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Series: Week 5

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Sermon Topic: Cultivating A Rhythm of Generosity, for “the Least of These”

What is a “Rhythm of Generosity”? It is a patterned lifestyle of regularly investing treasures, time, and talents to meet the needs of those who are “poor”—financially, physically, mentally, or relationally. It is ideally anonymous, sometimes sacrificial, but always compassionate, and it’s modeled after Jesus’ words and actions. **In short, a *rhythm of generosity* could be defined as “living intentionally to give unselfishly”.**

William Booth’s recurring dream:

God’s emphasis on generosity can be seen in the Old Testament:

God’s heart for the poor can be seen in the New Testament:

Today’s Passage from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:1-4):

A Conversation with Susan Blouch, of the Lebanon Rescue Mission:

A Challenge: Allow your heart to be stirred!

Questions for reflection and discussion (perhaps with your life group):

1. In your thoughts, words, and actions, are you more likely to seek to refresh/restore the poor, or to condemn them? Is it sometimes difficult to look past the destructive decisions some might have made?
2. What can we learn from Jesus’ words and actions toward the marginalized in the gospels?
3. What treasures are you willing to examine and reallocate in order to start a rhythm of generosity?
4. What specific talents do you possess which could be used to help a person in need?
5. How might your family, or life group, or circle of friends carve time to give periodic help to an organization that ministers to the marginalized?
6. Ponder/discuss this promise: “You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.” - **2 Corinthians 9:1**

A SAMPLING OF CHRIST-BASED COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Lebanon Rescue Mission: Website: www.lebanonrescuemission.org

Mission: “To represent and present the gospel of Jesus Christ to all within our sphere of influence and to alleviate human suffering, in His name, without discrimination.”

Follow-up Q & A with Susan Blouch, Executive Director of the Lebanon Rescue Mission:

Q: How do you balance providing immediate needs with longer-term goals for a guest?

A: “It’s not fair to say to someone, ‘All you need is Jesus.’ We strive to get people out of chaos, in a clean & safe environment. Next, we have conversations: “Tell me about...” We continue serving until clients ask, “Why do you care?” By being like Jesus for guests, trust is built...We don’t change lives; we point guests to the One who will!”

Q: What opportunities exist for volunteers who want to help with the Rescue Mission?

A: “In addition to donations of cash and goods-in-kind, volunteers are needed; for example, get on our driver’s list (insurance & vehicle are provided), and take a guest to the Driver’s Center so that he can get a driver’s license. Chat with him as you chauffeur!”

Q: What is something else that should be taken into consideration in helping the needy?

A: “Don’t be a hero in attacking homelessness; for the safety of your family, point the homeless person to organizations like LRM. And remember not to look merely outside the church walls in being a ‘hope ambassador’. The Lord calls us to take care of our families and those in the body of Christ first.”

Align Life Ministries: Website: www.alignlifeministries.org

Summary: “We align with God to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and champion the sacredness of human life through pregnancy services, strategic partnerships and equipping resources.”

Jubilee Ministries: Website: www.jub.org

Mission: “We exist to serve those affected by incarceration by being ambassadors of life change through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

True Life Youth Ministries: Website: www.truelifeyouth.com

Mission: “To guide students to discover their True Life in Christ, while equipping them spiritually, socially, and emotionally to impact their community and world.”

Additional Quotes and Scripture to Ponder:

“Your days at the most cannot be very long, so use them to the best of your ability for the glory of God and the benefit of your generation.” - **William Booth, Salvation Army founder**

“A Christian response to poverty begins by focusing on the dignity of the whole person.” – **‘Food for the Hungry’ motto**

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.” – **I Timothy 6:17-18**

“And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to Me!’ – **Matthew 25:40**