



Small Group Guide Week 4 INTRO: The religious elite in Jesus' time kept their distance from sinners, but that isn't how Jesus lived. He drew close to people with inconvenient needs, distasteful habits, or wicked character. Faith is not simply about what God does for you; it's also about what He calls you to do for others. If we are following in Jesus' footsteps, we will find ourselves loving messy and messed-up people and discover we are messed up, too.

1. Who was your best friend growing up? What did you have in common?

READ Matthew 25:31–46

1. What inheritance do you hope for from God?
2. Who are the "least of these brothers and sisters of mine" (verse 40) in today's world?
3. Think about the needs Jesus listed. What other needs exist in our community that we can meet (or not)?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Jesus has a special concern for those in need?
2. What would Jesus' life have looked like if he only spent time with "good" people?
3. "Walter thinks every needy person he meets is Jesus." (p. 145) Do you think like that?
4. How does a "successful" American life separate you from needy people?
5. In ways both small and large, how is loving messy people hard?

OUTRO: We normally talk about God's plan as a blueprint for our lives, but we can also think of God's plan as the life He calls us to live. What if instead of waiting for a special call from God, we took Jesus at his word that whatever we do for those in need, we do (or don't do) for him? In any given day, how many opportunities do you have to feed, listen to, care for, encourage, or house Jesus? How many opportunities slip by? Are you ready to love him?

PRAY TOGETHER:

Pray that God would give you opportunities to care for messy people. Eph. 2:10