



DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

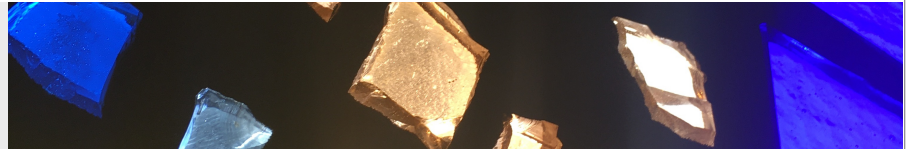
Week of March 26, 2023 (Matthew 25:31-46)

Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

Divine parent of all,
we pray today for those who
are sitting around us:
our [siblings] in this local limb
of your body, the Church.
Some have come with
gladness and celebration,
others with sadness and
tribulation.

But together we come to
support one another, for we
understand what it means to
"love our neighbour".

Divine parent of all, we pray
for those immediately
beyond the walls of this
church today: our [siblings] in
this local community, our
neighbours across the fence,
our colleagues at work, local
acquaintances and strangers
alike. We know of some
concerns in this area, and we
hold them before you now.
We do not know the details
of many other worries and
concerns, yet we pray to
support others in their need,
for we understand what it
means to "love our
neighbour"...



Devotions for Life

Context: From a contextual standpoint there just isn't a lot to say this week, since we pick up with the very next verse after where we ended last week. That said, this is the final in a series of parables about the end times, and of those parables, it is probably the most famous. And for good reason.

After this parable is where we see the narrative really starts to take off toward the cross, so it should cause us to pay particular attention to this parable as it is the last one in a long string of parables in Matthew's Gospel.



As you read this parable, as usual, pay attention to the details. Who might represent whom? What words are used? How are people described? Before you move to the meanings of this parable, take a moment to notice

... Divine parent of all,
we pray for those who are far
from us: our [siblings] around
this nation, our [siblings] in
humanity around the world,
like us, different from us,
Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jew,
Sikh, Buddhist, Atheist and
more. We hear of some
troubles and terror, horror and
heartache, but we cannot
possibly be aware of each
and every need. So we pray
for all those who need your
blessing today, for we
understand what it means to
"love our neighbour".

In and through and for the
sake of Christ we ask all this.
Amen.

Compassion & Justice

As usual in March, we are
collecting food for STEP, and
we're excited to do so in
partnership with Spirit of Christ
Lutheran. Specifically, this year
we are **collecting cereal**. If you
have the means pick up a bag
or two of various cereals and
drop them off at the entrance
to the sanctuary ASAP! Also,
STEP seems to have an on
going need for paper grocery
bags. If you have a stash to
spare, consider donating those
as well.

its details and what they may say.

Questions for Reflection & Discussion:

1. What stood out to you? What was hard to hear?
2. What do you think this parable is about?
3. What was hard to hear? What was encouraging?
4. Where is God's love and grace in this story?
5. What does this parable say about what really matters in this world?
6. Does this parable teach a "works based" kind of salvation or theology?
7. At this point in the Gospel of Matthew we start to move toward the cross and the end of Jesus' life and ministry. What would you say has been his overall message and work so far?
8. Who are the "least of these" in the context of this parable?
9. Who are the "least of these" in your community today? How about our nation? The world?
10. To what degree are the "least of these" an incarnation of Jesus or even a 2nd coming of Jesus? What are the implications of that?
11. What is the one big "takeaway" from this parable for you?

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