

## Week 5--October 18

### How Will Giving Draw Me to God?

#### Focus

Jesus invites us to trust God's abundant provision. Sacrificial giving is a transformational practice that draws us closer to God.

#### Scripture Reading--Mark 6:30-44

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat." But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii[a] worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. And all ate and were filled; and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

#### Questions for the Journey

- How have you experienced God's abundance in your life?
- Think about your attitude towards giving. Explore the ways a perception of scarcity might hold you back from trusting in God.
- Does your giving change your daily patterns and practices?

#### Drawing Closer

- C. S. Lewis wrote:

*I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc., is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving away too little. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot because our charities expenditure exclude them.*

- Consider your spending categories in light of Lewis's comment. What does your spending say about your priorities?
- Pray about your financial gifts to God's mission through Hamblen and decide what you will give by pledging for 2021. You may ask for a pledge packet from the church office if you do not receive one.
- If you already pledge but are not able to give a full tithe, consider "moving toward tithing" by increasing your pledge either now, slowly over time, or by simply setting a specific goal for the future.

We used portions of *Discipleship Essentials* by Greg Ogden in this resource. For an even deeper exploration of your journey as a follower of Jesus, check out Chapter 25.