When Opportunity Knocks


A. Jesus calls us as we are, but tells us we must become different.

   John 3: 3 – Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

B. The Apostles of Jesus taught us that being born again involved a radical change.

   1. We must become something different than those who have not been born again.

      Rom. 12: 1-2 – Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

      a. This change involves surrendering one’s body. (. Cf – I Cor. 6: 19-20 )
      b. The process of being born again also involves a new world view. (. Cf – Col. 3: 2 )

   2. All those who have been baptized into Christ have been born again.

      a. I Pet. 1: 3 – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

      b. Those who are born again have been purified TO love the brethren.

      I Pet. 1: 22-23 – Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

C. One of the aspects of NOT being conformed to the natural world is giving.

   1. Christians are taught that we are to count others as more important than self.

      a. Phil. 2: 3-5 – Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus

      b. This attitude is directly contrary to human nature.

   2. When a child is playing with toys and another child comes in, he does not instinctively share his toys.

      a. Most often he will want whatever the new child picks up.
      b. Children don’t quickly learn the say “yours” but they all learn to say “mine.”

   3. We must continually be learning to share so prioritizing others is difficult.
I. The story in our text teaches us that we must learn the attitude of Jesus. S#8.

   1. The man achieved the goal of every farmer ... an abundant crop.
   2. Undoubtedly, all of his neighbors viewed him as being successful.

B. No single action taken by this farmer was sinful. S#9.
   1. It is not wrong to be successful.
   2. It is not wrong to build adequate storage for your harvest.
   3. It is not wrong to prepare for your retirement.
      a. Prov. 6: 6-11 … Consider the ants
      b. Prov. 21: 20 – There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise, S#10. But a foolish man swallows it up.
      c. Every business man understands that every machine has a life expectancy, so he sets aside enough money to be able to replace it when the time comes.
   4. It is not wrong to retire.
      a. One must adjust to his limitations.
      b. Retirement enable one to spend his time serving God.

C. This man’s only sin was in centering his life solely on himself. S#11.
   1. I have … for me … I will
   2. Luke 12: 21 – So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”
   3. HOW can one be rich toward God.
      a. Luke 12: 33-34 – Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. 34 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
      b. How does one lay up treasure in Heaven? Giving it to those in need.

II. Giving to those in need must be the desire of the Christian’s heart. S#12.

A. Paraphrase Acts 4:36 - 5:11. (Ananias & Sapphira lied about their offering)

B. There was an urgent need in the church.
   1. Others were liquidating assets to meet the need.
   2. Ananias and Sapphira gave, but were motivated by the desire for praise.
   3. They did not trust God enough to turn loose of the whole amount.
C. The Christian’s motivation for giving must always be love.
   1. I Pet. 1: 22 – Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.
   2. Phil. 2: 3 – Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;
   3. Rom. 12: 10 – Let love be without hypocrisy. .... 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;
   4. II Cor. 8: 1-5, 8 – Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. 3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, 4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, 5 and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. ....... 8 I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.

III. Salvation is by grace through faith, but the fruit of faith is good works.
   A. Eph. 2: 8-10 – For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
      1. No one can be saved by doing good.
      2. No one can be saved without doing good.
      3. The faith that saves produces fruit in one’s life.
         James 2: 17-18 – Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. 18 But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."
   B. Notice the specific instruction of the Lord’s Apostle to us and via Titus.
      1. Writing to the preacher on island of Crete, Paul gave general instructions to all men:
         Titus 2: 11-15 – For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. 15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.
a. Salvation is available for all who will reject ungodliness and worldliness.
b. Those who are saved must lead a godly lifestyle. (not save us IN our sin)
c. Saved people must be zealous for good deeds.
d. This must be preached and insisted upon.

2. Sharing is to be taught as part of being a believer.

**Titus 3: 8** – This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.

3. The Apostle wrote similar instructions to the preacher at Ephesus, Timothy.

**I Tim. 6: 17-19** – Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

a. All that we have comes from God. (God allocates wealth so be content.)
b. Teach them to do many good works.
c. Be generous in your sharing.
d. Sharing with the needy lays up treasure in Heaven.

**Prov. 19: 17** – One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, And He will repay him for his good deed.

4. Sharing with those in need is a form of worship to God.

**Heb. 13: 16** – And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

C. When should I give?

1. **I Tim. 6: 18** – to be generous and ready to share,

2. The Christians motivation for working is to be ready to share.

**Eph. 4: 28** – He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.

3. **Tit. 3: 1** – Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.

4. We should always be on the lookout for opportunities to do good deeds.

**Gal. 6: 10** – So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.
5. Christians always respond to pressing needs.
   Tit. 3: 14 – Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.

D. To whom should we give?

1. Those who cannot care for themselves.
   Acts 20: 35 – In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

2. Gal. 6: 10 ... All men, especially the brethren. (I Tim. 5:8 .. provide for own)

3. Tit. 3: 14 ... Those with pressing needs

CONCLUSION:

A. We have seen that:

1. Those who do not do good to meet needs are unfruitful.
   a. Tit. 3: 14 – Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.
   b. Doing good works, like sharing, is part of being fruitful servants of God.
      Col. 1: 10 – so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

2. When born again, faith in Christ motivates us to give as Christ gave.

3. We are to prioritize our brethren, but respond to every need as we have opportunity.

B. Why are we taking this special contribution:

1. God had opened a door of opportunity for us to help those in need.

2. This collection follows the Apostolic example to do it this way.
   a. I Cor. 16:1-6 .. The brethren in Corinth were to prepare money for Paul to pick up
   b. The money from other churches was added to that of the church in Corinth.
   c. The Apostle took the money from all the churches and took it to Jerusalem.
      Rom. 15: 25-26 – but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.
      26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

INVITATION:

S#28 ... Communion slide
Lesson Text:

Luke 12: 15-21
15 Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." 16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' 18 Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry."' 20 But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' 21 So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Acts 4: 36–5: 11
36 Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement), 37 and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2 and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." 5 And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. 6 The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

7 Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." 9 Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well." 10 And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11 And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.