

Matthew 25:31-46 (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!’

41 “Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. 42 For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink. 43 I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.’

44 “Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?’

45 “And he will answer, ‘I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’

46 “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”

Serving is a sign, not a toll.

Galatians 6:7-10 (NLT) - 7 Don’t be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. 8 Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. 9 So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up. 10 Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

Study Guide

This last Sunday we spoke about the next step in the path, service. We also talked about how service is a sign, not a toll in that an affinity for and ability to serve is a sign of a maturing Christian who is becoming more and more like Jesus, and not simply something I have to do because I must.

As you look at your life and the history of your life, what moments when someone served you stand out? Why do you think you remember that act? Why do you think they served you?

Now, think of a time when you served someone else? Why did you do that? How did it feel?

Take a moment to read Acts 20:30-35. Why do you think Jesus says it is more blessed to give than to receive? The word blessed here means more correct, or more right. Paul is pointing out that it is not just morally or ethically preferable to give, it is actually better. Do you think that is the case? Is giving really better than receiving? Why or why not?

It can be hard to believe that it is better to give, but the more we learn about the way God has built life to work, the more we become like Jesus, the more sense it makes. Take some time to talk about what serving looks like as a regular act in your life, opportunities to serve that may be open to you now, and pray for each other that we might all look for and find new ways to serve those around us.