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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Serving The Least Matt 25:31-46

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson examines how we as Christians should be **Serving the Least** because Jesus will one day judge for this. The **study's aim** is to sense the importance Jesus puts on caring for the helpless and needy and to realize the great number of people around us who cannot care for themselves. The **study's application** is to minister physically and spiritually to the helpless people around us.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

Many years ago a character in a comic strip said, "I love mankind. It's people I can't stand." That was humorous and cynical, but it was thought-provoking too. There are days when many of us feel that way. Conversely, when some people talk about all the people of the world of every color and nation they get a warm, fuzzy feeling. A soft drink had an advertising campaign many years ago that highlighted this idea of the world singing together in perfect harmony. How wonderful it is to imagine everyone living in peace and harmony! When it comes to actually interacting with someone who is different culturally, though, many of us are hesitant at best. We may even be afraid of or hostile to the idea. People who are different from us in skin color or culture may be hard for us to understand, and we do not take the time or make the effort to get to know them. When Jesus was here on earth, He went about doing good to people. He had time for people, even when He was tired. Jesus loved people and had compassion for them. This lesson tells us about something Jesus taught His disciples just days before His suffering and death. Jesus described a time in the future when He will sit on His throne and reign as King and Judge. He will be like a shepherd, dividing those who follow Him from those who refuse Him. The "sheep" will be placed on the right, the place of power and honor, while the "goats" will be relegated to the left, the place of dishonor. Jesus will call those on His right "blessed of my Father" (vs. 34). He will invite them to enter His kingdom because of the love and compassion they have shown toward Him. Jesus explained that those He invited to enter His kingdom had demonstrated love and compassion for Him by aiding His needy and hurting brethren. Their loving actions in meeting basic human needs were proof of their faith in Christ. When we serve the needy, we actually serve Jesus too. We show that we are true children of the Father. Our reward will be blessing from God the Father and inheritance of the kingdom He has prepared for us. Those who fail to live as children of the King will be banished from His presence. They will be cursed and driven from Him. There will be no place in His kingdom for them. Those who are concerned only about themselves live as the devil does. They shut their eyes to the human misery around them. Because they have not put their trust in Christ and received God's gracious salvation themselves, they do not show loving-kindness to others. Jesus knows our hearts. He sees our motives and knows why we do good for others. Jesus is interested in a righteousness of the heart. Christians need to be spiritually aware and alert for opportunities to show God's love in physical, tangible ways. With all the needy people around us, we need God's guidance in knowing whom we can help and how. Good works do not save us. Our salvation comes from God's grace when we accept His gift of Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. However, salvation should lead to good works. Just as Jesus went about doing good, so should we.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Anyone doing God's work in God's way is important in His sight

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Lord, help me remember that there are no small places or small people. All are precious in Your sight. May I see the value of my work and cherish it as You do.

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
Indeed He says, It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.

(John 13:34 NKJV)

(From "Our Daily Bread", July 20, 2014)

Series: ACTS OF WORSHIP

UNIT: Stewardship for Life

NEXT WEEK

Clothed and Ready

(Eph 6:10-20)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

JUDGMENT AND SEPARATION ON WHETHER NEEDS WERE MET (MATT 25:31-33)

God gives the judgment to Jesus (31)

God entrusted all judgment to Jesus (John 5:22)

God gave the judgment to Jesus because He loved Him (John 3:35)

Jesus judges because He is the Son of God (John 5:26-27)

God granted Jesus authority to judge (John 17:2)

God appointed Jesus as judge (Acts 10:42)

All people will be judged (32)

Man is destined to face judgment (Heb 9:27)

Jesus will bring His angels with Him to judge (Jude 14-15)

God established His throne for judgment of the world (Ps 9:7-8)

All will stand before God's judgment (Rom 14:10)

All are accountable to God for what was done in the body (2 Cor 5:10)

Separation of the righteous and the wicked (33)

Man will not separate, but only God and His angels at the right time (Matt 13:36-43)

God will separate like a winnowing fork separates wheat from chaff (Matt 3:12)

God will separate those who are not prepared (Matt 22:11-14)

JUDGMENT OF THOSE WHO MET OTHERS NEEDS (MATT 25:34-40)

Those who have met other's needs inherit the kingdom of God (34)

Meeting other's needs means loving our neighbors, which results in gaining the inheritance of the kingdom (James 2:5-8)

The supplying of other's physical needs brings about a blessing of the kingdom (James 2:15-16)

Entering God's kingdom sometimes requires giving up our possessions (Matt 19:21-23)

Sometimes we may have to give others all we have to inherit the kingdom (Mark 12:41-44)

Those who have met other's needs took actions (35-36)

Meeting other's needs requires both love and actions (1 John 3:18)

Faith or intentions to help others without action is dead (James 2:17)

Helping others means putting our faith into practice (Matt 7:24-27)

We must not be deceived, we must actually meet other's needs to really be obedient to God (James 1:22)

Only through obedience to God's command to help others will we be counted righteous (Rom 2:13)

Knowing we should help others, yet not doing it is a sin (James 4:17)

We must take advantage of every opportunity to help others (Gal 6:10)

Those who have met other's needs did so without expectations (37-39)

We should never expect repayment for helping others (Luke 6:34)

The true repayment for helping others will come at the resurrection (Luke 14:12-14)

When we help others, sometimes we should do it without letting others know we did it (Matt 6:2-4)

Even if we have to spend extra, we should do it out of love versus expecting repayment (Luke 10:33-35)

Those who have met other's needs served God (40)

Whoever is kind to the needy honors God (Prov 14:31)

Those who are kind to the poor are counted as being kind to God (Prov 19:17)

Serving others is part of being God's disciple and servant (Matt 10:42)

We must always serve others as if we were serving God (Ephesians 6:7)

JUDGMENT OF THOSE WHO DID NOT MEET OTHERS NEEDS (MATT 25:41-46)

Those who have not met other's needs are cursed (41)

Cursed because of not being obedient to God (Gal 3:10)

Cursed because of not providing for others, especially family (1 Tim 5:8)

Cursed because of being selfish and greedy and trying to devour the needy (Prov 30:11-14)

Cursed because of nullifying God's word (Matt 15:5-6)

Those who have not met other's needs ignored their duty (42-44)

Ignoring duty through intentional sin (James 4:17)

Ignoring duty through perceived and misplaced priorities (Luke 10:30-33)

Ignoring duty through shutting out the cries of others (Prov 21:13)

Ignoring duty through claimed ignorance, yet God knows the mind and heart (Prov 24:12)

Ignoring duty through not having the love of God indwelling (1 John 3:17)

Those who have not met other's needs will receive everlasting punishment (45-46)

Punishment through receiving the rewards in this world versus the next (Luke 16:19-23)

Punishment for doing evil (John 5:28-29)

Punishment because of not being obedient to God (2 Thess 1:7-9)

Punishment for being a hypocrite (Matt 23:13)