value of something when we view it from the other side. Share a time when you were in need and someone came to your aid. How did you feel? What did the situation teach you?

3. The second reason we put such a high priority on Engagement comes from something in the last verse that you may have initially missed. When Jesus is talking about those who are in need, he calls them his "brothers and sisters." (Now, sometimes your siblings can drive you nuts...but...) Jesus is saying, "these people matter to me. They are valuable and worthy and beloved. And when you seek to meet their needs, you are showing them they matter to me." We have Engagement Partners and do Engagement Events because people matter to God and therefore matter to us.

You will never cross paths with someone Jesus does not love. How well do you do at seeing others as valuable, beloved siblings of Christ? What makes it difficult for you? What would make it easier?

Closing Prayers

Through this series, we've talked about who we are and what we do as a faith community. But it doesn't just have to be for us. These ideas can and should be taken and applied to your life, every day. Pray this prayer... go ahead... say it out loud...

"God, give me an opportunity to show someone that you love them."

Make this a daily prayer and then keep your eyes open for the opportunities that God will place in your path. Then seize them because there's a world that needs to know they matter to God.

Take some time to share prayer requests or celebrations. Close in prayer.