

# “THE LEAST OF THESE”

Lesson 8 for  
August 24, 2019

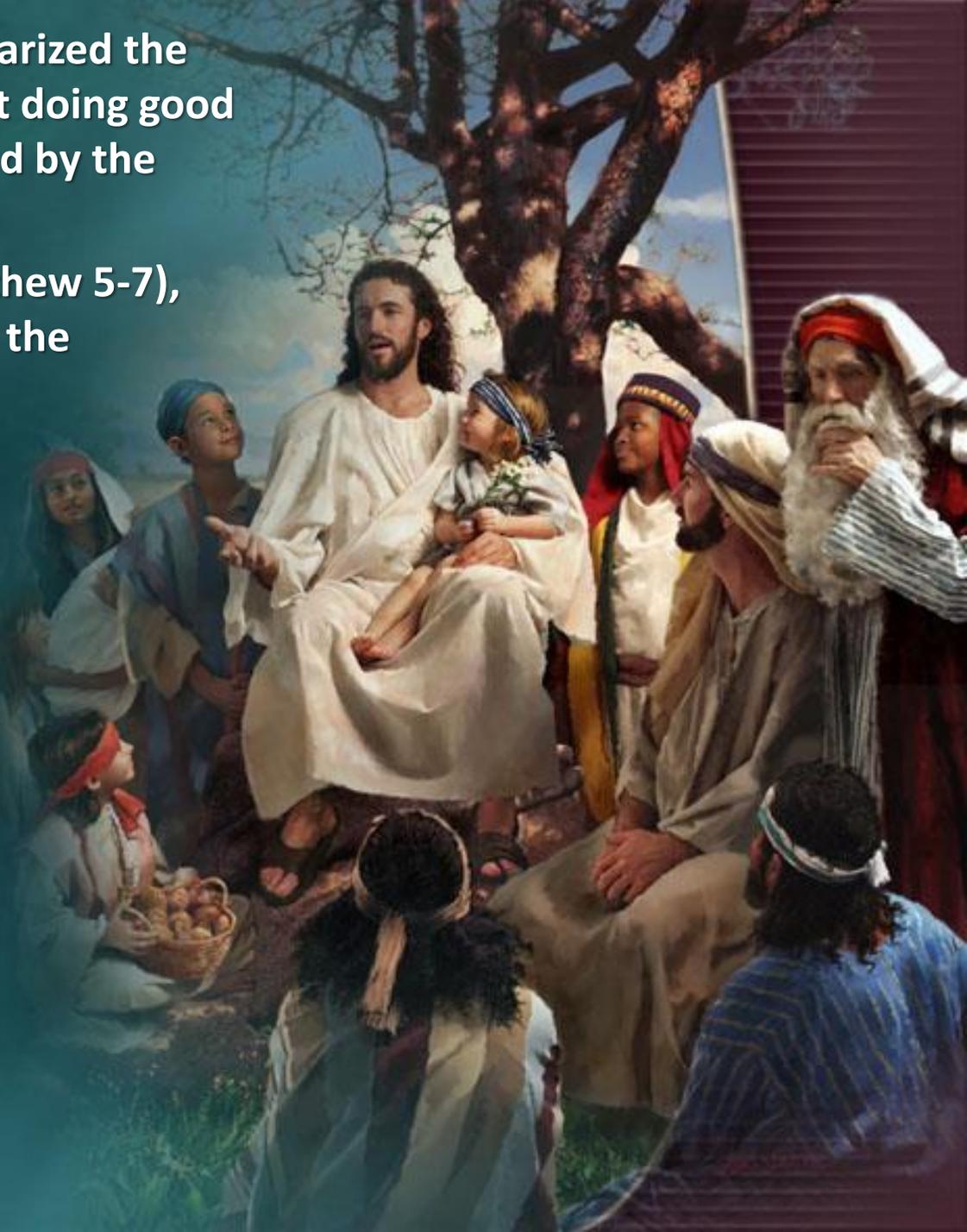


On a certain occasion, Peter summarized the ministry of Jesus: “[He] went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil” (Acts 10:38).

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Jesus taught us how the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven behave.

The life of Jesus is an example of His teachings. Peter’s summary of His ministry reflects the principles of the Kingdom.

- 👉 Values and influence
- 👉 Responding to injustice
- 👉 Acts of love
- 👉 Our priorities
- 👉 Serving others





# VALUES AND INFLUENCE

**"Blessed are you [...] You are the salt of the earth [...] You are the light of the world." (Matthew 5:11, 13, 14)**

**This is what makes us blessed (happy):  
Being poor of spirit, weeping because of sin, acting with meekness, yearning for righteousness, being merciful, having a pure mind, being peacemakers, bearing the injustice against us.**



**Many of these qualities are related to the way we treat others.**

**We are light when we enlighten the lives of others with our words and example.**

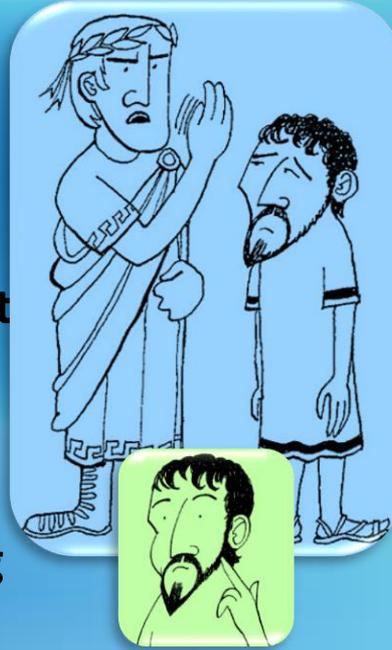
**We must live with other people in order to be salt, influencing and improving their lives.**



**“The followers of Christ are to be the light of the world; but God does not bid them make an effort to shine. He does not approve of any self-satisfied endeavor to display superior goodness. He desires that their souls shall be imbued with the principles of heaven; then, as they come in contact with the world, they will reveal the light that is in them. Their steadfast fidelity in every act of life will be a means of illumination.”**

# RESPONDING TO INJUSTICE

The lives of those listening to Jesus were not easy. The powerful were mistreating them, many had fallen into debt and were abused by the moneylenders, the Roman soldiers forced them to work for nothing in return.



**“But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.” (Matthew 5:39)**



It's easy to get swept up in hate in these situations. Jesus taught them to respond in an appropriate way, showing no hate but compassion towards those who don't want to be blessed.

Many times we cannot eliminate injustice, but we can choose how to react: **“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:21).**



**“Let us daily represent Christ’s great love by loving our enemies as Christ loves them. If we would thus represent the grace of Christ, strong feelings of hatred would be broken down and into many hearts genuine love would be brought. Many more conversions than are now seen would follow.”**

E.G.W. (Medical Ministry, p. 254)

# ACTS OF LOVE

“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44)

**Neighbor or enemy? In that time, Samaritans were considered enemies of Jews and vice versa.**

**Nevertheless, Jesus told the real story of a Samaritan who “had compassion” (Lk. 10:33) when he saw his enemy in need.**



**The mind-set of the priest and Levite: “If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?”**

**The mind-set of the good Samaritan: “If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?”**

**The mind-set of the citizens of the Kingdom: Thinking about others’ needs instead of their own.**



**“Seize every opportunity to contribute to the happiness of those around you, sharing with them your affection. Words of kindness, looks of sympathy, expressions of appreciation, would to many a struggling, lonely one be as a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul. A word of cheer, an act of kindness, would go far to lighten the burdens that are resting heavily upon weary shoulders. It is in unselfish ministry that true happiness is found. And every word and deed of such service is recorded in the books of heaven as done for Christ...**

**Live in the sunshine of the Saviour’s love. Then your influence will bless the world. Let the Spirit of Christ control you. Let the law of kindness be ever on your lips. Forbearance and unselfishness mark the words and actions of those who are born again, to live the new life in Christ.”**

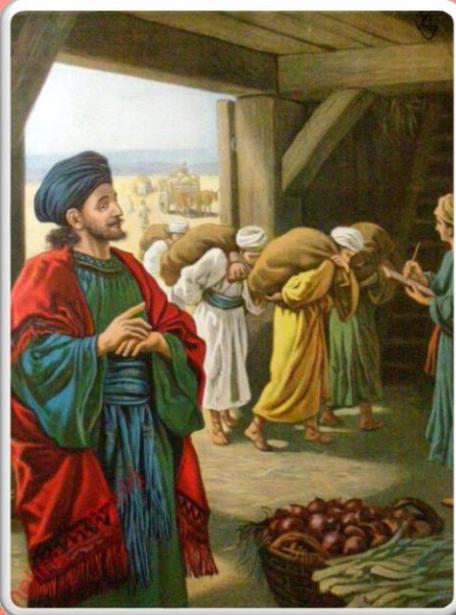
E.G.W. (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, cp. 10, p. 49-50)

# OUR PRIORITIES

**"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:33)**

**The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), introduces a rich man who remains indifferent to the needs of the poor.**

**In life, the respective circumstances of both characters remained unchanged; but in death, as judged by God, their positions were dramatically reversed.**



**In another parable (Luke 12:13-21), Jesus introduced another rich man who was worried about his riches. He was concerned about this temporal life only, and he lost his eternal life.**

**These two parables teach that the most important thing is to seek God's Kingdom first. We must also share God's blessings with others.**

E.G.W. (Mind, Character and Personality, vol. 2, cp. 71, p. 645)

**“God desires men and women to live the higher life. He gives them the boon of life, not to enable them merely to gain wealth, but to improve their higher powers by doing the work He has entrusted to mankind—the work of searching out and relieving the necessities of their fellowmen. Man should work not for his own selfish interest but for the interest of every one about him, blessing others by his influence and kindly deeds.”**

# SERVING OTHERS

“Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?’” (Matthew 25:37)

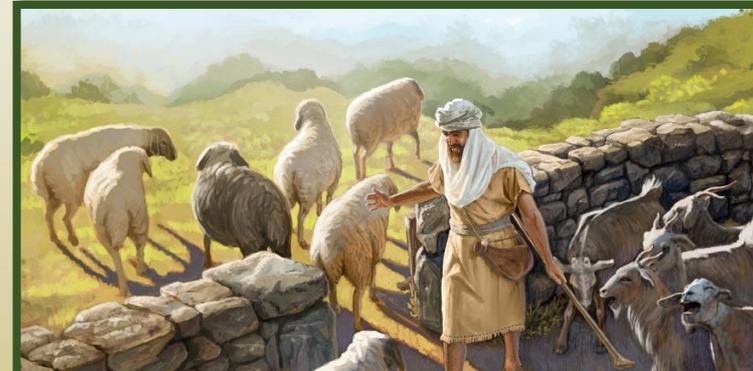
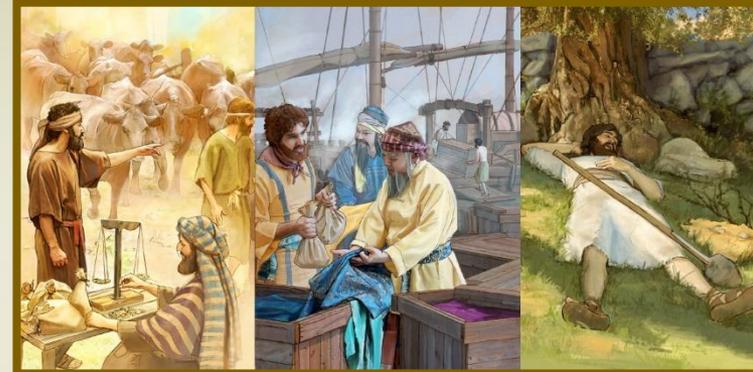


The parables of Jesus regarding His Second Coming (Matthew 25) are a reminder on the importance of preparing ourselves and living according to the principles of the Kingdom.

The parable of the sheep and the goats is an example of this. Doing mercy and caring for others is part of the righteous’ lifestyle.

They don’t have to think about it. In addition, they don’t proclaim their acts of kindness or expect any reward in return.

Jesus receives the acts we do to help those in need as if we had done them to Himself: “as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” (Matthew 25:40)



**“The truth as it is in Jesus does much for the receiver, and not only for him, but for all who are brought within the sphere of his influence... He does not consider present convenience; he is not ambitious for display; he does not crave the praise of men. His hope is in heaven, and he keeps straight on, with his eye fixed on Jesus. He does right because it is right, and because only those who do right will have an entrance into the kingdom of God. He is kind and humble, and thoughtful of others’ happiness... His manner is not harsh and dictatorial, like that of the godless; but he reflects light from heaven upon men.”**