

ALL – IN: Generous Living

This is week five of our All-IN Teaching Series. The gospel of Jesus is a radical realteration of our lifestyles. If you start following Jesus you quickly realize “I can’t go on with life as usual.”

To help you evaluate your own life and commitment to Jesus we wanted to give you a set of questions.

The questions we asked so far have been:

- Week 1: Am I living to please God, or myself? (Heart Attitudes)
- Week 2: Have I given all to God, or am I holding something back? (Practical)
- Week 3: Am I living by faith in what God can do, or in fear of what I might lose? (Intensity & audacity of faith)
- Week 4: Am I using what I have to glorify God? (Practicality & Devotion)
- Week 5: **Am I generous in life, or reluctant in giving? (Generosity & joy of faith)**

The shape of the gospel is the shape of generosity. If you want to know what generosity looks like look at Jesus. He had mad talent. But he chose to give himself constantly to the needs and the development of the people around him.

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.” 1 John 3:16

If we’re becoming like God then we’re becoming generous people like Jesus.

1 Kings 17:7-24

- She’s North of Israel in Phoenician territory
- Young widow, has a young child (vs 22). Single Mom.
- She doesn’t follow his God.
- She a little embittered.

Vs 7-14

Giving more than you expected.

- The widow was put into an awkward position.
- Normally someone would back down after hearing the sob story. But Elijah persists.
- “But first...” meet the need God is placing in front of you.
- Get your eyes off of your pain. Your problems. Your needs.
“Seek first the kingdom of God, and all the rest shall be added unto you...”
- Elijah puts her in a position to go All-In or go home.
- Often times God puts us in a position of risk (exposes us). We want to give out of our security, when we can calculate it and plan it. True generosity gives when there’s risk and there’s lack, because it trusts that God will come through.

- Sometimes you have to give more than you expected.

- Petra Church gave away their first building fund to the mission.
- Hurricane Harvey Relief: people who just lost everything, went out and helped others.
- People were donating their evening to help a family move. It was told the team would be needed from 5-7PM. But it went until 9:30PM.
- Someone recently was helping a family out at the DMV. They got stuck there 5 hours.
- Family that wanted to donate a car, but they had to invest another \$800 into the car just to give it away.
- Those were people that were already generous. But they gave more than expected!
- You never see Jesus complaining about giving above and beyond the call of duty. You never see Jesus tell God the Father – “do I have to?”
- The disciples were exhausted. Emotionally spent. “Lord send the crowds away, so they can get food...” Jesus tells them, “You give them something to eat.” He always ministered out of abundance. Joyful. Thankful abundance.
- Jesus gave because of the Joy set before him.
- The joy of the Lord is our strength.
- Joy is a renewable energy source. It will enable you to give more than you thought possible. Love someone you thought was unlovable.

Vs 15-18

- Angry at herself. She’s angry at God. And therefore she’s angry at Elijah.
- In their culture they associated tragedy with God’s punishment. Her husband’s loss may have been attributed to her sin.
- She’s may be living with the accusations in her ear.
- She doesn’t seem to deny the charges.
- God put her in the position where she was forced to relate to this man that I really don’t think she liked. But he’s helping her out. (I’m not talking about a dysfunctional relationship)

Relating to people outside your circle.

- Have you ever been forced to relate to someone you didn’t like, or understand?
- You go to work every day and work next to that person who’s thirty years younger than you. Millennial.
- Engineer verses the Creatives
- Lancaster County verses outsider...
- Maybe it’s your own child who has grown up and become so different from you or what you thought they’d be...
- **Matthew 5:43-48** Outsider verses insider
- Make friends in other camps. Be proactive.
- The people you’re uncomfortable with are exactly the people God wants you to learn to appreciate.
- The people you don’t like are the people that are going to help you grow.
- The people you are most uncomfortable with, are the people you need to spend time with.
- Jesus brought an ultra left winger and an ultra right winger on his same team.

- Jesus is always leaving the 99 sheep to go after the 1. Building bridges. Expanding his connections.
- Intentional Christian Community doesn't exist for your comfort. Small groups aren't a place where all your favorite friends hang out. It's a place we challenge each other to grow.
- Your marriage doesn't exist for your happiness.
- If you don't have friction in your relationships, if you're never put into a position where you're stretched and uncomfortable, you're not going wide enough, or you're not going deep enough. (I'm not talking about picking fights. I am talking about not avoiding them.)
- Some of you have helped homeless people in the area. Helping woman find an apartment, being kind to the person that no one else is reaching out to.
- **Generous living means relating to people outside our circle.**

Sometimes Generous Living means

Carrying someone else's burden with them.

- Elijah carries the boy to his bed. He lets this family into his heart. He's emotionally invested.
- Sometimes we like the idea of saving the world, but we want to do it from a distance. Kind of like a doctor, we want to keep this kind of on a professional level.
- "Well I have an opening, I can fit you into my life at 2:30 next Thursday."
- There's a place for that. Each of us have to discern boundaries with the HS.
- But there's also a time when it takes a full investment of self. You invite their brokenness into your personal/intimate space, and you're going to let them get close, and you're going to carry their pain in your heart, you stretch yourself on it. – You might be disappointed. You might get hurt. They might take your money and run.
- Some of our addictions coaches and parents who helping people come out of addictions. They are spending an evening with men or 3 women.
- Sometimes dogs bite the hand that feeds them.
- I'm so proud of our coaches and regional care leaders and small group leaders and mentors, and counselors, because it is not easy dealing with broken and messy people.
- **Verse 21 – "Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times"**
- Elijah could have stopped after one time. No one would have faulted him.
- *"Well we gave it a good go...we did the best we could."*
- There are times when we have to learn to let go and trust the Lord. You can make that decision for someone else.
- And there are times when the Holy Spirit rises inside of us and says "I will not take no for an answer. This is not God's will." Ie. This sickness is not God's will. This

Elijah prays 3x.

One chapter later God uses Elijah's tenacity to save a nation. Don't give up after praying 6x.

Prophecy:

- This morning, some of you need to hear this... “Let go, and trust the Lord. Keep praying, but trust the Lord.”
- And some of you need to hear this...”don’t let go. God’s going to use you to breath life into someone. You’re going to give more than you expected. It’s going to cost you something. You’re going to relate to people you never thought you’d have to. It’ll get messy. Don’t you dare give up.

God’s going to you use your prayers to send rain to a nation one day.

Closing:

Unused Notes:

Entrepreneur – Toms donates a pair of shoes for every.

1. Mark Fisher flying his plane
2. Bill Hurst donating his Saturdays for chicken BBQ
3. Praying until you see a breakthrough.
4. Regina Deel inviting family into her home to live with her for 3 months.

Story from Mark Fisher

Mark's mailman asked him about his subscription to Airline magazine.

Man asked if Mark would consider flying his aging father. He agreed.

The father used to fly when he was younger. Months later Mark got a call.

Grandfather had stage 4 cancer with months to live. The family asked him if

he had any final requests. Yes. He wanted to fly again. Mark agreed to take him up one more time.

So the whole family of 20 people showed up at the airport and celebrated. (At first Mark thought all 20 people wanted to go up in the air.)

The son reached out to Mark and thanked him for the life impact it had on the family. Mark views this as an outreach opportunity.