

Sermon & Bible Study Guide

World Hunger

October 2006

Sermon Outline

The Ministry of the Open Hand

Emphasis Passage: Deuteronomy 15:10-11 (Click 1)

Focal Verse: Verse 11

Context

Deuteronomy is a restatement of the Law that Moses gave to the people a short time before his death. In Deuteronomy 14:22-15:11, Moses addressed the issue of money: the tithe, the forgiveness of debt, and aid to the poor. He made it clear throughout this whole section that the underlying attitude throughout this whole section is to be one of generosity. The Israelites were not to be a tight-fisted people because God had been so generous with them. When they encountered someone in need, they were to give to them willingly even when they knew they would not get anything back. Stinginess would meet with God's disfavor while openhandedness toward the poor and afflicted would result in God's continued generosity toward them.

Introduction

Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines a generous person as someone who is "characterized by a noble or forbearing spirit: animated by or exhibiting high ideals : MAGNANIMOUS, LOFTY, BENEVOLENT, KINDLY . . . LIBERAL OR REFLECTING LIBERALITY IN GIVING" [Philip Babcock Gove, editor, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, Publishers, 1969), 945-946]. In other words, generosity is, first of all, a state of mind and then an act that emanates from it—a definition that fully conforms to the teaching of God's Word.

Christians are to be generous because of the magnanimity and generosity expressed by God toward us in so many ways—especially in giving His Son to redeem us and His Spirit to indwell us and empower us. Christianity is not just a changing of a person's emotions, but also a changing of the mind. In fact, the word "repentance" in the Greek means a change of mind—one that leads to a change of direction. But a person's direction will not change until the mind is transformed (Rom. 12:1-2). Christianity is a complete transformation of a life of self-centeredness to one of God-centeredness and, as a result, others-centeredness.

The question is: how does this all play out in the area of World Hunger? What is to be our response to the needs that we see around us? Though the context of this passage of

Scripture was directed to the Israelites who were under the Law, the principles apply to all.

- I. **We are to assist others generously (10, 11).** (CC1, CC2, CC3) (**Clicks 2-3**)
 - A. Giving generously does not mean holding onto what we have, but opening our hand to those in need (v. 8). (WS7, WS8, CC4) (**Click 4**)
 - B. Giving generously to other is the same as giving to the Lord (Matt. 25:35-44). (**Click 5**)
 - C. Giving generously to others will be rewarded, though that should not be our motivation in giving (Luke 6:38). (**Click 6-7**)
 - D. We are to give expecting nothing in return (v. 9). (**Click 8**)

- II. **We are to assist others with the right attitude (10).** (WS7, WS8, CC5, CC6, CC7) (**Click 9-10**)
 - A. Two attitudes work against open-handed giving: hard-heartedness and tight-fistedness (v. 7). (**Click 11**)
 - B. Giving, if done out of a “stingy heart,” will not be blessed by God. (**Click 12**)
 - C. Giving with the right attitude is illustrated by Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5. (**Click 13**)
 1. He says the Macedonians gave even when they were in “deep poverty” themselves. (**Click 14-15**)
 2. They begged Paul to allow them to give. That’s giving with the right attitude. (**Click 16**)

- III. **We are to assist others because needs are always present (11).** (WS1, WS2, WS3, WS9, WS10, WS11, WS12, CC5, CC8) (**Click 17-18**)
 - A. Jesus reminded us that there would always be poor people (Matt. 26:11). (**Click 19**)
 - B. Every generation has its poor people. Though some create their own poverty by their actions, many are poor through no control of their own. (**Click 20**)
 - C. The earthquakes, hurricanes, and the tsunami in Southeast Asia over the last two years have reduced hundreds of thousands, if not millions, to poverty beyond their control. (**Click 21-22**)
 - D. It has recently been estimated that the recovery of the Gulf Coast region alone may take 25 years. (**Click 23**)
 - E. Those people must have physical, as well as monetary, assistance. Disaster Relief teams will be needed for a long time to come. (**Click 24-25**)

- IV. **We are to assist others because God commands it (11b).** (WS4, WS5, WS6, CC9) (**Click 26-27**)
 - A. God says we “must willingly open [our] hand” to those who are afflicted and poor. (**Click 28**)
 - B. His words are not optional—they are a command to be obeyed.

- (Click 29)
- C. God repeatedly commanded that those in need be provided for (Lev. 19:10, 33; 23:22; 25:35-38; Deut. 24:14, 19-21). (Click 30-31)
 - D. The implication of Jesus' words in Matthew 25:35-44 is that those commands are still applicable to us today. (Click 32)

Conclusion

We have all seen the devastation caused by the catastrophic weather conditions in this country and around the world in the last couple of years. The pictures have been burned into our minds as we've watched the news coverage of these terrible tragedies. The upshot of all this is that there may be more need now than at any other time. We have seen Southern Baptists respond to those needs through Disaster Relief work. But the work is not over. It will take not only manpower but financial help to meet those needs along with many others not even related to those tragedies. There will always be needs that we must respond to. The question is: will we do it?

WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

1. Pray for those who minister among the hungry.
2. Learn about Southern Baptist hunger ministries in your area and link with them.
3. Involve your family and neighbors in hunger ministry activities.
4. Promote Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund giving in your church.
5. Train and volunteer to work in Disaster Relief.