3. “...Give all you Can”

Synopsis
One of the first things Jesus does is open a scroll and read this passage from Isaiah 61. Concern for the poor and generous giving isn’t just another in a long line of pointless rules to follow: this is very close to the heart of God and Jesus’ mission when he came to earth. Money and possessions aren’t really even ours, and Jesus has set us free from the idolatry of them. That means we are free to give sacrificially and in a radical way. Money and possessions for Christ followers, then, are nothing but ways to advance and further the Kingdom. If we use resources for any other end, we are misusing them.

The recommended passage for this section is Isaiah 61:1-2, where we will see God’s heart for the poor. The alternative passage is Matthew 19:16-22, where Jesus confronts a man and asks him to “sell his possessions.”

The win for this week: navigate a discussion about sacrificial generosity. Jesus calls us to give beyond what the rest of the world expects.

Giving Generously
Read Isaiah 61:1-2

Commentary
When Jesus begins his ministry in Luke 4, he opens the scroll of Isaiah to read this section of Scripture. Jesus’ mission and life, then, is to be seen in light of these verses. Jesus did not just come to speak a secret Spiritual truth of salvation. Salvation is more than that, according to Jesus. He comes also for the poor, captives, and brokenhearted. He faces people in very human situations and meets them where they are at.

What is interesting about verse one is that it begins by a reception of the “Spirit of the Lord.” As an effect of receiving the Spirit, we see the results: To proclaim good news to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, proclaim freedom to the captives, and the release of prisoners. A concern for these groups of people is a decent indication of whether or not the Spirit is moving in a person’s life.

In verse 2, he says he has come to “proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” This refers to the “year of Jubilee” in Leviticus 25. It might even be worth going and checking out Leviticus 25:1-13 and Leviticus 25:35-38. In these passages, we see that the year of Jubilee was designed to be a “reset” button on the social ladder. Those that had to become slaves or poor were to be set back on an equal plane.
Questions

I thought the “Spirit of God” does come until after Jesus? What’s going on here?

What does it mean to “proclaim good news” to the poor?

Who are a people group that you often think of as “brokenhearted”?

What is the “year of the Lord’s favor”?

Why do you think Jesus chose these 2 verses to begin his ministry?

In addition to reading the Isaiah passage, there are a couple of videos that would be really helpful here. We suggest you even play one in group to your students. Watch both in advance to see which you prefer. The first one is Tim Keller on The Blessing of Giving, which is basically a 13 minute clip of a sermon. The other is a little shorter. It is a testimony from a recent college grad who works on Wall Street, and his story of generosity.

Application Questions

Flip over to 1 John 3:16-17 (just a few pages before Revelation). What does this say about giving?

Jesus was homeless (Luke 9:58). We all say we want to “be like Jesus,” so what could this look like in our lives?

The Biblical idea of financial giving seems to be sacrificial, radical giving. We follow a homeless savior who told people “sell all your possessions and give them to the poor.” Yet there are also rich people in the Bible (Lydia in Acts). What does it mean then to give your finances and resources to Kingdom ends?

Many places in the Old Testament and New Testament, the “rich and comfortable” are condemned while the “poor” are lifted up as having special place. Jesus even said “the first will be last and the last will be first.” What does this say about American materialism?

American culture is one that is consumed with getting more and more for ourselves. Making sure that we are comfortable and well off. How does this rub against the teachings of Jesus?
What are cultural struggles that arise with the Biblical ideal of giving sacrificially?

There is a Christian quote that says, “Life is like monopoly. You can acquire as much as you want, but in the end the money and resources all go back in the box.” In other words, you can’t take money to heaven. What does this say about how we should live? If not investing money, what should we invest in?

Should you always give your money to homeless people?

### Accountability

If you’ve been around CSF long, you might have heard us say that “if you want to know where someone’s heart is, look at their checkbook.” That’s not guiltling people into giving, but true. Jesus said: “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

- Where do you invest your treasure? What are the things you consistently spend your money on?
- A famous quote says: “give until it hurts, then give a little more.” Are you modeling sacrificial giving in your life?
- What is one area that you could “downgrade” in? Is there something you could sell or a purchase you could not make to instead give the money away?

### Resource Toolbox

- Recent College Grad takes on Wall Street and lives Sacrificially
- Tim Keller “The Blessing of Giving”
- Mark Batterson on the Rich Young Ruler
- Francis Chan on how he Gives
- Kevin Kinghorn on Giving
- Kevin Kinghorn on Desiring More Things
- Generous Giving
- Irresistible Revolution by Shane Claiborne
- Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger by Ron Sider