

WHAT'S NEXT

HELPING THE HURTING

Matthew 25:35-40 NIV: 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, 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.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "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.'

LIFE GROUP / PERSONAL STUDY:

We've been focusing on "What's Next" for the individual as we have learned about the "Greatest Commandment" and the "Great Commission" and bringing God glory by using our individual gifts. However, we need to realize that as we work out these commands and instructions individually that we are also members of the Body of Christ here on the earth - the Church. So the impact of the "church" can become much greater as we work together to share the Gospel message, but also to "Help the Hurting!" This week, let's focus on the very clear instructions that Jesus gave about how to do this in Matthew 25.

Read Matthew 25:31-34:

1A) By looking at the context of our focus passage, when and where was Jesus saying this conversation would take place?

1B) Who will be there? Verses 31-32

What will Jesus be doing? Verses 32-33

Who will He be speaking to? Verse 34

2A) What examples did Jesus specifically use for helping others in Matthew 25:35-36?

2B) Jesus was speaking in the 1st person in each of these examples. What was the response of those He was speaking to? Verses 37-39

2C) PERSONAL: What does Jesus' response in verse 40 mean to you?

Read Matthew 25:41-46:

3A) From this passage, what do we learn about those who refused to “help the hurting?”

3B) PERSONAL: How important do you think “helping the hurting” is to Jesus?

3C) PERSONAL: How does that change your attitude towards “helping the hurting?”

Read Isaiah 58:6-11:

4A) What similar instructions did the prophet Isaiah give to the people of Israel?

4B) What promises did God give in these verses to those who followed these instructions?

5) PERSONAL: What does it mean to you that God has always placed great importance on His people “helping those who are hurting?”

6) Give specific examples of what following God’s instructions might look like in today’s world.

7) PERSONAL: What are you doing at this time to actively help the hurting? Or if you’re not doing anything right now, what areas of ministry would you like to get involved in?

ACT: The Church is called to be the helping hands and feet of Jesus to those people who are hurting - physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We cannot take part in all of the ministry opportunities, but we can pray and ask God to show us how and where to get plugged in so that we can help others by using the specific gifts He has given to us. Remember the body has many parts and each part needs to be functioning! So far, we’ve learned that opportunities lie in going and making disciples so they can be saved and baptized. There are other opportunities for teaching and helping others learn about Jesus and how we are to live our daily lives, and now we know there is a huge need to express compassion as we feed, clothe, visit, encourage, pray for, and provide for those who are hurting.

Daily Devotional: It always helps to look at the context of the passage. Then try to answer the following questions about the passage. Who is involved? What is going on? Where is the action taking place? When? How can this concept apply to my life? Why is it important? Also look for Commands, Warnings, and Examples to follow or not to follow.

- This week let's explore passages that describe the importance of helping others.

Monday:

Job 29:12-16 NLT

For I assisted the poor in their need and the orphans who required help. I helped those without hope, and they blessed me. And I caused the widows' hearts to sing for joy. Everything I did was honest. Righteousness covered me like a robe, and I wore justice like a turban. I served as eyes for the blind and feet for the lame. I was a father to the poor and assisted strangers who needed help.

Tuesday:

Proverbs 3:27-28 NLT

Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it's in your power to help them. If you can help your neighbor now, don't say, "Come back tomorrow, and then I'll help you."

Wednesday:

Proverbs 14:31 NLT

Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but helping the poor honors him.

Thursday:

Proverbs 19:17 NLT

If you help the poor, you are lending to the Lord— and he will repay you!

Friday:

Romans 12:13 NLT

When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

Saturday:

1 Corinthians 12:7 NLT

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

Sunday:

Ephesians 4:15-16 NLT

Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

