

For Further Discussion of Matthew 25

While the questions will primarily center on the three sections of chapter 25, it will be important for you to have read 24:36 – 25:46. After doing so answer/discuss the following questions.

Observation/Interpretation Questions:

1. **Establishing the context:** Matthew 25 builds upon Jesus' command for His disciples to "stay awake" and "be ready" for His return. The question chapter 25 will be answering is, what does it look like to be prepared? Each of the stories in chapter 25 contributes to the answer, each building upon the previous one. What contribution does the first parable (25:1-13) make in answering this question? (*Hint:* The main point of this parable is found in the unexpected twists.)

How does the next parable (vss. 14-30), about the stewardship of three servants who received unequal amounts of resource, build or elaborate on what has just been said?

The final section of the chapter (vss. 31-46) serves as the majestic climax of the chapter. How does this section connect and contribute to what has been said thus far?

2. How many groups does each section speak about? Why do you think there aren't more? Why do you think Jesus boils "all the nations" (25:31) down to two groups? Is this too simplistic? Why or why not?
3. What was the 'sin' of the five foolish virgins? The one-talent servant? The goats?

How would you describe the *nature* of the 'sin' in each of the three sections? (*Hint:* They all have something in common)

4. In the final section (vss. 31-46), who specifically were the one's to whom the King (Jesus) cared whether or not tangible love was shown (See also Matt. 10:40-42)? Why did Jesus itemize this group? What connection does Jesus say He has with them (See also John 17:20-21)?

According to Galatians 6:8, who especially are Christians to do good to? Why do you think this is the case (see John 13:35)?

Application Question:

5. Passages like Matthew 4:19, 8:19-22, and 16:24 (to name only a few) inform us that Jesus' goal was not to become popular, but to make fully committed disciples who lived out of the same passion as He did. How do these listed passages inform your understanding of what a disciple looks like? How do the three stories in Matthew 25 contribute to this idea?

6. You will notice that in each section the ones who received judgment had excuses for their actions (or lack thereof). Discuss with your group the excuses they gave (or likely gave as is the case of the five foolish virgins).

More often than not, the real underlying issue behind our excuses is the focus of our ambition. All of us have multiple ambitions (to get married, to own a home, to graduate from college, travel the world, etc.), with one that trumps all the others and which those others serve (usually it's more along the lines of being than doing...i.e., being seen as a success or being happy). According to John 4:31-34 and John 5:19 & 30 what was Jesus' driving ambition? What did all Jesus' other desires and ambitions serve? Does this same ambition characterize you?

Returning to our excuses, what are some that you hear yourself give for not following Jesus completely? What ambition is fueling that (those) excuse(s)?

7. Has there ever been a time in your life when your comforts were adversely affected (where you had to do without, or modify your lifestyle) because you were obedient to Christ? If yes, then tell the group? If no, why do you think this is the case?

8. Read Psalm 1. What is the difference between the righteous and the wicked? What does the one who prospers like a fruitful tree do?

Considering what James 4:4 says, what is the council of the wicked? What does it look like to be in their council or stand in their assembly?