

Discussion Guide
Here & Now: wk5 Belief vs. Faith
March 17, 2024



Big Idea

Faithful citizens of God's Kingdom love God by loving others, here & now.



Icebreaker

Share an observation &/or application from this past week's reading plan.



Discussion Questions

1. In the faith community there has been a casually tossed around phrase. It is this: "*evacuation theology*". This phrase is used to describe someone with a mindset such as the following, "*the world is going to hell in a handbasket, there is nothing I can or should do about it, so just come back soon Jesus; beam me up "Scotty"!*". Is this a healthy or unhealthy mindset & why or why not? How does this mindset impact the Kingdom of God which is to be *here & now* & not just *there & then*?
2. Read Matthew 25:31-33. From these passages what is the main thing that Jesus is saying will occur at some point? How does that make you feel (explain)? Consider Jesus' earthly ministry as a scale with 'inclusive' on one side and 'exclusive (or separatist)' on the other side. To which side would you say the scale leans? Is it easy or challenging to reconcile your response to that with what he is seen saying here (in what we just read) & why or why not?
3. Read Matthew 25:34-40. From this passage what is the inheritance those on the right are instructed to take? What resulted in the King placing them on his right & extending this invitation? We express love for God by what (in general & more specifically) per this passage? Complete the following statements: *Faithful citizens of God's Kingdom love God by I _____ o _____, h _____ & n _____.* *They do so via g _____, h _____, and o _____.*
4. Read Matthew 25:41-46. What are examples of some things that one may *believe* but not place *faith* in (i.e. smoking is bad for you, etc.) and what is the indicator or evidence that they have placed faith in that belief? With that, now discuss your thoughts on whether *belief* and *faith* are the same thing or different things when it comes to being faithful citizens of God's Kingdom, here & now. Do your thoughts align with Jesus' per this set of passages?
5. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. Why is this a critical verse to keep in mind as one processes Matthew 25:31-46? What was shared near the end of the sermon that you should work hard at which if you are going to work hard at anything? What will this do to your heart, therefore influencing your actions?



Concluding Question

How has your citizenship in the Kingdom of God increased your generosity, hospitality, and outreach toward humanity? Are there areas for growth with this and if so, what may they be? When will you begin and what is your initial step? Reflect on this statement: *God loves us as we are, but also loves us too much to leave us as we are.*



Application

1. What do you think the Holy Spirit may be saying to you through this sermon and our discussion?
2. What is something God wants you to do now?
3. Is there a way we can help each other apply what God is showing us?



Prayer

Pray for our upcoming Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday services...that God be Glorified and people drawn to Him!