

**Word Notes Sunday 04/12/16**  
**Tony Hodge – Authentic Christianity 2:**  
**Good enough for Jesus, good enough for me**

**Summary** *(read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday, listen to the podcast if you missed the talk <http://www.newmarketcommunitychurch.co.uk/podcasts.htm>)*

**Key Text: Matt 25:31-46**

This is possibly not the most quoted “End Times” prophecy but certainly one we should take seriously. The sheep and goats are not separated on their faith but their deeds. Is Jesus saying we’ll be saved based on our deeds – no, but there is a valuable lesson to be learned that perhaps comes into focus when we read James. James underlines the importance and role of doing Jesus’ work as well as having faith. The Apostle James was probably Jesus’ brother (Gal 1:19) and so who could know him better, who better to see through any pretence in Jesus’ teachings and deeds? And with his letter being written just 10-20 years after Jesus’ death it could be the closest writing in time to Jesus’ life, - is this then “Authentic Christianity”?

So how did Jesus measure up to his own expectations? Well his mission as set out in Luke 4:18,19 sets the scene and his actions to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome strangers, clothe the naked, visit the sick and release prisoners are to be found throughout the Gospels. Sometimes that is a physical here and now action, sometimes he deals with spiritual needs, a good example to us not to neglect one for the other. In sending out the 12 he gave them instructions to do these things 10:5-8 and it’s what the early church experienced in ministry too Acts 5:12-16.

Do Christians find this a challenge – yes! The fact that James needs to address the issue tells us that some were already acting like goats – “butting” instead of following in the master’s footsteps.

**Application** *(this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)*

What examples can you recall from scripture that tell you what the heart of God is for the people in need in Matt 25:31-46?

Let’s be honest – we all have goat-like tendencies from time to time, or maybe in certain situations. What’s the best way to see our attitudes change?

How do you balance the apparently overwhelming needs in the world with your limited resources to do something about them? What practical ways to you seek to be more sheep than goat?

**Witness** *(this is the bit where the cell talks, plans and prays about how to share the Good News)*

Go and find someone or a group of people who are hungry, thirsty, an alien, naked, sick or in prison to show the love of God to this Christmas. Be brave – don’t just spend some money, spend your time.