

## Group/Individual Study

Series - The Greatest Stories Ever Told: The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

Passages: Matthew 25:31-46, 1 John 4:19-21

REFLECT on the message heard on Sunday, 9/2

1. Before we get into our passage for today, let's look back at the big question Jesus is answering in Matthew 24 and 25. What question did the disciples ask Jesus in Matthew 24:1-3? Why do you think they wanted to know more about this?
2. Most of our focus today will be on how today's passage (the parable of the sheep and the goats) fleshes out Jesus' answer to the disciple's question. But before we get to that let's review the other major teachings and parables He told in these two chapters -- since His entire answer is a more complete response to their question than any single part of it was. (In a group, divide the passages among you for the sake of time.)
  - a. Mt 24:4-35: Main idea → \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. Mt 24:36-51, Main idea → \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. Mt 25:1-13, Main idea → \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. Mt 25:14-30, Main idea → \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Read Matthew 25:31-46. What do you think is the main thing the parable of the sheep and the goats adds to our understanding of how we are to live? How does this parable encourage you? Does it upset or make you uneasy in any way? How so?
4. Read 1 John 4:19-21. How does this verse unpack the relationship God sees between true and genuine faith in Jesus and how we relate to and treat other people? How does hard-heartedness and lack of caring towards others reveal a heart that really doesn't "get" Jesus and His love? How does a true embrace of Jesus' love and grace lead us to be loving and gracious towards others?
5. After reading this parable, we want to be those "sheep" who love Jesus by caring for people in His name when they are in various types of distress and need. When you've helped others in this way, has it ever made you feel closer to Jesus? Explain.
6. None of us want to be like the "goats" who were too wrapped up in themselves to care for others, but we all sometimes get too absorbed in our own worries and lives to live with Christ-like compassion. What have you found that helps increase your "compassion quotient" to both see and respond to needs God shows you? What have you found that dulls down your compassion? And how do you fight this tendency?