

Sunday November 22 2020 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – Matthew 25:31-46
“In Christ’s Glory**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have each participant answer the question, “What kinds of people do you have the hardest time extending compassion toward?” (For example, homeless, unemployed, emotionally needy, etc.) “And why?”

Matthew 25: 31-46 Context: This week’s reading presents the last words of Jesus’ last discourse before his suffering and death. It is in effect the climax of Jesus’ teaching as Matthew shapes it. It is a vision of the coming judgment, where those who will inherit the kingdom of God and those who will not, receive their rewards. This is the final triumph of the kingdom of God over the kingdom of this world. Matthew stresses that it is not the words on one’s lips but the deeds of one’s heart and hands that will separate the blessed from the damned.

Read Matthew 25:31-46

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Matthew 25:31-46 again

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- What would it feel like to hear verse 34 spoken over you?
- What is the difference between the sheep’s and the goats’ responses in verses 37 and 44?
- What was the difference between how the “sheep” lived compared with how the “goats” lived? [The preaching notes observe that the goats lived in a way more about passing the test; whereas, the sheep lived a life of servanthood to any in need.]
- How does this passage connect with the previous two week’s passages? [The first week’s passage was about acting wisely with our time; the second week’s passage was about acting wisely concerning stewardship. Generally speaking, this passage is about seeing the needs of others (seeing all the people) and responding (wisely and responsibly) to the needs of all. It also connects with the first passage by the invitation of the master - entering into the joy of the master. Here the invitation is to enter the glory of Christ. In the second week’s passage, those

who invested wisely were rewarded. In today's passage, those who invest their lives wisely are invited into the glory of the kingdom.]

- A colleague is fond of saying, "The secret to life is paying attention." Paying attention is easier said than done in a culture full of distractions and attention seekers. Paying attention is a muscle we need to exercise. When we are paying attention to the needs around us, we don't think about what we're doing; we just live out what's in us. What activities and/or how can this group help you to pay attention to the needs of those around you?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Compassionate God, we give you thanks for your abiding presence with us. Guide us to be more aware of opportunities to see you in the face and needs of those we encounter. Empower us to be focused on being your servants with and to all people that we might experience your glory.

Amen.

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.