



Life Group Study Notes

“Giving”

Ps. James Lowe - October 7, 2018

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What was your first job?
- What has been your favorite job so far at which you worked?
- What was your most interesting job to date?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

John 6:1-13 ESV *After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.*

This great miracle of Jesus ultimately teaches us that he is the Bread of Heaven, who is able to nourish our souls and satisfy all of our deep spiritual needs. Israel was miraculously given manna by God through Moses as they journeyed through the wilderness. That manna symbolically foreshadowed the greater nourishment that God would give us through his Son as we journey through this present mortal life. Through Jesus' sinless life, substitutionary death, triumphant resurrection, and glorious ascension, we are reconciled to God and can be nourished and sustained throughout this life as we await his eventual gift of immortality.

At the same time, we can learn some important principles and truths about giving and generosity from this biblical text. Just as the boy gave his food to Jesus and Jesus then blessed and multiplied it to feed a multitude, so also we can and should give to Jesus.

1. Honor God.

When we give to Jesus, we honor God. The most basic way we are taught in Scripture to do this is by giving ten percent of our earned income (the tithe) to the church. Israel gave tithes to support the ministry of those who taught the Mosaic covenant and served at the Tabernacle where their worship took place. The early church continued this practice of giving tithes to the church. Jesus himself upheld the tithe in his teaching (Matthew 23:23).

2. Bless others.

When we give to Jesus, we bless others. Churches carry on the important ministry of preaching and teaching the Word of God, facilitating public worship services as commanded by Scripture, providing spiritual oversight for people's lives, discipling people to follow Jesus and advance God's kingdom, providing pastoral care for God's people, and serving our surrounding communities. All of this is made possible through the generosity of God's people.

3. Be blessed.

When we give to Jesus, God blesses us in return. The Scriptures as a whole teach that God himself is extraordinarily generous and has designed our world so that blessings come to those who are generous. Jesus taught us to expect to be blessed by God in proportion to the measure we use in our own giving (Luke 6:37-38). The apostle Paul taught the same thing when he wrote to the Corinthians (2 Cor 9:6-8). To the Philippian church he promised that God would "meet every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus," because they had been so generous in meeting his own needs (Philippians 4:19).

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- Why do you believe our generosity to the church honors God? In what way?
- What are some specific examples of how our church giving blesses others?
- What examples can you give of how God has blessed you because of your church giving?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Thank God for the gift of his Son to us.
- Ask God for the guidance of his Spirit to develop a God-honoring giving plan.
- Ask God for the grace and discipline need to live out a God-honoring giving plan.