

Loving and Giving

Love Like Jesus, Message #6

INTRODUCTION

How would your life change if you knew that your life would be valued by what you let go of rather than what you held on to?

Open your Bible to Matthew chapter 25. We'll read verses 31-40 of this chapter.

BIBLE

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Matthew 25:31-40 KJV

<https://bible.com/bible/1/mat.25.31-40.KJV>

INTRODUCTION

This passage provides applications we can reflect on, respond to, and apply to our lives today. However, we must understand the passage's context to stay right doctrinally and theologically. Matthew chapters 24-25 contain Jesus's Olivet Discourse. It reveals His answer to His disciples about the signs of the end and His coming. Most of what Jesus says in these chapters relates to Jews and connects with the second coming of Jesus. Remember, the second coming of Jesus refers to an eschatological event after the seven-year Tribulation period. When Jesus comes, He will defeat His enemies, bind and

cast the dragon (Satan) into a pit for 1,000 years, and establish His earthly kingdom. The text describes a judgment of nations that takes place at the inauguration of His kingdom. He will judge nations according to their works, specifically how nations treated His brethren, referring, I believe, to Jews though the case could be made that He refers to believers. He will judge based on the love and care shown to needy people.

Jesus did not direct this text to His followers. We do not need to fear the judgment that He describes, so the applications are not in light of it. Yet, the applications from the text reveal how we can love like Jesus and make a difference for Him through our love. We can love and care for people in our communities who are needy. Doing so demonstrates God's love and draws people to Christ.

How can we love like Jesus as we live daily within our communities?

The simple answer give.

How?

1. GIVE ACCORDING TO THE NEED.

APPLICATION

Hungry? Give something to eat. Thirsty? Give something to drink. Need a place to stay? Give a place to stay. Naked? Give clothing. Sick? Visit, care for. In prison? Go to, minister.

Do what God enables you to do to meet the present need.

2. GIVE WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT.

APPLICATION

"When?" That's the question that those commended ask. Yes, "thee" is essential. "When did we see You, Jesus?" "When did we serve You, Jesus?"

Yes, that's important. The whole context presents this aura of feeding the hungry, giving drinks to the thirsty, and so on without thinking about it. Live with open hands - not to receive, but to give. When God's Spirit prompts you, obey.

In the context of giving, if God's Spirit prompts you to give without consideration. It's often not that we can't or shouldn't give, but our conversation with ourselves is usually related to why we shouldn't do what God's Spirit prompts us to do. When God's Spirit prompts, let's obey without giving it a second thought.

3. GIVE WITHOUT EXPECTING SOMETHING IN RETURN.

ILLUSTRATION

This past Friday, I participated in a presentation on substance misuse in Nash and Edgecombe counties. The presentation consisted of the results of a three-year community study and included some recommendations for combatting the issue.

I was impressed that faith-based organizations made up the majority of organizations addressing the issue and that faith or spirituality was ranked the most consistent aspect of those who achieve and maintain sobriety.

However, those doing the presentation discussed the difficulty of bringing organizations to the table on this issue. The common theme that kept people from coming to the table was the “what’s in it for me?” mentality.

APPLICATION

This message is not a substance misuse message but a giving message. However, the mentality that keeps organizations from coming to the table regarding substance misuse is the same mentality that keeps some of us from loving like Jesus. We want to know, “what’s in it for me?”. We desire to give when we have the likelihood of some return.

We need to be different from that. We need to be better than that. Let’s purpose to love like Jesus, to give without any expectation of return when the Spirit prompts us.

4. GIVE WITHOUT ASSESSING THE PERSON’S STATUS.

APPLICATION

“One of the least of these.”

“Least” means the least, insignificant, trivial.

“Jesus’s remarks here call for Christian care to reach all the way to the bottom of the social structure” (Faithlife Study Bible).

Whom do I ignore that Jesus notices? The homeless? Addict? Alcoholic? Prostitute? Abused?

Rather than assessing statuses, let’s give as we’re led when prompted by the Spirit.

5. GIVE JUST LIKE YOU WOULD GIVE TO JESUS.

APPLICATION

Isn't that what Jesus says we are doing? No matter whom you give to or how you give, when you give as the Holy Spirit prompts you, you are giving to Jesus.

CONCLUSION

Your life will be valued by what you let go of rather than what you hold on to.

Orville Rogers' life exemplifies that. Orville, nicknamed the running man because he set numerous world records in running between the ages of 90 and 99, was born in Oklahoma in 1917 and lived to be 101 years old. He trusted Jesus as his Savior when he was ten years old. After high school, he attended and graduated from the University of Oklahoma, where he met his wife. After graduating, he went to the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary but attended only two months before being drafted into the military. He served as a pilot during WW2 and into the Korean Conflict. He flew commercially until he was required to retire at 60. He then, along with his wife, began flying voluntarily for missionaries transporting them and materials worldwide.

The difference he made for Christ may never fully be known, but it didn't begin with the flying he did in retirement. Orville and his wife decided early in their marriage to tithe off their income to the Lord. Later, they felt God wanted them to give more, so they did. They figured out how to live on less to share more of their income with God. Then, again God spoke to their hearts about doing more. They decided to make wise investments to give the growth to God.

What kind of difference did that make?

Over a forty-year career as a pilot, Orville earned \$1,550,000, or an average of \$38,750 per year. It was a modest income. Yet, this couple gave away an estimated \$34,000,000 throughout their lives.

When asked to explain how they did it, Orville said, "I believe the only way we could have accumulated so much wealth was by giving it away. God knew we would give back as much as we possibly could, and He helped us grow and grow in abundance. God was, and continues to be, involved in every aspect of my life, including my finances" (Orville Rogers; as cited in <https://christianindex.org/stories/orville-rogers-one-remarkable-man,1425>).

I never met Orville personally, but that testimony moved me. I want his faith. I want his dedication to Christ. I want his eternal perspective. I want to make a difference by loving God and others as he did.

How about you?