



Good News for the Pews

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MATTHEW 25

In a recent Commission meeting a question came up about our decision to identify as a Matthew 25 worshipping community (WC). Roughly the question was along the lines of “are we completing the objectives of this goal.” Upon reflection I thought this would be a good topic to discuss with the wider community. It also has to do with some of the theological underpinnings of my sermons of late, in that sometimes the call to us from God is not in *doing*, but instead in *being*.

From the Presbyterian Mission Agency website, you can see the origin of the initiative. The Website states: “Matthew 25:31–46 calls all of us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. Convicted by this passage, both the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) exhorted the PC(USA) to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor.”

In 2019 and 2020 while serving on the SF Presbytery Committee on Ministry, I learned about Matt. 25, and participated in some presbytery-wide work on the topic. It became very clear to me that PCC English was already very much engaged in the work of Matt. 25, and it seemed to me that our WC *was already acting as* and doing the work *of* Matt. 25. Much like the Wizard of Oz where the wizard tells the Tin Man, that he didn’t lack heart, but in fact just some testimonials, it occurred to me that by adopting the Matt. 25 identity we would not be so much changing into something new but rather identifying who we *already are*, and then taking the extra steps of signifying our commitment to other Matt. 25 congregations and the world by adopting the Matt. 25 identity as part of ours.

I brought the idea to the Commission and after deliberation, we appointed a task force to research the goals of the Matt. 25 initiative from the PC(USA), see if they aligned with our already existing identity, and then make a recommendation as to whether or not we should sign on. The task force was charged with evaluating the material and seeing where (if anywhere) we already overlapped. They were charge to see if aligning with Matt. 25 made sense for us. Matthew 25 seeks to work

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