



Who Are You?

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You might feel that you no longer recognize people with whom you've worked, worshipped, or socialized. Some of that's perfectly explainable. Since the pandemic, people have had limited professional grooming available to them; a few may have put on a few pounds. Not to be judgmental, but they don't look the same. In those cases, you literally might not recognize people whom you've not seen for months.

I'm referring, however, to something that goes much deeper. No matter your political persuasion, you've probably heard opinions and views from people you once trusted, but who now seem to have lost all sensibility. "Who are you, and what you done with my friend/brother/supervisor/neighbor?!?" From your perspective, their views are so extreme that you can't even begin to fathom how they believe what they do. You no longer recognize them and lump them into a faceless category of people with a pejorative label.

Because of our nation's division and culture war, we have stopped seeing the humanity in each other. Worse, we've stopped recognizing the image of God in each of us.

In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus forewarns us of the judgment of nations, an ugly, uncaring state in which individualized choices cast off those considered "other."

"Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'" Both the righteous (who did these things) and the unrighteous (who did not) must ask the same question, "Lord when did I see you...?" The king explains that whenever they acted or failed to act compassionately and justly toward others, they also acted in the same way toward the king.

When we fail to recognize the image of God in our neighbors, our lack of caring and injustice is equally directed toward God. We are given no excuse for our inability to see the King in the midst of the faceless group who have different views, different opinions, different skin tones, different backgrounds, different economic status, and different political affiliations.



MATTHEW 25

Our denomination has named Matthew 25 as its guiding Scripture for work in building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty. We are all urged to affirm this vision, and three of our congregations (Heritage, Southminster, and Tippecanoe) have already done so. At our September 29 Presbytery Gathering, the Council will recommend that we become a Matthew 25 presbytery. It would signal our affirmation of the values of care, justice, and compassion for all, particularly in those three foci. It will signal our willingness to take risks for the sake of the gospel. It will signal our readiness to get to work. It will define who we are.