

Ministering to the Least

Matthew 25:31-46

Introduction

One of the ways that you can demonstrate your love for Christ is to meet the needs of others. Matthew 25 tells us that when we show care and concern in practical ways for those in need, we are in essence showing our love for Christ. Beyond practical service, Luke 14:12-14 instructs us to give to those who cannot pay us back. It is easy to do for those who can then do for us in return. The test of true ministry and service to the Lord is when we are willing to give our best for others who can't return the favor. In doing so, we choose to trust God with our reward because we ultimately show our love for Him when we minister to the "least of these." (Matthew 25:45)

In John chapter 9, Jesus encounters a man who was born blind and says that his special challenge in life existed so that the work of God might be displayed in Him. God sometimes allows people with special needs to teach spiritual lessons to others. If we take seriously the call to minister to those with a particular need, we often end up being the ones to have our eyes opened to new things and to see God at work in unique ways.

In Matthew chapter 19, Jesus is speaking of children and he says, that the kingdom of heaven "belongs to such as these." In the local church, children and children's ministry should not be overlooked but instead prioritized. Jesus showed great compassion and love for children and wants us to do the same.

Getting Started

1. Describe the thoughts and feelings that go through your head when you see someone who may fit into this category "the least of these" begging on the side of the road?
2. Do you have anyone that you personally know that has a special physical or mental challenge? Share with your group about that person and how they may have impacted you or others to glorify God?

Let's Get Personal

1. How has this week's sermon affected how you look at people that could be considered the "least of these?"
2. What changes will you make in how you relate to them?
3. Jesus told those who had not ministered to the "least of these" to depart from Him (Matthew 26:41). He goes on to say that when they choose not to minister to the needy, they were choosing not to minister to Jesus Himself. Reflect on what this means for our standard of ministering to others. Reflect on the reality that when we choose to give to the least of these we are giving to Christ.
4. Have you ever experienced mistreatment as one of the "least of these?"

Take the Next Step

1. Do you have any people in your life that would fit into the category of people from today's sermon? Why or why not?
2. If so, what can you do to actively change that?
3. Want to dig deeper? Look at Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 14:12-14, Matthew 18:1-6, or Matthew 19:13-15. How do these passages help you understand further the importance of showing God's mercy and goodness to those in need?

Renew Your Mind

"Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me." Matthew 25:45
