

Virginia Council of Churches
Week Eight – New Year’s Day

Have you ever thought about the hundreds of people with whom you come into contact as you move through this life? Some look just like us and some do not. There are wealthy people, beggars, poor people, criminals, liars and cheats and they all have one thing in common: They are all made in the image and likeness of our Almighty God. Do you see Jesus when you look at your neighbor, even if you cannot see the reflection of Jesus, He is there and is fully deserving of our love and attention. In the gospel of Matthew 25: 31-46, we are reminded that He will judge us all on how we have treated our neighbor because every person in our path is our neighbor. Did we offer food or water if they were hungry or thirsty, or welcome them graciously or visit them if they were sick or in prison? Did we love them? Did we ignore them? Did we pass them by in their need? Did we just feel too important to be humble enough to engage the lonely and downhearted? Do we have an exaggerated sense of self-worth? God is generous in His mercy and forgiveness. Why is it so difficult for us to follow the lead of Jesus to love, give generously to those less fortunate people and forgive those who offend us? Are we just too confident in our bank accounts and rich gifts that we have forgotten that all these gifts come from our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Because He is, we are! He is asking us to think less of ourselves, rely on Him to supply all our needs and treat everyone as we would like to be treated. He is telling us to love our neighbor as ourselves and to forgive as He forgives us. This will be asked of us when He comes in glory. How will you answer? He says, “How you treated the least of my people, you did to me.”

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, please always give us the grace, wisdom and patience to always see You in our neighbors and every person. Let us be generous with the gifts you have given us so that others may also see You in our actions. Peace, love and harmony begin with us, so, Lord, we beseech you to grant us a generous spirit, a loving heart that mimics the heart of Jesus and to live a humble life in the example you gave us. We ask this as we ask all things in Jesus’ name.

AMEN



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