



STORYTELLERS

Week One | Matthew - To the Religious | 03.14-15.2020

Grow Deep Conversation Questions: Use these questions to help you process the message in your personal time of study or with your group. Time suggestions are based on a 90 minute group gathering.

Message Recap: Matthew, one of Jesus' disciples, had seen himself unworthy to follow a great man like Jesus because he was a tax collector. But Jesus chose Matthew, knowing Matthew's heart. Matthew writes His gospel understanding who the religious were, oftentimes unaware of their need of a savior.

» Opening (2-3 minutes)

- Introductions - this is especially important if this is your first meeting and if there are new members
- Housekeeping - clarify expectations
 - **Announcements:** These are in your Community News email. **Please read and communicate! Encourage participation!**
 - Remind your group that this is a confidential meeting
 - **Remember there may be many thoughts and views. Please remain kind and respectful during conversations.**
- Pray - open your time together in prayer

» Introduction (12 minutes)

- Ice-Breaker: What is the first thing you notice about people?
- Digging Deeper: Matthew knew the needs of religious people. Whether you have been in church for a long time or not, what have been your observations of religious people?

» Observation | Read Matthew 25:31-46; 27:15-26 (15 minutes)

- What are your initial reactions to these passages? What do you find challenging? Are you encouraged by any of these verses? Why?

» Key Principle | We want justice for others but mercy for ourselves. (15 minutes)

- Why do you think it's easy to have different standards for others than we have for ourselves?
- Describe a time when you felt you deserved mercy but someone else deserved justice?
- Read Matthew 9:9-13. Who do you think today's "tax collectors and sinners?"

» Justified Separation | Reference Matthew 25:31-46 (15 minutes)

- In The Parable of the Sheep and Goats, what attributes separate the sheep and goats?
- How can you work to change your assumptions about other people?
- How might God want us to step into the needs of the world around us to reflect Him and bring hope to the world?

» Unjust Separation | Reference Matthew 27:15-26 (15 minutes)

- In Matthew's retelling of Jesus' trial with Pilate, reflecting on your own life, who represents you most? How do you feel about that?
- Who is the Barabbas in your life who does not understand that they were created in God's image with infinite dignity, value, and worth?
- How has your thinking about Barabbas changed your thinking about yourself?

» Next Steps and Prayer | (15minutes)

- How can you seek God first with your life? Who can you reach out to this week and build a relationship with?
- Close by praying for each other, our community and our world to recognize their need for Jesus and turn to Him for healing and help.