



MARCH 28, 2025

The Lessons: James 2:14-17, Matthew 25:31-40, Romans 12:9-13

Key Verses:

James 2:14-17

What good is it, my brothers, and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Matthew 25:31-40

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes, and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Romans 12:9-13

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

The Devotion:

Reading the words of James 2:15-16, we can find ourselves challenged to stretch our heart and our love for others further than using a few mere words.

Think about it, have we ever told a dear friend or family member going through tough times, “I’m so sorry you’re going through this. I’ll be praying for you.” But could we have done more to help? What if we expressed our love by sharing a meal or giving a small token so they know we are there for them?

God works strongly through our “thoughts and prayers,” but He also works mightily through our acts of love and mercy! When I think about the Great Commission, I’m reminded that He calls us all to share the Gospel and make disciples through words and deeds. St. Francis of Assisi once said, “Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use

words." Our loving words are important, but sometimes our loving actions are what make the biggest difference.

Think about Jesus words in Matthew 25:40: "I tell you the truth when you did it for one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it for me." What did the brothers and sisters do for the least of these? Did they pray for them? Did they wish them well and move along? No. They fed the hungry. They gave the thirsty something to drink. They welcomed the lonely and unsheltered into their homes. They gave them clothes to wear. They spent time with them and shared with them some much-needed good news.

Without a doubt, it's never easy. The issues that cause hurt, pain, depression, and trouble in people's lives are never simple. They're almost always too complicated, and often we don't want to get involved. Our lives are busy enough as it is, without having to stop and care for every struggling person we meet. But I wonder, can we perhaps stretch our heart a little bigger to help someone who needs more than just prayers and well-wishes? Can we give them a meal? A coat? New socks? Some of our time and hospitality?

This week as we find ourselves deep into this season of lent, I would like to challenge all of us to think about how our hearts might be stretched. Think of someone in your life who could use a helping hand. It might be an aging parent, a troubled teen, a neighbor, or a homeless person on your way to work. What would it look like if we stretched our love a little bit further than "thoughts and prayers?" What could we do to minister to them? How could we bring hope and healing into their life? How could we love bigger in that situation?

I think about the words of Romans 12 and how Paul always encourages us when it comes to the ways in which we can put that love into action. Paul calls it hospitality. Maybe this week is a time for us to do exactly that. Think about it – what if we just reached out to one person. If we stretched our heart and let someone know you're there to help – not just with words, but with humble service. Granted it's may not be convenient or easy, but isn't it needed? Isn't our heart and love in action the very thing Jesus and Paul we talking about?

The Prayer:

Almighty God,

Take us as we are Lord and draw out what we might be. Through our service, our devotion, and our daily lives, draw out what we might be. Through our relationships with You and with others, draw out what we might be. Through our prayer, fasting and almsgiving this Lent, draw out what we might be. In Your name we most humbly pray.

Amen.