

THE S.O.A.P. BIBLE STUDY METHOD

One simple but effective model for studying the Bible is called S.O.A.P. The acrostic S.O.A.P. stands for Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. As you prepare for this week's Life Group, we encourage you to begin practicing this method on the passage. Here is a brief breakdown of the steps below.

- **Scripture-** Read the Scripture passage above slowly and ask the Lord to give you insight into His Word for yourself and for your group.
- **Observation-** Begin walking through the passage by making observations about the text. What are some things that stand out to you as you read it? What questions come to your mind as you read the passage? What words or phrases seem like they are important to understanding the meaning of the passage? Are there any words that are repeated more than once? What does this passage say about God? Are there any lists in the passage? Is this passage telling us how to do something or is it something happening to you?
- **Application-** Write down a few ways that this passage applies to us as Christians. How has God spoken to your heart through your time in His word? Are there any principles discovered in the observation section that can be applied for your group? Take a few moments and write down a few things that God wants you to focus on for this week's discussion.
- **Prayer-** Pray over the things that God has shown you. Ask God to first work in your heart through what you've learned. Pray for your group and for your upcoming meeting. Ask God to lead your group and give you wisdom as you discuss this week's content.

KINGDOM BUILDERS // GIVE CLEAN WATER

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

There are many problems in the world that may feel out of our control. And while we may not be able to solve all the world's problems, we can solve the world's water problems. This week we celebrate providing clean water to Liberia, and our vision to provide clean drinking water for three more countries in three years!

For more insights relating to this week's sermon, see <https://newbreak.church/blog/>. We post a new blog every Sunday which coincides with the sermon passage or theme from that day.

ICEBREAKER

- 1) If you had the resources and opportunity to choose any world problem to solve, what would it be?
- 2) When was the last time you drank water and thought about its source? Have you considered how fortunate you are to have access to clean water?

DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE SERMON

Read: Matthew 25:31–46

As you read through these verses keep these questions in mind:

- What value does this chapter add to what we understand about God?
- What are some of the things that stand out to you when you read the passage?

—DISCUSSION POINTS—

Point 1 – There is no greater way to serve Jesus than to provide for those who cannot provide for themselves.

Read: Matthew 25:31–46

This is a parable about the “final judgment,” a significant event in which Jesus’s return will call all the world into account. Notice that people are separated into one of two groups (Matt 25:32-33); there are only two factions that exist—the “sheep” and the “goats.” (A similar act of separating the “righteous” from the “unrighteous” occurs earlier in Matthew 13:47-50.)

Palestinian shepherds frequently had to separate their flocks this way. Sheep and goats freely intermingled and often looked quite similar in appearance, at least from a distance. We too could probably not guess from superficial knowledge and external appearance who are truly God's people, but Jesus knows. Sheep have often been an image representing believers since the Lord is portrayed as a shepherd to his people (see Psalm 23).

The “righteous” are deemed so not because they are morally flawless, but because they strive for idyllic justice. In fact, the Greek word for “righteous” is the same word for “just” (Greek: *dikaios*). The righteous take matters of justice into their hands. But note what kind of justice. We are not speaking of taking up weapons and overthrowing tyrants. Here, it refers to aiding those who cannot help themselves. God's care for the poor and needy is a constant theme throughout all of Scripture, and his people often act as the hands and feet of God's provision.

Is this not a reflection of the gospel? Jesus secures salvation for us, something we could have never secured for ourselves. We can think of our lives as an ongoing thank you letter back to God for what he has done for us through Jesus.

While this passage speaks of meeting needs of hunger, thirst, hospitality, and clothing—our focus is on the thirst, since we are speaking of our give clean water projects.

(DISCUSS):

- What stands out to you about the actions of the righteous?
- Why do you think Jesus would communicate this teaching parable in what might be considered a harsh or dramatic way? (Trying to communicate that the stakes are high)
- How does our mission of giving clean water respond to the needs referenced in Matthew 25:31-46?

—ADDITIONAL INSIGHT—

Matthew 25:31 opens the parable with Jesus designating himself as the “Son of Man,” which was his favorite title for himself during his earthly ministry. And while the title might seem enigmatic for modern readers, what this refers to is actually uncontested.

Daniel 7:1-14 contains a strange and exciting vision about the kingdoms of the world being confronted with a sense of finality. All the trouble and evil that came through the empires of the world would come to an end as the world's true king takes his place! But who is this king? Daniel 7:9-10 uses ancient, apocalyptic, and vivid symbolism as God (“the Ancient of Days”) takes his seat in a posture of judgment over the rulers of the world.

Verses 13 and 14 are the climax as one “like a son of man” was ascending with the clouds toward the throne of heaven. Riding the clouds might seem funny or even arbitrary to us, but for the ancient audience this was one thing only a deity could do! Only God could “make the clouds his chariot” (Psalm 104:3 is only one example of this!).

So, already we have an interesting picture of a figure who seems to be human (“like a son of man”) but also does what only God can do (like riding the clouds). It gets even more interesting.

*He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; **all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him.** His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. – Daniel 7:14*

This “son of man” would become the King over a kingdom that would be unrivaled and unending. And all people would “worship him.” This is astounding since God emphatically states, over and over in Scripture, that he does not share his glory or the worship due only to him (Isaiah 42:8 and Exodus 34:14). While this divine “son of man” was distinct from the “Ancient of Days,” he also was equal to him. Therefore, this “son of man” became part of a rich Jewish tradition known as the “two powers in heaven” where many (rightly) expected the coming Messiah to also be divine. And that is why Jesus’s claim to be the “Son of Man” while on trial, caused the high priest to say Jesus was blaspheming, because by claiming this, Jesus was equating himself to God—something that was indeed true, though the chief priest did not believe it.

No wonder church tradition, for nearly two millennia, has referred to Jesus as the “God-man.” He is both truly deity and truly human. He was always the Lord, the God of Israel, but through his incarnation (the act of becoming human and being born of the virgin Mary) he became the Messiah of the world. Through him we have a King who will call all kings and all people into account. He will act justly and will set things right in due time.

For now, what does this king ask of us? Many answers could suffice, but in context of the parable in Matthew 25:31-46, he asks that we provide for the needy. The King cares so much about this commission he even equates our service to the least of these as service to himself (Matt 25:40).

Point 2 – Giving clean water is more than a water project—it’s a people project!

Read: 1 John 3:17–18

The apostle John saw the world very black and white. For John, it seemed irreconcilable for someone to claim to be a believer—to have the love of God abiding in them—yet not do anything about those in need.

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. – 1 John 3:18

Our faith is supposed to be action oriented. After all, God’s love did not end by word, telling us he loves us, but God demonstrated his love for us through the sacrificial death of Jesus for our sins (Romans 5:6-8).

Our actions are not something we do to save ourselves or even prove ourselves. Instead, they are to be an organic by-product of experiencing the love of God, as 1 John 3 says. Therefore, our passion to serve comes by seeing how much Jesus has served us.

(DISCUSS):

- Why are words without actions an incomplete expression of our faith?
- “Our faith is supposed to be action oriented.” Take an honest assessment of your faith. Is it something that is only a proclamation? Or does it also include love expressed through service and generosity? Explain.
- **If you are in a Life Group, what is your Life Group going to do this semester to serve?**
- Have you ever thought about the gospel as a way Jesus “served” you? (See Mark 10:45). How does this inspire you to want to serve others?

—CALL TO ACTION—

Every year hundreds of thousands of people around the world die from unclean water related illnesses. Even if they do not die, many miss work frequently from being sick due to unclean water. So by providing clean water for people who need it, we are increasing their likelihood of living a longer, healthier life, and we are giving them back more days where they are able to work and provide for their families.

Would you prayerfully consider partnering with us toward our goal of \$100,000 for this year? [Follow this link](#) or go to newbreak.church/kb and scroll down to February’s featured project to give!

Here is how it works:

\$10 provides sustainable clean water for **one person**

\$50 provides sustainable clean water for **a family**

\$500 provides sustainable clean water for **a school**

\$3,000 provides sustainable clean water for **a village**

As Newbreak partnered with Give Clean Water and The Last Well, we were able to accomplish an incredible feat—providing clean water for every person and tribe in Liberia. Now we are seeking to do the same for three countries over the next three years in Fiji, the Solomon Islands,

and the Marshall Islands. Giving clean water is the tool which allows our teams to bring the gospel to new territories.

P.S. When you give to any of Newbreak's Kingdom Builders' projects, 100% of the proceeds goes directly to that ministry. We ask that you give through Newbreak (instead of the organization) because we usually find donors who are willing and excited to match your donations! This means that however much Newbreak can raise, donors will match that, therefore doubling our contribution!

Will you consider partnering with us to bring clean drinking water to hundreds of thousands of people?

—SUMMARY—

Jesus's parable of the "sheep and the goats" in Matthew 25 calls us to take action for the needy. One of the ways we meet these needs is through our mission of giving clean water.

Point 1 – There is no greater way to serve Jesus than to provide for those who cannot provide for themselves.

Point 2 – Giving clean water is more than a water project—it's a people project!

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

1. How are you going to think differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?
2. What is one thing you are going to change in your life in light of the sermon?
3. BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids?