

REIGN OF CHRIST SUNDAY.

Devotionals for 21- 27 November 2021

Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers or sisters of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

Matthew 25:40 (NIV)

This passage from Matthew 25:31-46 challenges us, since it indicates that people who demonstrate concern and generosity toward helping those in need – in tangible ways – will be rewarded. And that others have no such hope. It's not enough to just have concern, for as the apostle James wrote, "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (James 2:17)

The Bible also teaches that it's possible to help others in ways that lead to no reward, perhaps to be seen by others or to receive thanks. In other words, without love for those being helped. Paul addressed this in 1 Corinthians 13:3: "... if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."

Overview - Imagine yourself going to a large nationally televised sporting event. There are easily close to 100,000 people attending. Look around the crowd. Who are believers and who are not? There is no way for you to know just by looking at someone if they are a Christian or not. It takes more than superficial knowledge to know what is going on in someone's heart. Today's passage describes the return of Christ. In the passage God is separating believers from non-believers. He uses the analogy of a shepherd separating their herd of goats and sheep. The place of honor is on His right and the place of disgrace is on His left.

This would have been a common practice for shepherds to do. Their herds would intermingle until a day came when they wanted them separated. Separating sheep and goats is easy. You know which is which just by their appearance. Separating believers from non-believers is something only God can do. He alone knows if a believer's actions have aligned with their faith. He knows the deeds done in secret. The acts of kindness or words of encouragement given to someone who is having a hard time. All the acts of kindness described in the passage were not done expecting any sense of reciprocation. The people doing the acts were not even aware they were serving Jesus. Their service was a natural outflow of their faith. The hope they have inside overflows to those around them. For believers this overflow of hope is not just a 'to do list' of activities. It is who they are in their hearts.

Bible Study & Journaling for: Matthew 25:31-46

1. If you never said a word would people around you know that you believe in Jesus by the way you served?
2. Do you associate being a messenger of hope with the Christmas season? Why or why not?
3. What are some ways you can bring hope to those you work with or your neighbors?
4. Do something unexpected for someone during this Christmas season. Give a timetable for getting it done then journal how it went.
5. Journal your thoughts about Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt.25:31-46). The only difference between the sheep and the goat is what they did and didn't do. Why do you think Jesus makes care for the poor and needy the issue by which he evaluates his followers in this story – rather than doctrine, personal holiness, or something else?
6. Discuss the difference between "salvation by works" and the "good works" God calls us to, as his followers (refer also to Ephesians 2:8-10 and James 2:14-26). Without doubt, Jesus is more concerned about a possible lack of authentic obedience than about anyone trying to earn their salvation by works.
7. Debates occur today about the tension between the spiritual and the social aspects of evangelism. How can we keep both of these important activities in balance?
8. The Bible refers to God's heart for the poor and the needy frequently. Do you think that this theme is talked about enough in the church or has it been somewhat overlooked?
9. How can we live with a greater awareness that as we serve others, and care for the needy, we are really serving Jesus?
10. What practical things could each person do to demonstrate a greater concern for the poor and needy on a regular basis? What about our Fifth Ave. United Methodist Church?

Talking to Our Heavenly Father - *If we have faith, our prayers will be answered.*

You're Not Alone, Let Us Pray with You & For You

- The sweet, sweet spirit of Mrs. Betty Felt was called home to glory on 26 October 2021. Ms. Betty's Celebration of Life Service will be held, 6 November 2021 at 12:30 p.m. with visitation from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Cards and notes of condolences can be mailed to Ms. Poly and Bro. Dave Bertelsen, 5588 Whispering Pines Drive, West Bend WI 53095
- Prayers of incredible healing for Ms. Ashley Barnett. Ms. Ashley underwent surgery to clean-up and change-out her heart pump on 21 October 2021. Ashley suffered a stroke following her surgery. She is still admitted in the hospital, but progressing well. Ms. Ashley is the daughter of Mr. Brett and Ms. Mary Barnett and mom to Brenna and Joshua. Let us shower her with our love, care and support! Cards and notes can be mailed to 932 Hillcrest Street, West Bend WI 53095

- Bro. Martin Martinelli is still in need of your prayers. After finally getting a new knee on 2 September 2021 and negative blood cultures for the bacteremia, Bro. Martin became jaundice due to a complete blockage of his liver duct on 19 September 2021. Surgery was performed on 29 September 2021 to reconstruct a new liver duct. After the liver surgery, he developed a large blood clot in his right calf. Two small clots broke off from the calf clot and lodged in his right lung. After intensive anti-coagulate therapy, he came back to the parsonage 8 October 2021. Unfortunately, the liver wound became infected and he had surgery on 28 October 2021 to clean the wound site and start wound vac therapy. The wound vac is greatly improving the healing process. Bro. Martin has finally begun physical therapy to rehabilitate the right knee. Our humble thanks to each of you for your continued prayer and encouragement; it has been a very long healing journey. Our sincerest appreciation and passionate love to you all. Amen, amen and amen!
- Little Emmitt Omernick, Great-Grandson of Ms. Bev Hartman had brain surgery on 20 October 2021. Emmitt is doing great! He will be returning to school next week. God is so good! Please continue to keep him in your prayers as he returns to the life of an active 5 y/o. Emmitt Omernick, c/o Ms. Bev Hartman, 3627 Jansen Drive, West Bend WI 53090
- Mrs. Marilyn Liepert has relocated into her new home at Cedar Bay West. Ms. Marilyn's new address: Mrs. Marilyn Liepert, Cedar Bay West Rm 2126, 5555 Cedar Bay Dr., West Bend WI 53095. Her phone number is: 262-353-7749; she would love to hear your voice.
- Prayers of healing for Stanton Schmidt, great-grandson of Ms. Maureen Hornung and son of Brady and Payton Schmidt and little brother to Benton and Hudson. Stanton is in Children's Hospital with pneumonia. Cards for miraculous healing can be sent to: Ms. Maureen Hornung, N168 W21920 Main Street, #110, Jackson WI 53037
- Mr. Ethan Schnell, Ms. Dot Edison's daughter-in-law's nephew. He continues to do well and hopes future tests will reveal he has been cured. Cards and notes of continued prayer and encouragement can be mailed to: Ethan Schnell, 500 Melrose Street, Morgan Town West Virginia 26505
- Fifth Avenue UMC, thank you for your unceasing prayers for Ms. Irina Johnson, daughter (in-law) of Ms. Barb Johnson. Ms. Irina has completed a series of chemotherapy. She is feeling and doing well. Cards and notes of continued healing, strength and comfort can be mailed C/O Ms. Barb Johnson, Ms. Irina Johnson, 190 Mayer Street, West Bend, WI 53090
- Mr. Ted Meilahn, has been admitted to Cedar Lake Rehabilitation Center. Please send cards or notes of encouragement and support to the church office: Mr. Ted Meilahn, C/O Fifth Ave. United Methodist Church, 323 South 5th Ave. West Bend, WI 53095 and Mr. Gil Sheridan or I will deliver them. Thank you in advance for your love and care of Mr. Ted.
- Ms. Trisha Funke, daughter of Mr. Ralph & Ms. Bonnie Hensel. Ms. Trisha has returned home and is discerning her return to her vocation as a teacher. Ms. Trishia is still awaiting further diagnosis. Cards of encouragement and prayers for continued healing and diagnosis can be sent to her parents: Mr. Ralph & Ms. Bonnie Hensel, 629 Highland View Drive, West Bend WI 53095
- Mr. Roger Sacia, is requesting prayers for healing; Mrs. Nobi Sacia words of encouragement and prayers for healing. Mr. Roger and Ms. Nobi have permanently relocated to Madison with their daughter. Their new address is: 1626 Jefferson Street, Madison WI 53711
- Mr. William (Bill) & Mrs. Ginger Hornung would love to hear from you! Cards or notes of encouragement or "just thinking of you" can be mailed to: W194N16744 Eagle Dr. Room 3, Jackson, WI 53037
- Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, continued healing; alankempf33@gmail.com; 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073; phone number: 920.838.1830.
- Fifth Avenue UMC's Laity, Accountable Leadership Board, Pastor & Bro. Martin – Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.
- Bro. Bob Krell, continued prayer for healing; 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090
- Ms. Nancy Whitson, healing and strength; 922 Hickory Street, West Bend, WI 53095
- Mr. Phil Heimerl, son-in-law of Mike & Fay Lewis. He was just diagnosed with ALS.

"Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul." 3 John 1:2

Prayer: "Thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives, thank you for your goodness and for your blessings over us. Thank you that you are Able to bring hope through even the toughest of times, strengthening us for your purposes. Thank you for your great love and care. Thank you for your mercy and grace. Thank you that you are always with us and will never leave us. Thank you for your incredible sacrifice so that we might have freedom and life. Forgive us for when we don't thank you enough, for who you are, for all that you do, for all that you've given. Help us to set our eyes and our hearts on you afresh. Renew our spirits, fill us with your peace and joy. We love you and we need you, this day and every day. We give you praise and thanks, for You alone are worthy! In Jesus' name. Amen." (Debbie McDainels)

"There are so many things Bro. Martin and I are especially thankful for this year, but at the very top of that list is each one of you. Wishing you a wonderful holiday filled with the warmth and happiness of the season."

Your humble Pastor & Servant Leaders,

