When Did We See You?

2020 Bible Study

Prepared for the
Presbytery of Wabash Valley
a Matthew 25 Mid-Council

by
Jennifer Burns Lewis,
Visioning and Connecting Leader

and
Quincy Worthington,
2020 Coordinating Council Moderator
Gregory C. Ellison II’s powerful book, *Fear + Less Dialogues*, (Westminster John Knox Press, 2017) and his even more powerful presentation with Georgette Ledgister at the Mid-Council Leader Gathering in 2018 provide the inspiration for this 2020 PWV Bible Study. Stated Clerk Marjorie Reinsch and I had the honor of participating in a day of exercises designed to create space for thoughtful and creative dialogue, to speak frankly and safely, and to “go deep”. Using photographs as prompts, small groups engaged in processes called Living Museum and Laboratory of Discovery. It was a profound experience unlike anything I’d experienced at a church gathering.

We have an artist in our midst who is facing the world we live in, with God’s help, in an equally unique way. In a recent blog post, Quincy wrote, “…when I turned on the news or social media, I was bombarded by all these messages about lines in the sand and how the other side is stupid or hates America and wants to destroy it for <insert your own reason here>. And I began to wonder, as I still wonder, if maybe we feel “the other side” is so different or that we’re so divided because we’re told that and not because it was actually real.” He continues, “I wonder to myself, “What if the world needs to be different/better sure, but what if I need to see the world differently? What if I could look at this world in a way where I could find and see the beauty that’s already there in front of me like this rhino? What if I could show other people the beauty I’m trying to see, and I am finding What if…. I could literally look at this world differently?” (QuincyWorthington.com/log/finding-light).

In October, the Coordinating Council of our Presbytery voted to be a Matthew 25 mid-council. You can read much more about what that means for us as a presbytery that is committed to awakening, enlivening and enhancing congregations to bear new fruit in the Spirit, (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/) but know that, at its core it’s a call, an invitation, a great big kick in the pants to commit to holding each other accountable to make a difference in God’s world, to consider the possibilities of committing ourselves to eradicating systemic poverty, dismantling structural racism, or building congregational vitality.

This bible study on Matthew 25 and an evocative image for each month is an attempt to offer a taste of a conversation like those in Fear+less Dialogues, an approach that invites us to gather around our family story in Matthew 25 and share some of our own stories, and to have the experience of looking at the world differently. An ambitious undertaking? Possibly, but Quincy and I know you have it in you. Godspeed.

Jennifer Lewis

January 2020
Matthew 25: 34-40

34 “Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who will receive good things from my Father. Inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you before the world began. 35 I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. 36 I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.’

37 “Then those who are righteous will reply to him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? 38 When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you, or naked and give you clothes to wear? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

40 “Then the king will reply to them, ‘I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.’ (Common English Bible translation)

There’s more to this teaching we’re offered by Jesus. It begins at verse 31 and continues through verse 46. But for starters, take a look at the middle of the passage, offered above. Then take a look at the photograph on the next page and ask yourself, “What do I see?” “Who do I see?” “What do I say?” “What is my response?” Share with the group. Close in prayer.
February

The questions are always the same.

Take a look at the photo for February and ask...

“What do I see?”

“Who do I see?”

“What do I say?”

“What is my response?”

Share with the group.

Close in prayer.
March

Take a look at the photo for March and ask...

“What do I see?”

“Who do I see?”

“What do I say?”

“What is my response?”

Share with the group. Close in prayer.
April

Take a look at the photo for April and ask...

“What do I see?”

“Who do I see?”

“What do I say?”

“What is my response?”

Share with the group. Close in prayer.
May

Take a look at the photo for May and ask...

“What do I see?”

“Who do I see?”

“What do I say?”

“What is my response?”

Share with the group. Close in prayer.
June

Take a look at the photo for June and ask...

“What do I see?”

“Who do I see?”

“What do I say?”

“What is my response?”

Share with the group. Close in prayer.
July

Take a look at the photo for July and ask...

“What do I see?”
“Who do I see?”
“What do I say?”
“What is my response?”

Share with the group.
Close in prayer.
August

Take a look at the photo for August and ask...

“What do I see?”

“Who do I see?”

“What do I say?”

“What is my response?”

Share with the group. Close in prayer.
September

Take a look at the photo for September and ask...

“What do I see?”

“Who do I see?”

“What do I say?”

“What is my response?”

Share with the group. Close in prayer.
October

Take a look at the photo for October and ask...

“What do I see?”

“Who do I see?”

“What do I say?”

“What is my response?”

Share with the group. Close in prayer.
November

Take a look at the photo for November and ask...

“What do I see?”

“Who do I see?”

“What do I say?”

“What is my response?”

Share with the group. Close in prayer.
December

Take a look at the photo for December and ask...

“What do I see?”

“Who do I see?”

“What do I say?”

“What is my response?”

Share with the group. Close in prayer.