

Sermon Title: Deuteronomy: Faithfulness and Fellowship, Part XIX 10.29.2023

Themes: Loving God, loving others, faithful generosity, and being a witness for Christ. Video devotionals are at christforlife.life. trinitycg.org has live-streaming and sermon notes.

Question of the week: Are you a witness?

Sermon Points:

1. Be a witness. This requires discernment. **Acts 1:4–8** ⁴While He was together with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "This," He said, "is what you heard from Me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶So when they had come together, they asked Him, "Lord, are You restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?" ⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." No one is too pathetic for God's grace and no one is so perfect that they don't need His grace.

2. Be generous. This requires discernment. **Deuteronomy 15:7–11.** It is true that there will never cease to be poor people. Yet, the much deeper message is that God expects His people to never cease to be generous. The command isn't to solve the poverty problem. God did not command His people to end global poverty. He commands us to end stinginess. God is not telling us to end poverty in the *world*, but to end stinginess in our *heart*. One way we do that is by being generous. Listen to the words of Jesus and see the difference between sacrificial generosity and self-centered stinginess. When we're generous God gets the glory, when we're stingy we go for the gold. **Matthew 26:6–16.** The point is not that there will *always be poverty*, or that we are expected to solve this serious issue (because poverty is relative), but that we are expected to *always be generous*. When we are not generous, we are either stingy or greedy. Why does God bless us when we solve the stingy/greedy problem and not the poverty problem? Poverty is the fallen *world's* problem, stinginess/greed is your *heart's* problem! I cannot solve the *world's* poverty problem in my lifetime, but I can address my heart problem today. Give generously for God's glory. When I give expecting the problem of poverty to be solved, I will get donor fatigue. When I am faithfully generous, I won't stop giving because *it hurts*. I will continue to give because *it is right!* When we make sharing the Gospel about solving the lostness problem we grow weary when we are rejected. When we make sharing the Gospel an obedience issue, we continue with joy regardless of the obstacles. We don't share the Gospel until *it hurts*, we share the Gospel because *it is right!* Why? Because Jesus is our greatest treasure and we want others to know Him. Thus, when I give, I solve *my* problem even though I will never solve the *world's* problem. And, what Jesus said is true, this story has been told for 2,000 years!

3. Biblical justice. This requires discernment. Appointing judges and officials. **Deuteronomy 16:18–20** ¹⁸"Appoint judges and officials for your tribes in all your towns the LORD your God is giving you. They are to judge the people with righteous judgment. ¹⁹Do not deny justice or show partiality to anyone. Do not accept a bribe, for it blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. ²⁰Pursue justice and justice alone, so that you will live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you. A goal of discipleship is for us to be *quite comfortable* being out of our *comfort zone*. Stinginess and injustice are intertwined. The message is clear: Be generous and pursue justice. That is what the people of God are supposed to do.

Invitation: Lord, help me to see where You're working, be generous, and testify about Your goodness!