

Worship Material
Do your actions reveal the real you?
Materials from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 26th November

Begin with an opening prayer

You are our Father of glory,
maker of heaven and earth and the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Our Lord is a great king,
the rock of our salvation and our shepherd, rescuer of the lost.
By the power of your Spirit, you grant us wisdom and insight.
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, our adoration knows no bounds.
Amen.

Read Matthew 25:31-46

Bible notes

This reading may leave us feeling a little uncomfortable. But the readings throughout Matthew 25 have all been travelling in this direction. Are we ready to face the Son of Man on his return? The problem in the 21st century is that we've been waiting for 2,000 years and nothing seems to have happened or changed. First, remember that this is a parable – a story to help us understand something, rather than a description of an event. Second, the key to the story is verse 40 The measure of true faith is not the heart alone, but the body too. As James says, faith without deeds is dead (James 2:14-26). What we do, the way we live, is the outward sign of the inner truth of our faith, and makes our true identity visible to everyone. It is too easy to internalise faith as merely belief. But true belief shapes and forms who we are and what we do. It demands a lifestyle that gives body to our faith. The parable picks up on an image that Jesus' hearers would have understood – of judgement as a courtroom drama with God as the judge. But like all parables, even though the scenario may be familiar, it changes before our eyes. Judgement is not based on the obvious: how religious are you?

The point is not that we find salvation for ourselves, but that salvation is given to us. Indeed, it is offered to all. And it is all about Christ the King, how we live as Jesus' subjects, and how we serve him in our daily lives.

Prayer

Thank you, Lord God, for being in control of everything. You judge what is right and wrong; but we need not despair. You are mighty; with you all things are possible. You gently bring us back when we stray. You put your loving arms

around us when we hurt. You strengthen us when we are weak. Thank you for your love in our lives, that helps us know you better; for the security that knowing you gives us. Thank you for your abundant blessings; you give more than we need so that we can faithfully pass them on.

Thank you, Lord God, for meeting all our needs, for strengthening us, for loving us. May we lovingly pass on to others all we learn and receive, for your provision never ceases. We give our thanks and praise.

A prayer to conclude

Loving God,
help us to be 'doing' people and not always 'thinking about it';
help us to be 'sharing' people and not hoarders or hidiers;
help us to be people who know we are blessed in abundance by you
and, through the power of the Spirit, are eager to pass those blessings on.
We ask in the name of Jesus.

Amen.