Matthew 25: 31-46 "The Sheep and the Goats"[1]

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious
throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats
on his left.
34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your
inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you
gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you
invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in
prison and you came to visit me.'
37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and
give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes
and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'
40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters
of mine, you did for me.'
41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal
fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was
thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed
clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'
44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes
or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'
45 "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for
me.'
46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

When considering the "least of these" idea in mathematics, we might encounter the concept of the lowest common denominator of a number or formula; that which is not divisible by another whole or which is basic or fundamental[2].

If one applies this concept to society, we may find the following definition; that which is 'used to refer in a disapproving way to the sort of people in society who are least intelligent and who will accept low-quality products and entertainment:'[3] or we might say, "…those at the margins of society."

Christians may wonder whether Jesus had a version of such a concept in mind when he spoke the aforementioned words from Matthew 25:31-46. When we read "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:40), we may almost come to that conclusion. Therefore, the extent to which one helps or hinders the "least ones" becomes the measure by which one's fate is determined.

All too often people behave in a manner designed to maximize individual comfort and security, sometimes at the expense of others. This could also spring from the thought that granting another something will adversely impact oneself, or "if you gain something, I automatically must lose something," a "zero-sum" mindset. Perhaps this is fueled by envy. Experience may support the notion that this feeling is intensified when the recipient of the assumed largesse is from the "less than" class.

Our nation suffers from generations of characterizing People of Color as "other" or "less than," facilitating the process of denying them equal treatment in most arenas; whether education,

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[1] https://www.biblegateway.com/Matthew 25:31-46

[2] https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us

[3] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us

employment, advancement, remuneration, social status, etc. Unfortunately, that continual negative reinforcement has often led to an internalization on part of the recipient that hinders growth and realization of God-given-potential.

One would hope that professing Christians would break this pattern, but such is often not the case since humans remain human, foibles and all.

The Presbytery of Tampa Bay has adopted an antiracism policy that helps us learn how to live into Jesus commandment to love our neighbor, who may be the least of these. A part of this policy is the requirement for leaders[4] to participate in an educational workshop that is designed to assist in understanding elements of racism and adopting strategies that oppose racism.

The next workshop is scheduled to take place on **October 23, 2026 from 9 AM to 4 PM at Trinity PC – Clearwater**. The registration link follows (hit ctrl & click to follow the link):

https://form.jotform.com/261743445988169

[4] Racial Equity training is required no less than once every three years for:
Teaching Elders serving in or seeking installed or temporary pastoral relationships with congregations or otherwise engaged in a validated ministry within the bounds of The Presbytery of Tampa Bay,
Retired teaching elders engaged in any pastoral ministry, including pulpit supply,
Commissioned Ruling Elders actively serving a congregation,
Certifi ed Christian Educators,
Members-At-Large, and
Presbytery Staff.