

LIFE Group Leader Handout

October 6, 2019

Compassion on Display

Pastor Michael O'Connor

Scripture--2 Corinthians 8:1-9

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. 6 Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. 7 But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.

8 I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Main Idea--Jesus Leads the Way in Showing the Grace of Giving

The Need in Jerusalem--was extreme

Why not just tell them to trust God to supply all their needs?

- It was not a load but a burden (Galatians 6)
- It is more blessed to give than to receive
- It unifies the church

The Macedonian Gift

- It was not the first one--they gave themselves first to the Lord and to spiritual leaders
- A Giving Caveat--the need was real
- Motivated by Grace--their poverty could excuse them, but they begged to participate

The Secret--

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9

Application--

- What has God shown you about the relationship between grace and giving?
- Can you track changes in your attitude toward wealth since coming to Christ?
- Did God show new frontiers to you about giving motivated by grace?

Signing Your Life Away

*Being a Small-Group Leader means signing away your old life
and taking on the new life of a shepherd.*

By Sue Skalicky

My signature becomes my word when I sign checks, tax forms, petitions, applications, letters or cards. By signing my name I am saying that I am good for the money I am promising, or that I believe in a cause, or that all the above information about me is true. When I sign my name on letters or cards to loved ones I am saying that I care about them and I am committed to them.

Recently, as I was forming my signature my eye was drawn, not to my name, but to the hand that was creating it. My thoughts turned to the endless accounts of Jesus' hands touching lepers, tax collectors and prostitutes. He touched children with protective love and the hurting with compassion. His hands healed eyes, delivered people from demons and helped those who were once dead stand to their feet. After His hands broke bread and washed the feet of his skittish disciples, they caressed the head of the disciple whom He loved. His hands were raised to His Father as He pleaded with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane then outstretched them to touch the wounded ear of one who had come to arrest him. His hands never once struck back as He was mercilessly flogged and beaten. He carried His own cross to Calvary with hands that were stained with His own blood.

And then His hands were pierced for the work of my hands. On occasion my hands have pointed out the differences, weaknesses and failures of others and, begrudgingly, have served others with a self-seeking heart. Am I using my hands to touch a hurting world or to hold closed the door of my heart, refusing to get involved? I am convinced that touching such a dark world with the hopeful light of Christ means trusting Jesus as I reach out and touch others.

In Matthew 25:40, Jesus shares the foundation of all evangelism when He says, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

Being a small group leader means signing away your old life and taking on the new life of a shepherd. What can Jesus' signature look like?

- A handwritten note of encouragement to someone that is struggling with a tough issue.
- Offering to pray with someone who needs the hope of an intercessor.
- A small anonymous gift left on the doorstep of a neighbor or friend's home.
- An uplifting message of thankfulness and encouragement left on an answering machine when a friend, family member or neighbor is at work or out of town.
- Inviting someone to go for a walk, shopping, out for lunch or a cup of coffee.
- Stopping by a friend or family member's workplace just to say "hi!"

Jesus' signature on my life was written with His pain, His blood and His love. His name written across my life means that He is good for what He has promised, and that He believes in me and that all that He has said is true. His name boldly proclaims that He loves me and is fully committed to me.

By the work of my hands I can either make His signature clear to a world in dire need of a Savior or cloud their perception of who He is. Now, when I sign my name, I give thanks to a Savior that allowed His hands to be pierced for the work of my own. Is Jesus' signature visible in your life?