

gospel in life

Generosity: Generosity & Ministry

Luke 9:49-10:2 New International Version (NIV)

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Samaritan Opposition

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The Cost of Following Jesus

⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.”

⁵⁸ Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

⁵⁹ He said to another man, “Follow me.”

But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”

⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

⁶¹ Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.”

⁶² Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-Two

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

Luke 9:49-10:2 (NIV)

Goal of This Study:

One of the currencies people tend to lack, when it comes to radical generosity, involves their time, their talents and their gifts. Expanding on the idea that every believer is not intended to be a ministry consumer, but a ministry provider who has been sent out into the world to serve.

Background Information:

This passage may represent the best of all the passages we are considering in getting to the generosity of spirit looks like. We will work through the passage backwards. Moving from...

- ... Generosity of Service (last two verses) which is based on the middle part of the passage where we will learn about

- ... Generosity of Discipleship and even that is based on the very beginning where we will learn about
- ... Generosity of Grace. Grace which leads to Discipleship which leads to Service.

The Text: Part 1... Generosity of Service

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ²He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. (Luke 10:1,2)

Context for these two verses require a look at first two verses of Luke 9:

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ²and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. (Luke 9:1,2)

Importance of "72"

EVERY Christian sent out to minister

Every believer is sent ("missio" = on mission); a man or a woman on mission. God never calls you in to radically heal you or bless you and forgive you without then sending you out to give the same benefits. He never calls you in without sending you out. God never blesses without calling you to be a blessing.

"It's almost like Jesus is saying this: Before you met me, I understand that you were self-absorbed. It's hard to be your own savior. It's hard to produce all your own worth and significance and security. It's very hard. Especially when you're trying to be your own savior; that is to say you're living for yourself and your saying "I'm going to make my life worthwhile and I'm going to feel good about myself because I've achieved this and this..." That's terribly hard. That's quite a burden.

And you're always (before you met me) struggling with that inner sense of inadequacy and emptiness. You were always battling and you were always losing. No wonder you were self-absorbed. But now you've met me and things have changed. I've dealt with that sense of inner shame and inadequacy. I've given you the love and beauty you've always looked for. I have filled you up and now there is no excuse for just living for yourself. No excuse to pad your resume and to get the designer life you want. You're here to serve now... just like me.

What does this mean? It means that you have an adventure in front of you!

¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork [workmanship], created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10 NIV)

"Workmanship" = poiema or English "poem" work of art

Gifts, talents, experiences, background, age, race, suffering, failures... Some hands only you can hold; some demons only you can cast out and some needs only you can meet and God has prepared you for those and they are waiting for you.

- Martin Heidegger: Now that we don't believe in God any more, we feel that we have just been thrown into the world. There is no rhyme or reason to it. We are here by chance. We are thrown into the world chaotically.
- The Bible: God has crafted you in such a way that you've got people out there for you to help and therefore your life is marked by sentness, not thrownness.

The Text: Part 2... Generosity of Discipleship

You will never give yourself away to others until you have first given yourself away to Jesus without condition.

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What it means to follow Jesus: three men as examples.

1. Moving too fast... think about it first.
2. Moving too slow... "yes, but..." Jesus can't be a supplement to the life we choose for ourselves.

Following him has to be the FIRST thing. Laser focused on Jesus.

"You will never give yourself away to other people; you will never achieve the beauty of giving yourself to others until first you've given yourself to Christ without reservation and without condition."

The Text: Part 3... Generosity of Discipleship

We are very lucky there is a third point. And here's why. A lot of you are saying, every point is getting worse. The first point was hard enough; live for other people. "Well I'm kind of busy, I'm kind of selfish and I'm kind of self-absorbed. Yeah, okay, I should live for other people.

But then the second point. It's all or nothing with Jesus; no conditions, no if's ands or buts, no "as long as," unconditional, without reservation, holding nothing back, all or nothing. And you go, "okay, alright, maybe I should do that. But I don't want to." And you know you don't want to. And I want you to know that you will not be able to do it just by telling yourself, "I need to be unselfish."

You see, generosity is a life of deep unselfishness. That's biblical generosity. "I should be unselfish, I should give myself to other people." You can tell yourself that and it will never happen because your little heart is holding onto your little life like this [clenched fist]. And you can go home a little convicted after a sermon or something like that and it's not going to work.

This will. If you're going to know the generosity of service and know the generosity of discipleship, you need to know the generosity of grace.

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this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?"⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶Then he and his disciples went to another village.

First incident...

Someone who was doing good things, but disciples were ungenerous toward him. We need to get on top of this... we need to get out in front of this!

Jesus IS generous toward him. "Don't do that."

Samaritan Opposition...

Calls up images of Elijah in 2 Kings 1:1-15

Disciples: "These people deserve judgment! We can do this!"

Why the difference between Jesus and the disciples? And why the difference between the New Testament and the Old Testament? Why fire in some cases and forgiveness in other?

- Soldiers come to arrest Jesus in the garden and he healed them.
- Soldiers nail him to the cross and he forgives them.

How could Jesus do that? Luke 12:49,50

⁴⁹"I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!"⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed!

Jesus didn't come to bring judgment; he came to bear judgment. The fire we deserve.

1. You will never be able to give ourselves away to others until we see how Jesus gave himself away for you.
2. If your fundamental – what your life is based on – is a man dying for his enemies, you will never call down fire on anybody and then you will know that you are a true disciple.