

No Room/Make Room Week 2 “Do You See Me?”

Seeing the Person Before Seeing the Problem

Matthew 25:31–46

Opening Prayer: God of compassion, open our eyes today. Help us see beyond appearances, assumptions, and labels so that we may recognize the dignity you have placed within every person. Give us courage to listen honestly, speak graciously, and allow your Word to challenge us. Teach us to recognize Jesus in the people we might otherwise overlook. Amen.

Theme: It is possible to look directly at someone without truly seeing them. We can notice someone's clothing, circumstances, behavior, or needs while never stopping long enough to recognize the person underneath them. Matthew 25:31–46 challenges that way of seeing. Jesus identifies Himself so closely with people experiencing hunger, thirst, displacement, sickness, imprisonment, and vulnerability that He says what we do—or fail to do—for them is done to Him. Before asking, “What should Christians do about homelessness?” this week's study asks a more fundamental question: “Who have we failed to see?” Christian compassion begins before the meal is served, the donation is given, or the program is created. It begins when another human being stops being a category or problem and becomes our neighbor.

Secular Quote: *“The opposite of love is not hate, it’s indifference.” — Elie Wiesel*
We often form opinions about people before we know their stories. Christian compassion begins when we slow down long enough to see the person rather than simply the circumstances surrounding them.

Starter Question: Think about a time when someone made you feel genuinely **seen** rather than merely noticed. What did that person do that made the difference? What does that experience teach us about the difference between looking at someone and truly seeing them?

Digging Deeper Questions:

Jesus says, “I was hungry,” “I was thirsty,” “I was a stranger,” “I needed clothes,” “I was sick,” and “I was in prison.” What strikes you about how personally Jesus describes each situation? Why do you think Jesus speaks about individual people rather than discussing poverty and suffering as abstract issues?

Both groups ask essentially the same question: **“Lord, when did we see you?”** Why is that significant? What does their surprise tell us about where we should expect to encounter Christ?

What changes when we begin thinking about **“a person experiencing homelessness”** rather than simply **“the homeless”**? How can the language we use either preserve someone's dignity or unintentionally reduce them to their circumstances?

Fear, stereotypes, previous experiences, political disagreements, discomfort, and assumptions about personal responsibility can all influence how we respond to homelessness. Which of these most often creates distance between people? How can Christians acknowledge legitimate questions about safety, responsibility, addiction, and boundaries without allowing those concerns to erase compassion?

Consider this statement from Sunday's message: **“Statistics can inform us, but relationships transform us.”** What do you think this means? Can you think of an issue that changed for you after you personally knew someone affected by it?

Jesus does not tell His followers merely to feel compassion. The people He praises actually feed, welcome, clothe, care for, and visit others. What is the relationship between seeing someone and acting on what we see?

Imagine Jesus physically standing before you saying, **“I am hungry,” “I need somewhere safe,” or “I feel forgotten.”** How would you respond? Why might our response be different when we encounter another person with the same need?

What might it mean for our churches to become communities that don't merely provide assistance to people in need but build relationships with them? What could we gain by listening before assuming we know what someone needs?

Actionable of the Week: Make Room This Week

This week, practice intentionally seeing people. Choose one encounter that you might normally rush through. It could be with someone experiencing homelessness, someone working behind a counter, someone sitting alone, an elderly neighbor, someone struggling financially, or simply someone whose life is very different from yours. Do not begin by trying to fix anything. Begin with dignity. Make eye contact. Offer a greeting. Learn a name when appropriate. Listen without immediately preparing a response. Resist making assumptions about someone's story. Then sometime afterward, pray: “Jesus, what did you want me to see in that person, and what did you want me to see in myself?”

If you are participating in Cardboard Village, carry that same prayer into the weekend. Our goal is not simply to become more informed about homelessness. Our prayer is to become more faithful disciples of Jesus.

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, give us eyes to see you in the people around us. Break down the assumptions and fears that keep us distant from our neighbors. Teach us to listen before judging, to recognize dignity before circumstance, and to allow compassion to become action. As we prepare for Cardboard Village, make us humble enough to learn and courageous enough to be changed. Show us where you are already at work and help us make room. Amen.

No Room— MAKE ROOM

A WORSHIP SERIES

SEEING CHRIST IN THE UNHOUSED
BECOMING THE CHURCH THAT
MAKES SPACE

WEEK 2

Do You See Me?

*Seeing the Person
Before the Problem*

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

MATTHEW 25:40

A weekly journey through Scripture, inviting us to see people as God sees them, respond with compassion, and put faith into action in our daily lives and community.

When we see people as God sees them, everything changes.

READ
REFLECT
PRAY
LIVE
MAKE ROOM

*All People.
All Neighbors.
All Belong.*

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

A WEEK OF SEEING, REMEMBERING, AND RESPONDING

MON SEPT 14		Luke 10:25–37 “Who Is My Neighbor?” The Good Samaritan challenges us to notice the person others pass by.	Reflect: Who am I tempted to walk past?
TUE SEPT 15		Genesis 1:26–27 “Created in God’s Image” Before someone has a job, home, possessions, or social status, they bear God’s image.	Reflect: How would I treat people differently if my first thought were, “This person bears the image of God”?
WED SEPT 16		Luke 16:19–31 “The Person at the Gate” The rich man repeatedly passes Lazarus, whose suffering is right outside his door.	Reflect: Who has become so familiar to me that I no longer really see them?
THU SEPT 17		James 2:14–17 “Compassion Becomes Action” Faith cannot remain only good intentions when a neighbor lacks life’s necessities.	Reflect: Where is God asking me to move from concern to action?
FRI SEPT 18		Isaiah 58:6–12 “The Worship God Desires” Isaiah connects genuine worship with feeding the hungry, providing shelter, clothing those in need, and refusing to turn away from others.	Reflect: What would change if serving vulnerable neighbors became part of how I understand worship?
SAT SEPT 19		Hebrews 13:1–3 “Remember Them” On the eve of the next step toward Cardboard Village, this passage calls us toward hospitality, empathy, and remembering those experiencing hardship.	Reflect: Jesus, what are you preparing me to see that I have overlooked before?

The Whole Story Changes Everything.