What did Jesus teach about treating others?

This passage from Matthew’s Gospel is partly about what Christians believe will happen in the future, but also about how they should live their lives in the present. Jesus isn’t describing an actual event – this is a passage with symbolic meaning. In the story, Jesus uses imagery which would have been familiar to people in Israel at the time when he lived, of a shepherd dividing his animals into different types.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory with all of his angels, he will sit on his royal throne. The people of all nations will be brought before him, and he will separate them, as shepherds separate their sheep from their goats.

He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, “My father has blessed you! Come and receive the kingdom that was prepared for you before the world was created. When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me, and when I was naked, you gave me clothes to wear. When I was sick, you took care of me, and when I was in jail, you visited me.”

Then the ones who pleased the Lord will ask, “When did we give you something to eat or drink? When did we welcome you as a stranger or give you clothes to wear or visit you while you were sick or in jail?”

The king will answer, “Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me.”

Then the king will say to those on his left, “Get away from me! You are under God’s curse. Go into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels! I was hungry, but you did not give me anything to eat, and I was thirsty, but you did not give me anything to drink. I was a stranger, but you did not welcome me, and I was naked, but you did not give me any clothes to wear. I was sick and in jail, but you did not take care of me.”

Then the people will ask, “Lord, when did we fail to help you when you were hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in jail?”

The king will say to them, “Whenever you failed to help any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you failed to do it for me.”

Then Jesus said, “Those people will be punished forever. But the ones who pleased God will have eternal life.”

Matthew chapter 25 verses 31-46
List three actions which were done by ‘the sheep’.

List three actions which were done (or ought to have been done, but weren’t) by ‘the goats’.

To do...

What does this passage tell Christians today about how to treat others? How might they put this into practice in their everyday lives?

How might a Christian explain why it is difficult to always be righteous? To write a great answer to this question, re-read your work on Genesis chapter 3 and the parable of the Lost Son, and try to use the keywords ‘fallen’, ‘repentance’ and ‘forgiveness’.

In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. A parable is a story with a deeper meaning, told by Jesus to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson.
There was once a rich man who wore expensive clothes and every day ate the best food. But a poor beggar named Lazarus was brought to the gate of the rich man’s house. He was happy just to eat the scraps that fell from the rich man’s table. His body was covered with sores, and dogs kept coming up to lick them. The poor man died, and angels took him to the place of honour next to Abraham.

The rich man also died and was buried. He went to hell and was suffering terribly. When he looked up and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side, he said to Abraham, “Have pity on me! Send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and touch my tongue. I’m suffering terribly in this fire.”

Abraham answered, “My friend, remember that while you lived, you had everything good, and Lazarus had everything bad. Now he is happy, and you are in pain. And besides, there is a deep ditch between us, and no one from either side can cross over.”

But the rich man said, “Abraham, then please send Lazarus to my father’s home. Let him warn my five brothers, so they won’t come to this horrible place.”

Abraham answered, “Your brothers can read what Moses and the prophets wrote. They should pay attention to that.”

Then the rich man said, “No, that’s not enough! If only someone from the dead would go to them, they would listen and turn to God.”

So Abraham said, “If they won’t pay attention to Moses and the prophets, they won’t listen even to someone who comes back from the dead.”

Luke chapter 16 verses 19-31
Don’t store up treasures on earth! Moths and rust can destroy them, and thieves can break in and steal them. Instead, store up your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy them, and thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will always be where your treasure is.

Matthew chapter 6 verses 19-21

To do...

Fill in the gaps:

Jesus makes a contrast between ‘treasures on ____________’ and ‘treasures in ____________’. Jesus’ message in this teaching is that worldly goods can be ____________ or be ____________, but good deeds are more ____________ because ____________________________________________________________________.

To do...

Which character in the story of the rich man and Lazarus had stored up treasures on earth? Which character received treasures in heaven?

How might a Christian avoid storing up ‘treasures on earth’? How might they try to store up ‘treasures in heaven’?

To think about...

What should motivate Christians to be righteous and to do good deeds, love for God or fear of judgement?