

## **BIBLE READING DAY 39, WEDNESDAY: APRIL 6**

### **Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14–30**

*“The kingdom of heaven is like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one—to each man according to his ability. Then he took his journey. He who had received the five talents went at once and began to trade with them and gained five more. In like manner, he who received the two talents gained two more.*

*But he who received the one talent went away and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. And after a long time, the master of those servants came to settle accounts with them. Then he who received the five talents came and brought five more talents and said, ‘Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have gained five more talents.’*

*“Well done, good and faithful servant,’ said his master, ‘you have been faithful over a few things, I will place you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s joy.’*

*“Then he who received the two talents came and said, ‘Sir, you gave me two talents. See, I have gained two more talents.’*

*“Well done, good and faithful servant,’ said his master, ‘you have been faithful over a few things, I will place you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s joy.’*

*“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Sir, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not winnow, and I was afraid and went and hid your talent in the ground. See, you still have what is yours.’*

*“Then his master answered him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! You knew, did you, that I reap where I have not sowed and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. Take the talent from him and give it to the man who has ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance, but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. Cast the worthless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”*

### **The Coming Judgment, Matthew 25:31–46**

*“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his throne of glory and all the nations will be gathered before him. And he will separate the people as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats; he will set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left.*

*“Then the King will say to those on his right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of 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 a drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in. I was naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me.*

*“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we see you a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?’*

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*“Problems never just go away or take care of themselves, especially when God allows them in order to shape our character. God will patiently wait and allow the circumstances to compel us to do what we should have done at the beginning: surrender all control to God.”*

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Wayne Stiles  
Going Places With God

*“And the King will answer them, ‘I tell you truly, because you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’*

*“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink. I was a stranger and you did not take me in, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’*

*“Then they too will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to you?’*

*“Then he will answer them, ‘I tell you truly, because you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.’ And these*

*will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*

### **Preparing for Passover, Mark 14:12–17 (Matthew 26:17-20: Luke 22:7-18; John 13:1-2)**

*On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to Jesus, “Where do you want us to go to prepare for you to eat the Passover?”*

*And he sent two of his disciples, saying, “Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the head of the house, ‘The Master says, “Where is the guest chamber where I will eat the Passover with my disciples?”’ He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready, and there you are to prepare for us.”*

*And the disciples left and went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them and prepared the Passover. And when it was evening, Jesus arrived with the twelve. Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*

### **Contending for the Highest Place, Luke 22:24–27**

*And there arose a dispute among the disciples as to which of them should be considered the most important. Then Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their rulers are called ‘benefactors.’ But it is not to be that way among you. Instead, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the one who leads as one who serves. Who is the greater, the one who sits at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at the table? And yet I am among you as one who serves.”*

<b>Approximate Timeline of Jesus’s Public Ministry</b>														
EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	FIRST PASS-OVER	SUMMER	FIRST BOOTHS	WINTER	SECOND PASS-OVER	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	FINAL PASS-OVER

## DEVOTIONAL DAY 39 (WEDNESDAY APRIL 6)

How You Treat “*The Least of These*” Reveals Your Eternity

*Based on Matthew 25:31-46*

As believers, we are a people living between two advents. Just a couple of months ago, we remembered with great joy how God’s chosen people anticipated the coming of the Messiah, and He arrived to them as Emmanuel. With great anticipation, we live daily awaiting Christ’s final, epic, victorious arrival to usher in eternity with Him. While today’s parable of the sheep and the goats may look like a lesson on the attitudes of livestock, it is a direct and specific foretelling of what is coming when Jesus returns to Earth.

In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus clearly separates the sheep and the goats and alerts us to specific differences between the two, but what He highlights most boldly is each group’s actions toward what He calls “*the least of these*”. Jesus is clear that the way we treat others has eternal significance. Even though a person’s actions cannot earn them salvation, those actions are evidence of the overflow of their heart. How radically does Jesus change our hearts when we give Him Lordship of our lives? He gives us empathy, insight, and a tenderness to the needs of others. Jesus led by example here and it is evident all over the gospels: He healed physical and mental illness, fed the hungry, gave dignity to the unclean, and treated sinners as brothers. Those who are “*the least of these*” are all around us every day, but do we actively pray for God to reveal them to us? Do we get tunnel vision in the activities of our day and ignore, either purposefully or ignorantly?

Even further than dividing the group from their behavior, Jesus discusses the eternal destination for the sheep and goats. He also gives us a HUGE clue as to what God’s purpose was for the “*eternal fire*” (or Hell, as we call it in our modern culture). Did you catch it in verse 41? “*Then He will also say to those on the left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!’*” Eternal separation from God was prepared for the devil and his angels.

Remember the Garden in Genesis 2? THAT is what God prepared for the people He created. A perfect place where God could be in relationship and live WITH His creation. When the serpent’s temptation was successful, and the chasm between God and humankind was created, God launched into the rescue—our redemption. It also meant that we would have to choose Him.

God fulfilled that mission through Jesus, who paid the price for our sin and grafts us into God’s family. We are given kinship with God not because we have done anything worthy, but because we choose to make Jesus Lord of our life. Those sheep, who choose Him, will spend eternity with Almighty God. But the goats’ existence will be in stark contrast. The eternal fire will serve as a reminder that it was not the place He wanted for His creation.

As we continue moving to Resurrection Sunday, I encourage you to examine your heart today. Who is Lord of your life? In what ways has God changed your heart and mind to see things of eternal significance? Who are the “*least of these*” in your daily path?

**Father God, You are Almighty Creator, who desires relationship with me. Please forgive me when I allow my life around me to distract me from what You are doing. Give me Your eyes to see how I can make Your name great in my homes, my workplaces, my church, and this city. Help me to live each day with the urgency of eternity. Amen.**

--By Jessica Diem

**WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:**

**WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?**

**PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?**

**ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION** (How God Can Supply Needs)

**A**

**C**

**T**

**S**