

Exodus: Journey of Fulfillment

A Calling to a Generous Life

Week 1

Sermon Date 10/29/2017

MY STORY

- 1) What was your takeaway from last week's study?
- 2) From last week's study, what was the difference between a slave mentality and the thinking of the people entering the Promised Land?

QUICK REVIEW

- 3) Upon reviewing your notes from Sunday's teaching, was there anything that caught your attention?

The Goal

This week we will be unpacking the idea of living a *generous life*. We will begin by reading about the Israelites and the commands that God gives them as they are about to enter the Promised Land. Then we will revisit a thought from Week 5 about how to keep the first thing first. Then we will dream about what could be. Many times when the topic of generous living comes up people immediately assume the worst. Please receive this as *encouragement* for you as the leader and to your group as a whole. God wants to give you a fulfilling life, and the people who experience this the most are the ones who are the most generous. The Bible speaks about our finances and the love of money more than any other topic. How we manage the resources God has given us matters—it can be the difference, for many of us, of living in the land between rather than living in the Promised Land. In the land between we guard the little we think we have; in the Promised Land we ask, “Why do I have so much?”

DIGGING DEEPER

Deuteronomy 25:1-11 (NLT)

“When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you as a special possession and you have conquered it and settled there, ² put some of the first produce from each crop you harvest into a basket and bring it to the designated place of worship—the place the Lord your God chooses for his name to be honored. ³ Go to the priest in charge at that time and say to him, ‘With this gift I acknowledge to the Lord your God that I have entered the land he swore to

our ancestors he would give us.’⁴ The priest will then take the basket from your hand and set it before the altar of the Lord your God.

⁵“You must then say in the presence of the Lord your God, ‘My ancestor Jacob was a wandering Aramean who went to live as a foreigner in Egypt. His family arrived few in number, but in Egypt they became a large and mighty nation. ⁶ When the Egyptians oppressed and humiliated us by making us their slaves, ⁷ we cried out to the Lord, the God of our ancestors. He heard our cries and saw our hardship, toil, and oppression. ⁸ So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and powerful arm, with overwhelming terror, and with miraculous signs and wonders. ⁹ He brought us to this place and gave us this land flowing with milk and honey! ¹⁰ And now, O Lord, I have brought you the first portion of the harvest you have given me from the ground.’ Then place the produce before the Lord your God, and bow to the ground in worship before him. ¹¹ Afterward you may go and celebrate because of all the good things the Lord your God has given to you and your household. Remember to include the Levites and the foreigners living among you in the celebration.ⁱ

- 4) From the passage above, what were the Israelites commanded to do when they had conquered and settled in the land God had promised?

Bring the first fruits as an offering to God.

- 5) God is trying to teach the Israelites generosity. How has God modeled this principle to the Israelites?

By giving them the land and providing an overabundance. The land of “milk and honey” means a place that was good and full of resources.

- 6) After the Israelites bring their offering to the Lord, what were they then supposed to do and who were they supposed to include?
- 7) Why were they supposed to celebrate?

In the Promised Land God set aside a place for each of the twelve tribes of Israel to live except for one. The tribe of the Levites had a special job. They were to be priests before the Lord, but they received no land to grow crops on to support themselves. So God instituted a system for them to be cared for; this was in the form of tithes and offerings. The first fruits were to be given to the Lord as provision for the Priests. There was more to the system, but this was the basic concept.

- 8) Why do you think the Lord commands the Israelites to include the Levites and foreigners in their celebration?

Without the people being obedient and generous to the Levites they would have had no possessions or way to provide for themselves.

TAKING IT HOME

Deuteronomy 6:4-5(NLT)

⁴“Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. ⁵ And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.”ⁱⁱ

- 9) In Week 5 we touched on the previous verse. What is one of the ways we show our love to God regarding generosity?

We can give God the first fruits of His blessing to us. This means giving 10% off the top.

Malachi 3:10-11 (NLT)

¹⁰Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! ¹¹Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.ⁱⁱⁱ

10) From this passage, what are we supposed to bring into the storehouse? And how much are we supposed to bring?

11) What does God say we are to do to Him?

Test Him for His provision. This is the only place God challenges people to test Him.

12) What does God promise to do for us if we test Him?

13) Have you ever tested God with this? What was your outcome?

14) From Pastor Craig's closing thoughts on perspective, which one speaks to you the most?

- A grateful heart asks, "How do I honor God with my life?"
- He is not taking from me. I am returning an intentional portion back to Him.
- I want to be a good steward of what God has put in my hands: Time, Talents and TREASURES.
- My obedience has an eternal return!
- God's perspective is that He wants to BLESS you...give you more.

Years ago, when I was young, I was really inconsistent with my giving. I was in a Bible study with a group of men, and the topic of tithing came up. I was honest about my fear of not having enough. All of the men in the group shared with me similar experiences of how God always provided for them when they were faithful. I was inspired to try. Fast forward several years when my wife and I were newly married and money was tight. We made a commitment that no matter what our giving would be first, and we have never been in need. God has always given us enough. I believe because of our faithfulness He has put even more into our hands so that we are able to be even more generous. Our experience, and everyone I talk to who has ever really tested God in this regard, has found Him to be faithful.

CHAIR TIME TOOL

Read Matthew 25:14-30 about the parable of the talents, and answer the following questions.

15) What were the master's servants entrusted with?

16) What did the first two servants do with the money they received from their master?

17) How did the master reward their faithfulness?

18) What would the master have done to the servant he gave one talent to if the servant had tried to invest it? This can be inferred by how he treated the first two servants.

ⁱ Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2013), Dt 26:1–11.

ⁱⁱ Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2013),

ⁱⁱⁱ Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2013), Mal 3:10–12.