

## Matthew 25:31-46

### The Challenge of Discipleship Study 12: *Compassion*

**Focus Question:** *When in the previous week did someone extend compassion to you?*

#### Word of Life

**“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”** Matthew 25:40

#### Read [Matthew 25:31-46](#)

This text is often referred to as the Last Judgment, describing the end of time when the Son of Man returns. Jesus uses the phrase “Son of Man” to describe himself sitting on the throne with all the angels at the time of judgment. All nations gather before him.

The age-old questions about the second coming of Christ – *when?* and “*what sign?*” – are answered in a surprising way: Christ comes now, in the “least.” The poor and the suffering are signs of Christ’s presence.

1. *How does Christ connect and identify with those in need?*

Note that neither those identified in the parable as the sheep nor the goats knew who it was that they were serving (or not serving). They did not act (or fail to act) to earn Jesus’ favour or to gain their salvation. Rather, the faithful lived out their faith daily in the ordinary actions and service to others in need. They are called “blessed” – the word Jesus uses in the Beatitudes to describe the faithful disciple ([Matthew 5:1-12](#)). They have an *attitude* of a servant, reaching out and caring for those in need with the heart of Jesus. They fulfil what Jesus described earlier in Matthew as the great commandment: to love God and to love the neighbour ([Matthew 22:37-39](#)). Followers of Jesus of every time and place are to act with the same attitude of servanthood and compassion.

This parable sheds light on the sins of omission – the things we are called to do that we fail to do. We can often readily identify and name our sinful actions. But it is a more difficult task to name and identify those things we failed to do – those needs we did not even recognize. This passage shakes us to our core. The world is big; the needs are great.

2. *What are some sins of omission, those things left undone?*

Each day we, as disciples of Jesus, struggle with forgiveness, grace, responsible living, courage, love, stewardship and other issues. Sin yanks at us to go our own way with no regard for anyone but ourselves. Thankfully, we have other Christians to encourage, support, and challenge us. We have God’s Word to ground us in the teachings of Jesus. We have the Spirit to nudge and prod us.

3. *How have the challenges of being a disciple of Jesus changed for you over the years?*

4. *Today, what is the greatest challenge for you as a disciple of Jesus?*

5. *What might help you face that challenge?*

#### Prayer

O Christ, continue to teach us to be your disciples. Forgive us when we seem slow to learn. Challenge us to grow in your Word.

#### Dig Deeper

[1 John 4:7-12](#)

#### Last word

This week, each day, name your greatest challenge as a disciple of Christ. Ask God to help you with that challenge.