



Small Group Study Guide for November 19, 2023

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School

Theme: Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords! Yet He used His power and authority to humble Himself and suffer for our salvation. He came not to be served, but to serve. We also serve our neighbor as we live under the Servant King in His Kingdom.

Getting Started: (sharing with each other)

1. How do you celebrate Thanksgiving, and what keeps you focused on the reason we celebrate it?
2. What are some things you are most thankful for right now?

In the Word: Read Matthew 25:31-46

3. This is the famous “sheep and the goats” account of the final judgment at the last day. It is not a parable, but uses the metaphor of sheep and goats in verse 32 and 33. Jesus is the Son of Man who will come again. Look through verses 31-34 and see if you can find at least two reasons why this text is read on Christ the King Sunday.
4. Who is gathered before Jesus/the Son of Man/the King, and how are they separated in vs 32-33?
5. Make a list of the things that the people on the right (sheep) did for the King without knowing (verses 35-36). Is the list the same each time in verses 38-39, 42-43, 44?
6. The explanation that King Jesus gives in verse 40 and 45 is similar, yet different. Compare these two verses and discuss who exactly Jesus is saying we help/serve/clothe, etc.

7. Hell is a challenging topic for modern discussions. It's not difficult for people who are confronted with raw evil, such as the Israelis who suffered at the hands of Hamas, the Ukrainians suffering from Russian atrocities, the Sudanese being slaughtered by warlords, and the Jews who perished in the Holocaust. Hell is easier for them to comprehend and accept as just punishment for the evil human beings commit. It is more difficult to justify hell in light of our unbelieving, yet friendly neighbor. Some wonder if it even exists. What does Jesus' teaching in verse 41 and 46 say about the matter?

Putting it all Together (what do we believe or do as disciples?)

8. Jesus promises He will come again. The world as it is going will not always go this way. Sin and death will be no more. Justice will be served. Grace will reign. All things will be made new. How is the teaching of Jesus' second coming, summarized in the Apostles Creed (He shall come again to judge the living and the dead) bring comfort to believers?
9. If people have Jesus in this life, we get Jesus forever. If people don't have Jesus in this life, they are separated from Him forever. The fact that not all people go to heaven is a difficult reality for us to accept sometimes. God determines what is just and fair, and we need to trust Him. It is also important to remember that we do not judge someone, only Jesus does. And Jesus won't judge early, but only on the Last Day. How do these truths motivate us to share the Gospel with others, and yet also leave all things in the Lord's hands?
10. On the surface, it might look like the sheep are saved by their good deeds, as if salvation were 'earned' by our good works. But what do you notice about the relationship between the sheep and their good deeds in verse 37? Are they concerned about 'doing enough'? How do we explain that we are saved by faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9) in light of this account of the Final Judgement?
11. The Kingdom of God looks like serving. King Jesus says you will serve Him when you serve the hungry, the thirsty, the immigrant, the naked, the sick, and those in prison. How do you see the people of God serving these specific groups of people? If you have ideas on how our congregation could be more of service to King Jesus by serving these people groups, email your ideas to Pastor Wangelin at pastorw@oursaviorlansing.org.

Prayer: Acknowledge Jesus as the King in your prayers, and that He rules and reigns over all things, including our lives. Ask for opportunities to serve Him by serving others, as the Spirit motivates and empowers us. Ask for the Lord to strengthen our witness to Christ so that others might be covered with His righteousness.

Next Week: Advent begins! Our Advent series is called "Christmas Confessions," where we will confess what we don't always get Christmas right, and confess that Jesus is Lord and Savior.

Note: Thanksgiving Worship is Wednesday, November 22, at 7 p.m. with Holy Communion!