

## Book of Faith Bible Study Matthew 25:35-36

*“for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”*

We do not always know when we are following Christ. Matthew reminds us here that what we do, how we act towards others, stands as the most crucial mark of our discipleship. The larger passage in which these verses occur (Matthew 25:31-46) describes God’s final judgment of the nations in apocalyptic terms: at the end times, when God will have prevailed over the forces of evil, everybody (“all the nations” - Matt 25:32) will be judged on equal terms. Who will be saved? The text is unambiguous with the answer: those who have ministered to Christ, even if unaware of it, by feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, and caring for the sick and the prisoner.

This exhortation stands firmly in the tradition of Israel’s prophets. Called to rouse people from their complacency in the face of specific political or social situations, the prophetic message carried a common theme: care for the poor, the orphan and widow, and the stranger in your midst.

These apocalyptic and prophetic themes underscore the urgency of this message, and can help to rouse us from our own complacencies. In a political and social climate in which people of other faiths and nationalities are viewed with suspicion or even hostility, we are called to a discipleship known through our treatment of the outcast and those in need. This passage reminds us of our Christian responsibility: secure in the knowledge of God’s grace, we are called and empowered to live the life of the coming reign of God here and now, a reign of justice for all people.

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**As you consider opening Scripture individually or with others, you may wish to consider these general questions:**

*How does the Bible feed your daily life?*

*How does the Bible feed the life of this community?*

*How are we renewed, empowered, and enlivened by the Word?*

*What stands in the way of our opening the Bible and joining the conversation?*

### Questions on Matthew 25:35-36

- *The righteous in Matthew 25 were surprised when Jesus told them that they fed and clothed and welcomed him whenever they fed and clothed and welcomed the “least of these” in their midst. Are we equally surprised by this judgment of Jesus?*
- *What are some images we have of the final judgment?*
- *How do we minister to Christ? How do others minister to Christ?*

**In addition to questions found in the studies, here are general questions that can be used for each of the texts:**

*What is God saying to us through this passage?*

*What does this passage tell us about God?*

*How does this passage speak to us as individuals and to us as a community?*

*What does this passage teach us about our neighbors and our world?*