

Lesson 5

Love That Meets Needs

Class Objectives

- **True love does what it can even when someone else's needs are overwhelming, Matthew 6.1-15.**

We must be willing to yield what little we have to the service of Christ, trusting that we will receive back in abundance.

- **True love looks out for the interests of others, 1 Corinthians 13.4-7, see especially 5b.**

Pride kills the spirit of giving that Jesus commands us to have.

Think About It

What type of heart did Jesus have to meeting the needs of people?

What holds most of us back from having this same type of heart as we see the needs of people today?

What the Savior Said

John 6:1–15 (CSB)

THE FOURTH SIGN: FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

⁶ After this, Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). ² A huge crowd was following him because they saw the signs that he was performing by healing the sick. ³ Jesus went up a mountain and sat down there with his disciples.

⁴ Now the Passover, a Jewish festival, was near. ⁵ So when Jesus looked up and noticed a huge crowd coming toward him, he asked Philip, "Where will we buy bread so that these people can eat?" ⁶ He asked this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do.

⁷ Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread wouldn't be enough for each of them to have a little."

⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹ "There's a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish—but what are they for so many?"

¹⁰ Jesus said, "Have the people sit down."

There was plenty of grass in that place; so they sat down. The men numbered about five thousand.

¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves, and after giving thanks he distributed them to those who were seated—so also with the fish, as much as they wanted.

¹² When they were full, he told his disciples, “Collect the leftovers so that nothing is wasted.” ¹³ So they collected them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces from the five barley loaves that were left over by those who had eaten.

¹⁴ When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, “This truly is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” ¹⁵ Therefore, when Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

The feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle that is recorded in all four of the gospels ... therefore it is regarded as significant and something we should dwell upon. We need to learn the principle that **love does what it can, even when someone else's needs are more than we can possibly meet on our own.**

It was Jeremiah who said, “Oh, Lord God! You yourself made the heavens and earth by your great power and with your outstretched arm. Nothing is too difficult for you,” Jeremiah 32.17. In our text we learn that multitudes are following Jesus ... the majority have a superficial interest in Him. But that doesn't matter to our Lord who, *had compassion on them for they were like sheep without a shepherd*, Mark 6.34a. *Jesus began to teach them many things*, Mark 6.35b. Evidently, He went on for some time. It grew late, and there was no food. There may have been as many as 20,000 men, women, and children present.

What is the first answer the disciples come up with to solve the problem of meeting the crowd's needs? Do you think this might give us a clue as to who or what they were more concerned about?

What might we see when we begin to look at the needy person through the eyes of Jesus?

What is an important lesson we can see as we contrast Philip's *for each of them have to get a little*, 6.7, and Andrew's *what are they for so many*, 6.9, with 6.11: *he distributed them ... as much as they wanted*? How does Philippians 4.19 fit in here?

Christ intends to teach us that He will use inadequate people who yield their inadequate resources to Him. What will you yield to Him? What has the Lord given you?

A Passage to Explore

1 Corinthians 13:4–7 (CSB)

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, ⁵is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. ⁶Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. ⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

In this section, we want to focus on the second part of 13.5: Love *is not self-seeking*. If we are going to meet needs, we must understand that **true love looks out for the interests of others**. Some of the other translations say:

- Love *does not insist on its own way*, ESV.
- Love *does not seek its own*, NASB95.
- Love *is not self-seeking*, NIV.

At the heart of meeting needs is the attitude of selflessness. We have been given so much. *What do you have that you didn't receive*, 1 Corinthians 4.7? Are we willing to share of our physical and monetary blessings? Are we more concerned about our personal rights than how to help others? Are we content to use the things we have been given for ourselves ... instead of to the benefit of others?

In what way does pride and selfishness kill the love required to meet needs? How can we eliminate selfish pride?

The inscription on a tombstone in a small English village reads,

Here lies a miser who lived for himself,
and cared for nothing but gathering wealth.

Now where he is or how he fares,
nobody knows and nobody cares.

In contrast, a plain tombstone in the courtyard at St. Paul's Cathedral in London reads, "Sacred to the memory of General Charles George Gordon, who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, his heart to God."¹

What is a lesson you can take away from the contrast presented in this story?

¹ MacArthur, John F., Jr. *1 Corinthians*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984, p. 345.

Now, read 1 Corinthians 10.33. In the immediate context Paul is speaking about his desire to save others, but what is the general principle found in this verse that connects with this lesson? How does this coincide with 1 Corinthians 13.5b?

Life Application

This week, make some time each day to spend a few moments alone with God. Every day, we will consider how much we have been blessed by God and how that should inspire us to look for opportunities to give. Take your time with each passage(s) so you can concentrate on what is being said. Use the questions as a springboard for your positive thoughts throughout your day.

Monday

Read Philippians 2.3-4. *Love looks out for the interests of others.* What are some of the difficulties you have experienced in putting these verses into practice? How are you addressing those things?

What is one thing you can do today to apply this verse when it comes to meeting the need of someone else?

Tuesday

Read Romans 12.9-13. *What is genuine love?* (See the ESV rendering.) What are the things listed in v. 9b-13 that demonstrate *genuine love*?

What are some things you can do to show honor to others in our church family?

Who is someone that you can pray for a specific need they may have today?

Wednesday

Read Luke 6.38. What does this passage mean to you?

How can this passage inspire you as you consider how to meet the needs of others?

Thursday

Read Acts 20.35. What is the principle in this verse?

What encouraging thing can you do today to *help the weak*?

Friday

Read James 1.27. What is *pure and undefiled religion*?

How can we demonstrate *agape* love toward orphans and widows?

Who are some widows/widowers/orphans/needy people you can identify and encourage and help?