

CoreGroup Guide | Much Given. Much Expected. – Part 2

Written by Melissa Ross and Denee Bowers

Welcome

Last week, Matt recounted how our church has grown over the past 19 years, and the gratitude we have for our church community. In CoreGroups, we discussed Luke's parable of the talents which reminds us that, to those who are given much, much is expected. Keeping in mind our gratitude for what God provides in our lives, we pivot this week to focus on what God can do in us to make us more generous people, both as individuals and as a church community.

Opening Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for bringing each of us to this group and for inviting us into a relationship with you. Examples of generosity in your life and your words are both inspiring and challenging. Use our time together today to help us understand you and mold our hearts to reflect your priorities and values. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Ice Breaker

Who is your "go to" person for life advice?

The Head

There are some situations in life where it seems natural to seek wisdom from God, but financial decisions aren't always one of them. This week we are looking at two different scriptures that highlight conversations Jesus has with two different rich men – an unnamed rich ruler and a tax collector named Zacchaeus. Both narratives remind us that Jesus has a lot to say about our money. Jesus presents us with a challenge to reconsider our relationship with money, no matter our stage of life.

Luke 18:18-24

18 A certain ruler asked Jesus, "Good Teacher, what must I do to obtain eternal life?"

19 Jesus replied, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except the one God. 20 You know the commandments: Don't commit adultery. Don't murder. Don't steal. Don't give false testimony. Honor your father and mother."

21 Then the ruler said, "I've kept all of these things since I was a boy."

22 When Jesus heard this, he said, "There's one more thing. Sell everything you own and distribute the money to the poor. Then you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me." 23 When he heard these words, the man became sad because he was extremely rich.

24 When Jesus saw this, he said, "It's very hard for the wealthy to enter God's kingdom!"

Luke 19:1-10

1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through town. 2 A man there named Zacchaeus, a ruler among tax collectors, was rich. 3 He was trying to see who Jesus was, but, being a short man, he couldn't because of the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. 5 When Jesus came to that spot, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay in your home today."

6 So Zacchaeus came down at once, happy to welcome Jesus.

7 Everyone who saw this grumbled, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

8 Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone, I repay them four times as much."

9 Jesus said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this household because he too is a son of Abraham. 10 The Human One came to seek and save the lost."

- What do you think the rich man is seeking when he asks Jesus about eternal life?
- How would you explain Jesus' response to the ruler's question?
- What do you notice about the attitude of the rich ruler toward Jesus? How does that compare to the attitude of Zacchaeus?
- In what ways were the actions of Zacchaeus pleasing to God?

The Heart

It's easy to look at wealthy people and feel like we aren't that rich. As the Companion Guide notes, "most people living in the United States are among the top 20% of the wealthiest people in the world" (p. 26). In these passages, Jesus signals that wealth can be a detriment to faith. In fact, he notes that "It's very hard for the wealthy to enter God's kingdom!" (Luke 18:24).

- How does it make you feel when Jesus tells the young man to "sell everything you own" (Luke 18:22)? What does "everything" mean to you?
- What follow-up questions would you ask Jesus based on his conversations with these wealthy men and your own life experience?
- What's the difference between performative or obligatory giving versus giving motivated by generosity? What happens in your heart when you practice generosity?

The Hands

It can be easy to dismiss Jesus' advice in the passage as being too extreme. A clear takeaway, though, is that we need to cultivate an attitude of generosity. Like other faith practices, living generously may feel counter-cultural, but it can become more natural with practice.

- How have you seen generosity contribute to growth in your spiritual life?
- What new spiritual action or attitude of generosity will you adopt this week to be the hands and feet of Christ in our community (or the world)?

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for the opportunity that we have to gather and discuss your words and their impact on our lives. Keep our hearts aligned with the priorities of your Kingdom, and help us to emulate you by living generously. Amen.

Additional Resources

Much Given, Much Expected Companion Guide, week 2, pp. 26-27.

From Accumulation to Abundance, [Mammon Illness](#), Center for Action and Contemplation

References

Past Gathering Sermons:

- [Why do we do this? Part 2: Offering](#)
- [Open to Generosity, Week 2 \(Luke 19:1-10 and Luke 18:18-23\)](#)
- [Say Yes! Series](#)

From Pastor Charity – Find Hope and Support This Season

Two ways to connect and care for yourself and others:

The Underground Recovery Community

For anyone in recovery, their loved ones, and spiritual seekers who need a safe, grace-filled space. Wednesdays at 6 p.m., beginning October 22nd.

Serve with us! Looking for folks to help in childcare and chair set-up, which begins at 5pm. Spread the word! Look for FB posts on The Gathering page and share to your timeline as well. It could be a source of hope for someone.

👉 Learn more & sign up here: <https://gatheringnow.org/recovery>

Holiday Wellness Groups

From Simplifying Christmas and Money Management to Grief Support and Navigating Family Drama, find peace and presence this holiday season. You can be in a CoreGroup and attend a Wellness Group. Plus they're open to the public so share with friends and family. Be a source of light during a season that for some can feel gray.

👉 Explore holiday groups » www.gatheringnow.org/wellness

Let's walk together toward healing, hope, and wholeness.