

The
Matthew 25:40
Project

Love God. Love Your Neighbor.

Not Worthy

By Mike Bencheck CEO Matthew 25:40 Project

Are we as a culture ok with saying that homeless people really don't matter to us and that they will just have to help themselves? Are we as a society really ready to say that the homeless are somehow less than human? As a follower of Jesus I find these attitudes insulting to my Savior. Jesus felt that they were worth His sacrifice on the cross. Jesus tells us that He was homeless (foxes have holes and birds have nests but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head). He tells us that what we do for others we do for Him. In a country that wants to call itself a Christian nation, are we so unclear on Jesus's teachings that we think it is ok to write off some of God's creations?

I truly believe that having a place to live is a right. In our country there are innovative ways of providing people with housing. My friends at Opportunity Village in Eugene Oregon have found that tiny houses with shared bathrooms and kitchens are a solution. Their out of the box solution costs very little and provides the homeless with a safe place to live. In some cities, housing made from old shipping containers is a solution. Similar to tiny houses, each person has a place to call their own. In some cities renting someone an apartment is another solution. Fully furnished with the rent paid they now have a place to live.

People are provided with housing and access to the social services that may allow them to make significant changes in their lives. Mental health and substance abuse treatment, health screenings and treatment, job training and job search assistance, even spiritual guidance can all be provided to them. Case managers can help each person develop their goals and a plan to meet those goals. The current homeless population can be treated as if they are human instead of something less than human.

The next question asked is how we pay for this. Very often cities are able to justify the cost because when the homeless are given a place to live, they cost of multiple arrests and of trips to the ER in ambulances are avoided. The money spent on these things can be reallocated to housing someone rather than putting them in jail for a few days or taking them to overcrowded hospitals and the releasing them right back into the same situation.

Providing housing also reduces panhandling. When the homeless have a place to live, they don't need to panhandle as much. Many complain about people asking for money. Maybe if they had a place to live, they wouldn't need to do this.

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Do we as a society want to make a commitment to solve homelessness or are we not willing to do what needs to be done to end this crisis? One day we will all face our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for our final judgement. In Matthew chapter 25 Jesus describes the process of separating all people into two categories, sheep and goats. The sheep will spend eternity with God. The goats will spend eternity in torment. Jesus tells us that the way we treat the least of these will have an impact on where we are sent.

Jesus knows they are worthy. That answers it for me. They are worthy.