



GPS GUIDE: MARCH 26, 2023 G r o w . P r a y . S t u d y .

Series: Discipleship Pathway

Sermon: Joyful Generosity

Monday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment. Today you are invited to practice breathing as you read the text from Sunday. What questions are stirred in your spirit? What might God be revealing through the words of these passages? Sit with your question as you breathe deeply.

Luke 15:1-2, 11-24

Meanwhile, the tax collectors and the "sinners" were all gathering around Jesus to listen to his teaching, at which the Pharisees and the religious scholars grumbled, "This person welcomes sinners and eats with them!"

Jesus shared a parable saying, "A man had two sons. The younger of them said to their father, 'Give me the share of the estate that is coming to me.' So the father divided up the property between them. Some days later, the younger son gathered up his belongings and went off to a distant land. Here he squandered all his money on loose living. "After everything was spent, a great famine broke out in the land, and the son was in great need. So he went to a landowner, who sent him to a farm to take care of the pigs. The son was so hungry that he could have eaten the husks that were fodder for the pigs, but no one made a move to give him anything. Coming to his senses at last, he said, 'How many hired hands at my father's house have more than enough to eat, while here I am starving! I'll quit and go back home and say, 'I've sinned against God and against you; I no longer deserve to be called one of your children. Treat me like one of your hired hands.'" With that, the younger son set off for home. "While still a long way off, the father caught sight of the returning child and was deeply moved. The father ran out to meet him, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, 'I've sinned against God and against you; I no longer deserve to be called one of your children.' But his father said to one of the workers, 'Quick! Bring out the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Take the calf we've been

fattening and butcher it. Let's eat and celebrate! This son of mine was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and now he's found!' And the celebration began.

Prayer: Breathe in... and breathe out... inhale... exhale... Amen.

Tuesday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment.

The labyrinth has traditionally been an opportunity to embark on a journey with God. You'll notice the labyrinth is different from a maze. Having only one way in and one way out, it is impossible to get lost. The labyrinth's path moves you towards the center—towards the heart of God—and the return journey.

Below you will find a finger labyrinth, meant to be traced with your finger or colored with pen, pencil, or crayon. You can download a copy to print or trace it on your screen.

Today as you practice prayer using the labyrinth you will journey through three stages:

Stage 1: Remembering Your Generosity

- As you make your way through the first spiral meditate on ways that you spend your time generously.
- As you make your way through the second spiral meditate on ways that you use your talents/spiritual generously.
- As you make your way through the third spiral meditate on ways that you use your financial resources generously.

Stage 2: Giving Joyful Thanks to God

As you reach the center of the three spirals take time to stop and offer your thanks to God

- for the time God has given you.
- For the talents/gifts God has given you.
- For the resources God has given you.

Stage 3: Growing in Your Generosity

- As you make your way back out through the first spiral meditate on ways God might be challenging you to grow in your generosity of time.
- As you make your way out of the second spiral meditate on ways God might be challenging you to grow in sharing your talents/gifts.
- As you make your way out of the third spiral meditate on ways God might be challenging you to grow in your generosity of your financial resources.

Wednesday

Generosity is a biblical principal found throughout both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus teaches about generosity as a way of discipleship.

Did you know that scientists have found that generosity actually benefits our physical and mental health. It can reduce stress, enhance your sense of purpose, fight depression and even increase your lifespan. Each day presents hundreds of opportunities to be generous to others. By making generosity part of your daily life you will do both yourself and others a word of good.

Today you have the opportunity to practice joyful generosity. Make a commitment today to deliberately look for ways to be generous. Here are some sample ideas:

- Give someone a compliment
- Share something with someone else
- Pay for someone's meal without them knowing it.
- Spend time with someone who needs your company
- Let someone go in front of you in line
- Do a chore for someone (family chore, chore for a neighbor, co-worker, etc.)
- Spend time teaching someone something such as the rules to a game, how to use
- Put a shopping cart away for someone
- Hold a door open for someone

Family Activity: Giving Jar

Giving money is one of the first things people think of when they think of generosity. Decorate a jar with a sign that says "Giving Jar" and place it somewhere you will see it often. Have everyone drop loose change in the jar until it is full. Then vote on who to give the money to. You may choose to donate it to a local charity, or spend it to purchase something for someone in need, give it to your church for a special need, or spend it to take someone special out for a meal to show them how much they are appreciated. If your children receive an allowance, asking them to set aside 10% to put in the giving jar is a great way to teach them to be generous consistently.

Thursday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment.

When we offer God our confession, we join the beautiful work of reconciliation, that God wants for us

Today, offer this prayer of confession.

Prayer of confession

Generous God
whose giving knows neither measure nor end,
We confess that all too often
we have kept our own hearts, hands and minds
firmly closed.

Forgive us for those times
when our own wants and wishes
have filled the horizon to the exclusion of all else,

and made us blind and deaf
to the needs and concerns of others.

Forgive us for those moments
when the fear that sharing what we have
will lead to our own impoverishment,
has kept us silent and still
when those around us are in need.

Forgive us for those situations
when seeing only a problem
rather than daring to dream a solution,
has left us fettered and powerless
where we might have been building your Kingdom.

Forgive us life giving God.
Help us to transcend self-centeredness, greed, and fear
and always to feel, think and act
as those who know the hope
that is rooted in the generous giving of Jesus
who taught that where our treasure is
there our hearts will be also.

In these moments of confession as our hearts are opened to more fully receive God's
desires for us
we are set free.
Free to love boldly.
Free to share joyfully.
Free to offer the grace that we have been freely given.
In God's goodness we are forgiven that we may be transformed to live generously.
Amen.

Friday: Read Matthew 6:19-21

Jesus talked about money a lot! But not because he wanted people to give to any particular cause. He talked about money because he cared about us and because he knew that what we do with our money affects who we are spiritually. Many people misquote Jesus by saying "where your heart is, there your treasure will be also." But Jesus taught it the other way around: "where you put your treasure - that's where your heart will end up." The point isn't that how we spend our money *reveals* what sort of people we *are*, but that how we spend our money *determines* what sort of people we *become*. And remember, treasure is not only about money. Our treasure is whatever we value - our money, but also our time and our possessions, and our families, and our physical bodies. Whatever we value - that's our treasure. And Jesus says that what we do with our treasures affects our hearts. In other words, it determines who we are inside. It determines what sort of people we become.
This may sound scary, but it is actually very good news! What it means in essence is that we can control our hearts, direct them in ways we want them to go. We can do so in a very practical way, by deciding what sort of people we want to be, and then giving

our treasure - our time, talents, and our money - to those things that we want to care about.

When you think about the statement that "how we spend our money determines what sort of people we become" does it sound threatening or promising? Would you like to grow in your spiritual life? Is there anything that you might do with your money, time, and talent that would move you further along that path?

Saturday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment.

Today you are invited to pray this prayer of transformation.

I breathe in God's grace.
May it transform my insecurities
So that I breathe out God's love

I breathe in God's love
May it transform my fears
So that I breathe out God's hope

I breathe in God's hope
May it transform my doubts
So that I breathe out God's faithfulness

I breathe in God's faithfulness
May it transform my heart
So that I breathe out the Good News of Christ Jesus

I breathe in the Good News of Christ Jesus
May it transform me
So that I breathe out God's grace...

