

# Pursuing Shalom: Serving Our Neighbors Locally and Globally

## Training Outline

### Abstract:

Grounded in Genesis 1 and manifest in Matthew 25:31-end, this session explores the biblical concept of shalom and its implications for the social worker and the Christian as we engage the world with justice and compassion. Lisa Sharon Harper connects the biblical text with the challenges encountered by social workers on a daily basis: hunger, thirst, sickness, immigration, prison, and abject poverty. This presentation explores the implications of the call to “righteousness” on local and global engagement with those Jesus calls “the least of these.”

### Learning objectives:

1. Define the biblical concept of shalom.
2. Describe the connection between Matthew 25 and the challenges encouraged by social workers every day
3. Articulate 2-3 examples of applying an understanding of the challenges faced by clients to advocacy for just public policy

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- I. The Biblical Concept of Shalom: Overview (15 min)
  - a. Three words in Genesis 1)
    - i. *tov' mehode* (very good)
    - ii. *tselem* (image)
    - iii. *radah* (dominion)
  - b. Implications)
    - i. To be human is to be made in the image of God.
    - ii. There is a direct connection between being made in the image of God and the call to “exercise dominion.”
    - iii. To diminish the capacity of people to exercise dominion, through poverty or oppression, is to diminish the image of God on earth.
    - iv. Shalom requires the protection and service of the vulnerable.
- II. Matthew 25 Context (15 min)
  - a. Matthew 23:27-32. Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and Scribes for corrupt leadership)

- i. Whitewashed tombs
    - ii. Brood of vipers
  - b. Jesus exits the temple and gathers his disciples on Mount of Olives, opposite the Temple)
- III. Matthew 25: 31-end (30 min)
  - a. V. 32 “nations” = people groups
  - b. Two options for how to read vs. 32
    - i. He will separate people groups from each other
    - ii. He will separate out people from their groups creating two new groups
  - c. Vs. 34 “blessed” = to speak well of
  - d. Vs. 34 “come” = invitation to intimacy
  - e.
- IV. How do we seek shalom? (15 min)
  - a. Be ones of equitable action and character
  - b. This is how we partner with God to restore “tov’ mehode” to creation!
  - c. To seek equity is to increase capacity of all people to exercise Godly dominion and to fan the flame of the image of God on earth.