



GPS GUIDE: OCTOBER 9, 2022 G r o w . P r a y . S t u d y .

Series: Inside Out

Sermon: Erasing Lines

Matthew 25:34-40

Then the ruler will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, 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, 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.' Then the just will ask, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the ruler will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'

Daily Prayer – At the conclusion of each day's meditation offer this as your prayer:

I breathe in God's grace.

May it transform my insecurities

So that I breathe out God's love

I breathe in God's love

May it transform my fears

So that I breathe out God's hope

I breathe in God's hope

May it transform my doubts

So that I breathe out God's faithfulness

I breathe in God's faithfulness

May it transform my heart

So that I breathe out the Good News of Christ Jesus I breathe in the Good News of Christ Jesus

May it transform me

So that I breathe out God's grace...

Monday: Read Acts 9:36-42

As a disciple, Tabitha was known as a woman who was always doing good and helping the poor. She was a generous woman. A steward of God's love and abundance. You cannot read the Acts of the Apostles and escape the reality that this was a hallmark, not only of the early church, but of the individuals who make up the church. Caring for the widows, the orphans, and the poor - caring for the "least of these" - is what they understood their calling to be. Sharing resources to ensure that no one was left without was what they did. Followers of Christ would generously share everything that they had to make sure that everyone was cared for and protected. Christians are called to live this way today as well, following Jesus' instruction to care for the least, lost, lonely. What are some specific needs in our community? In addition to providing money, in what ways is our church equipped to meet those needs? What is your participation of time, treasure, and talent in your church's witness?

Tuesday: Read John 10: 22-30

The church in our day is known for a lot of things. Unfortunately, not many of them are positive. At least not in our culture at large. In our day, the church is known for things like covering up serious abuses by the clergy, for heaping loads of guilt on people who don't seem to "fit in", for ignoring the needs of God's justice in the world.

In our reading for today, Jesus makes some interesting remarks about what characterizes those who claim to follow him. He says, "My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me" Can you imagine the response from our world if the church came to be known as the people who truly seek to listen for God's voice? Can you imagine what would happen if we became known as the people who truly seek to follow Jesus by caring about what and who he cares about, by continuing to do that works that Jesus did? When we are living out the mercy and compassion of Christ, it seems to me that we're doing a pretty good job of listening for God. Then maybe we can become the kind of people who are known for knowing Christ truly and for seeking to follow him sincerely. What is one way that you need to listen to Jesus' voice and follow him more closely by doing the works that Jesus did?

Wednesday: Read James 1: 17-27

James reminds us of two incredibly important things:

1. Faithfulness does not need to be heroic
- 2) Sunday is not the most important day of the Christian week.

As to the first, James proclaims: "every generous act of giving...comes from above." Not some, not only Christian acts, but all generous acts of giving. And to that we might add all acts of mercy, or advocacy, or support, or friendship. All we do that is good comes from God. Which means that faithfulness is available to all of us: in our homes, places of work or volunteering, our schools, our communities, and more. Wherever you find yourself God is at work for the health of this world God loves so much. James encourages us not just to *think* the faith, but to *do* it. And this brings us to the second point - that none of these activities is restricted to Sunday. In fact, being more patient with co-workers, friends, family members, or working hard to listen better, or working to offer support and care for the most vulnerable - all of these things are done outside of Sunday, during our Monday through Saturday lives in the world. Which helps orient us to the possibility that Sunday is intended to serve and support our Christian lives the rest of the week. Sunday is the day we are immersed again in the word, have our

sins forgiven, receive guidance and encouragement in our Christian lives, hear again the call to follow Christ and are sent once more into the world to work with God for the health of the people God has put all around us. As you offer the prayer today think about how you might enact it during your Monday through Saturday life.

Thursday: Read Matthew 10: 40-42

The last line of this brief passage has always jumped out at me: "and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward." What a little thing, don't you think, to give a cup of cold water? Jesus emphasizes the same by his use of the word "even." We often imagine discipleship as requiring huge sacrifice or entailing great feats, and sometimes that is exactly what discipleship comes to. But at other times, Jesus seems to say, it's nothing more than giving a cup of cold water to one in need. Or offering a hug to someone who is grieving. Or a listening ear to someone in need of a friend. Or offering a ride to someone without a car. Or volunteering as a school tutor. Or...you get the idea. Discipleship doesn't have to be heroic. Like all the small acts of devotion, tenderness, and forgiveness that go largely unnoticed but tend the relationships that are most important to us, so also the life of faith is composed of a thousand small gestures. Except that, according to Jesus, there is no small gesture. Anything done in faith and love has cosmic significance for the ones involved and, indeed, for the world God loves so much. Even small acts of faith are intentional. What will you do in the days ahead to make a big difference for someone in need?

Friday: Read Leviticus 19: 9-10; Matthew 25: 31-46

Leviticus 19 gives several specific ways in which to demonstrate love of neighbor. One example strikes me particularly as helpful. The law instructs us to leave gleanings as we harvest for the poor. We are not to harvest completely and leave nothing to waste; instead, we are to stop our harvesting before we reach the farthest boundaries of our fields so as to welcome the poor and stranger, who live at the margins, to take their share. When deciding exactly how much to leave behind, the Jewish Mishnah "recommends taking into consideration several factors, such as the abundance of the yield, the overall resources of the owner of the field, and the current needs of the poor." Loving neighbor involves providing from our hard labor for those who do not have enough. When you think about the command about gleaning in Leviticus does it have any comparisons in your mind to Jesus' command in Matthew 25 to care for the "least of these?" What parts of these commands challenge you or make you uncomfortable? There are those in our community who are hungry and poor and sick. What makes it hard for us to see them or to help them? Can someone be a "least of these" and have brought their situation upon themselves? Does that change Jesus' command to care for them?

Saturday: Faithful Action

As part of FCC's commitment to serve others in the name of Jesus, we have partnered with Oak Mountain Missions again this year to sponsor Thanksgiving meals for 40 families in our area. We have a grocery list of items that are needed to provide a complete Thanksgiving meal. We also provide gift cards to Walmart so that the families can purchase a turkey or ham. The grocery list is provided below if you would like to shop, or you can donate online to sponsor a meal. One meal for a family costs \$27, but

any and all amounts are welcome. The last day for donations is Sunday, November 13. We will distribute the meals on Saturday, November 19. Join us in making Christ's love active by feeding those in need this season. If you need help donating or have any questions, please contact Dixon.

[Click here to donate. Select "Thanksgiving Outreach" in the drop down menu.](#)

Below you will find the thanksgiving grocery list. Donations may be brought to the church office.

Each meal kit needs:

canned corn (2 15oz cans)
canned green beans (2 15oz cans)
instant mashed potatoes (2 packs)
instant gravy mix (2 packs)
StoveTop Stuffing Mix - Chicken or Turkey (1 6oz box)
Martha White Cornbread Mix (needs water or milk, 2 packages)
Small Crisco Vegetable Oil (16oz)
9" pre-made graham cracker pie crust
Libby's Pumpkin Pie Mix (1 30oz can)
evaporated milk (1 12oz can)
cranberry sauce (1 14oz can)