

BORN TO GIVE

PART 2: BORN Legacy

Lk 2:1-11

We're in our series BORN TO GIVE. This morning we are talking about BORN LEGACY.

And we're talking about continuing on the legacy of giving that Christ established for us.

The definition of legacy very simply is something handed down from an ancestor or a predecessor or from the past.

Legacies are rare and special gifts from one person to another, from one generation to the next.

And as we look at the life of Jesus Christ we see, as we read through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we see the giving of Christ and the ministry of Christ and the attitude of Christ.

And then at the end of each of those books of the gospels, we see His instructions just before He goes.

Go and make disciples. Lay hands on the sick and they will recover. Go and preach the good news and the kingdom of heaven.

Then in Acts, Chapter 1, we see where He's gathered together and before He ascends, before He's been on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights, since He's been resurrected from the grave.

Validating, proving, "I am alive!" And then He meets with his disciples and He says, ...But wait for the promise.

He says, ...I've told you all these other things to go and do and to make it all happen.

But wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit because you will be endured with power and you will be filled with the Holy Spirit and so wait for that.

And then it says, like POOF!, they stand there and He ascends, and they're looking in the sky and the angels appear and say, ...What are you looking for? The same way you saw Him go, He will return again.

And then the angels disappear.

And then, here's what I hear,

...Now what? Do you think He's coming back next week? I mean, He said He's returning.

Do you think it'll be in a month? Do you think it'll be in a year? Do you think it'll be in my lifetime?

What do we do now? Peter, what do you got? I dunno.

Thomas? I don't even think He left. I don't even know!

What do we do now?

*God challenges us to have faith in Him. But look at the amazing faith that Jesus has in us.

His ministry of reaching people, healing them of their sickness, meeting and supplying their needs, delivering God's grace, God's freedom, God's victory, God's deliverance in their lives.

He didn't say, ...Father, look at these people. Do you really trust them? I think I outta just stay.

I know I'm supposed to be there on the throne, at your right hand and I love you, Dad. But I'm not sure that these people can do it.

No, no, no, no. Jesus said, ...You got this, right? You got it? You got it? You got this? You got this?

You guys, you got it?

Ok, I'm outta here! WHOOSH! He's gone. And He left it up to you and I to carry on His legacy.

Four Things in carrying out the LEGACY of GIVING

1. A legacy of ministry

You say, ...Well, I'm not in the ministry. You're in the ministry, that's your job. That's the pastor's job. That's the church staff job.

No, we're all in the ministry of reconciliation, the bible tells us.

We've all been called to go and help make peace.

To reconcile means to make peace between enemies.

We've all been given the ministry of reconciliation, to go to the highways and byways and tell people,

...God's not mad at you and you shouldn't be mad at Him.

Cause the things that you think He did to you, He didn't do. That was the devil.

And God loves you and He gave His son for you and to make peace between enemies.

We need to minister. But Jesus didn't just leave us hanging, ...Go, go do it. Just make it happen.

(Jn 14:12-14) – 12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Now "greater" used to puzzle me.

How do you out do blind eyes being opened?

How do you do something greater than with someone who is deaf, a mute who couldn't speak and suddenly they can hear and they have speech?

How do you out do someone that has been crippled from birth and has never walked, and suddenly leaps and runs and walks?

How do you out do when that little girl died, and when Lazarus, Jesus' friend, died and BOOM!, they're back to life?

How do you do something greater than that? I don't know that we can do it greater in quality.

I think where Jesus was challenging us is there was one of Him and He can only go and be in so many places.

And He said, ...I want you to go on my behalf and greater works than these will you do because there's more of you.

And so we all need to take on this mission and this ministry that Christ has given us.

Whatever we see Jesus doing in the Gospels, of encouraging, forgiving, blessing, casting out demons, laying hands on the sick.

Whatever we see Jesus doing, He has commissioned us to do.

He has said, ...I gave. Now you go and you give. And you plant and you invest in others. (vs. 13)

(Mk 16:17-18) - 17 *"And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."*

Everybody, act like you're going into surgery and put your hands up.

Ok, some of you just woke up, that was good. Welcome, we're glad you're here.

Put your hands up. Ok, look at your hands. These hands represent the hands of Christ.

The hands, you say... Oh no, not me. Not me!

No, these hands are Jesus' hands. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

And what Jesus did, He wants us to do.

He wants us to bring His healing, His power, His love, His victory. He wants us to minister.

*Ministry is simply this, it's taking what I have and giving it to someone else. I minister to them.

2. A legacy of giving

The second legacy that Christ wants us to blossom in to, continue on is His LEGACY OF GIVING.

That legacy of having a heart of giving, a heart of generosity, that we want to plant and sow and invest beyond being concerned about our needs, but to always be looking into giving and looking for where we can help and plant and invest.

Jesus wanted to teach his disciples about giving.

(Mk 12:41-44) – 41 *Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.*

Does anyone have a penny?

What she gave, there wasn't a denomination in the Greek or Roman culture that could really identify.

It was such a small amount. It is miniscule, it is trivial.

But look how Jesus wants to teach the disciples and teach us a lesson about giving.

(Vs. 43) - *Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others."*

I can just see the disciples, ...What are you smokin', Jesus? Did you visit an herb store?

She comes and she puts in two small coins and Jesus says, *"She has put more into the treasury than all the others."* And then He gives a description...

(Vs. 44) - *They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on."*

You see, most of us in the United States don't feel rich because rich is always beyond us.

It's the next level, it's the next pay grade, it's always beyond us.

But if you make \$36,000 a year, you are in the top 1% of the wealthiest human beings on the face of the planet.

But we don't feel rich. But here's what Jesus said, ...This woman gave all she had, she gave more.

So here's what we can learn about the aspect of giving.

God is not impressed by zeros... 1,000. He's not impressed by zeros!

All the gold and silver and the precious stones and rubies, who do you think put them in the earth?

His sidewalk is gold, no big deal.

And God's not going to be blown away when you or I put a 1 and put one zero, two zeros or a bunch of zeros behind. He's not like,

...Hold the train, people! Look at that! Someone gave a million dollars!

What is God moved by? God is moved by our percentage.

See, He said this woman gave more than all the people who gave out of their wealth because she gave it all.

And what God is concerned about is not how much we give but what's the percentage of what we give.
Are we holding back?

Now here's what statistics tell us... Poor people out give rich people, hands down. Hands down! You say... Really?
Hands down, not in monetary value, but in percentage value.

Because a wealthy person, let's say they're making \$100,000 a year, and they give a whopping \$2,000 for 2013.

But somebody making \$30,000 a year, and they're committed to God and they tithe and they give 10% to the church and they're giving to other community needs, they're buying Toys for Tots or for our Unwrap Christmas, shopping and buying school supplies and donating them. They just have a heart to give.

Now here's what the difference is, here's why poor people give more, because poor people don't put their hope in their wealth.

And here's the way poor people, or could I say it this way... us folks.

I'm not saying we're poor, I'm saying "normal people."

Because here's the way we live, we go... "I don't have enough to do everything I need to do so I might as well lend a hand to somebody else."

1 Timothy 6:17 – Command those who are rich... (so we all qualify for being rich because a very large percentage of us in our household income make more than \$36,000 a year.

Maybe you're not there yet but it's ok).

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant or to put their hope in their wealth, which is so uncertain. But to put their hope in God, who richly provides us everything for our enjoyment.

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds. 18 and be generous and willing to share.

So watch how the enemy kills giving.

He says to the poor person, ... Why would you give?

... Don't give because what you give won't make a difference.

But if you get a million people who are poor and they give a dollar that makes a pretty big difference!

Am I right? And then here's what happens, the reason rich people don't give to the challenge that the Lord gives to them is because they write a big check and they go, ... I'm done!

And they've only given 1%, 2%, ½ %, 4%, 5%. And they're going, ... Look how much I gave!

God's not concerned about how much you gave.

God's concerned about what percentage, how committed are you to this.

And it's not just about money, it's about what percentage of your time do you give to the Lord.

Do you realize that someone gave their time and that is why we have decorations here at Christmas

So I ask you, what do you have that you can give and bless and help others.

Help the kingdom of heaven. Help and bless other people.

(Matt 6:20-21) – 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Where's your treasure? You're heart's gonna follow.

So why does God want us to be freely to give? To give to kingdom purposes and to be kingdom minded?

Because when we do, He knows where our treasure is, our heart will be also.

So when we give and we bless and we help, our heart wraps around those ideas, our heart engages.

2 Corinthians 9:7-8 - 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

3. A legacy of love

Next, the LEGACY OF LOVE. Let me just read it to you, jot it down.

John 13:34. Jesus said this, ... Hey guys! Who can quote the Ten Commandments?

Ah, thou shall not have no other Gods before me. Thou shall not murder. Thou shall not steal. Thou shall not commit adultery.

Ah... After a lot of mumbling, he says, ... Guys, don't worry about it.

That's great if you know it, but I'm going to summarize it into one. One Commandment.

A new Commandment, and it's this... **(John 13:34-35)** - 34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Here's the way it's summarized, ... Live and walk in love like Jesus loved humanity. That's it!

You won't steal if you're walking in love.

You won't covet somebody else's things if you walk in love.

If you walk in love you'll be saying, ... I'm glad they got that! I'm glad they were able to get a new car.

I'm glad they were able to move and rent a bigger house so they have more space.

I'm glad that they got that promotion.

You're not coveting.
 Why wouldn't a person commit adultery? Because that's not the God kind of love.
 Why wouldn't a person murder somebody? Because that's really not love.
 So when we get mad at a friend or a family member, we withhold love from them.
 *Let me put it this way, what blood is to our body, love is to our relationships.
 If we cut off love and we tie a rope around our wrist and we cut off the blood supply to our hand, all of a sudden it's going to begin to decay, it's going to begin to rot, you're going to get gangrene, your skin, your fingernails are going to begin to fall off, and it's going to begin to smell and it's going to become gross.
 Why? Because it didn't get blood.
 Blood carries the life and love carries the life in our relationships.
 I know couples that go two to five days, when they have a blowout argument, they go, ...I'm not talking!
 They won't even say, ...Good morning!, they won't say, ... Pass the salt! Nothing!
 Watch what's happening, you've just cut it off and it's starting to decay and it's starting to die.
 The good news is, let the love flow and life comes.
 That's why when I mess up, I say, ...I'm sorry honey! I apologize!
 I want to make it right! I want the blood, I want to make the love flow.
 I wanna get the love going back again. I don't want to cut off love.
 You know what the greatest need in humanity is? It's not money. It's not health. It's not shelter. It's not food.
 The greatest need of any living human being is to be loved. To be accepted. To be forgiven. To be loved.
(1 Cor 13:8) - Love never fails.
 Kudos to all the volunteers who serve throughout this church and bless and minister and help and give.
 You are being Jesus. You are carrying on the legacy of Jesus.
 And you are sharing our last legacy.

4. A legacy of light

Light always takes out darkness. Darkness never wins.
 I never walked into my house at night, flipped on the light and the light goes, WOOP!, and all of a sudden darkness goes WHOOSH!, and overtakes it. Light always wins! It always wins.
 In the presence of light, darkness can never stand.
 It always runs and Jesus declared himself, in John 8:12...
(Jn 8:12) – "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
(Matt 5:14-16) – 14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others,..."
 How is it, are we supposed to carry around a candle, ...this little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
 No, He said.....*that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*

What is he saying? The light that we carry as we're going around with the legacy of ministry, the legacy of giving, the legacy of love and we are blessing and helping, when we do these things, the legacy of light explodes through us and we are that light to a broken world.

So the next time you're hesitant, "Should I say something to my friends?
 I don't know if I should," and the enemy is saying, "Don't say anything. Don't say anything. Don't invite him to church.
 Don't invite him to be a part of this. Don't say 'Jesus' around them."
 And the enemy tries to bring darkness on that.
 You say, "No, light always wins." You say, "Hey, I'd like to invite you to church.
 I would like to invite your family to sit with my family.
 And be light in this world. When you start giving, it does something on the inside that nothing else can do.
 How many of you will leave church this afternoon, you'll get the kids in the car, you'll turn the heater up, you'll turn on the Christmas tunes and you'll say, "Kids, lets drive through the neighborhood really slow, lets look for some bulbs."

No, when are you gonna go? At night, when the lights are shining.
 Nobody cares about the bulbs, everyone wants to see the lights.
 We need to be the light in this world. Amen.

And then, will you stand to your feet, here's what I want you to do, here's your challenge...
 This week I want you to think who is the person in my world that needs me to put an arm around them and just say... "How are you doing? How can I pray for you? How can I bless you?"
 Your dare... 15-minutes.
 I want you to sow, plant or invest in someone's life.

If you want to live big, go to 30-minutes, go 60-minutes.

Take a friend out for coffee, go pick up the kids that don't have a Dad, some of you Dads.

And maybe the Mom and Dads, you take them out and you take them to McDonald's and get them an ice cream cone and let them play on the slides.

Because you never know what your words of love, what lies and what darkness, your words of love and your attitude of giving are killing and quenching. Amen.

Lets Pray

Father, show us who that is this week. That we can go and pull aside and say, "Hey, we're here for you. I love you and I want you to know that you're special and God believes in you." Who's life can we be a voice into? Who's shoulder can we put an arm around and let them know that we care? That we're here to comfort. God, use us. Jesus, we're going to do what you challenged us to do. We want your legacy to live through us here on this earth. In Jesus' name we pray, AMEN!