

## Giving them something (w/c 14 October 2018)

*"Our resources will seem and feel totally inadequate. That is Jesus' problem, not ours... our task is not to bemoan how few loaves and fishes we have... but to offer to Jesus what we do have."* (Tom Wright)

While these two passages focus on particular acts of giving, they have much to say both about our own approach to giving in general but also about God's heart of generosity. Even they though both emphasise support for believers (or at least those with some interest), we need to not take this out of the wider biblical context where God's (and therefore our) concern is for all those in need.

In first-century Palestine you had to either meet or have some other fairly direct contact to know about someone's need. Today, as various media channels can show us needs anywhere, the whole world has become our Jericho road and anyone, anywhere can be our neighbour (Luke 10:25-37).

### Read 2 Corinthians 9: 6-end

This section concludes Paul's concerns (chapters 8 and 9) about the gift being collected for needy believers in Palestine (see also Romans 15:26.). There are parallels here with John's observation (1 John 4:19) that, "We love because he first loved us"; how does that thought affect the way we approach others?

God's heart for the poor, as shown through the Old Testament, makes it clear that we must do more than simply help out in emergencies and not restrict our generosity to fellow believers. What can or could or indeed should we be doing in our communities to fulfil the words of Proverbs 31:8-9 or Zechariah 7:8-9? The New Testament has similar examples – see for example, Acts 10:1-2 and 1 Timothy 6:17-18.

### Read Luke 9.10 – 17

This is the only miracle (except of course the resurrection) mentioned in all the gospels. Why do think all four writers felt that this event was so important as to require including in what they wrote? What do you think about the possibility of *miracle* today? Do you have experiences you could share?

Luke places two significant questions on either side of this passage: Herod's "Who then is this?" and Jesus asking "Who do you say I am?" How does the passage answer those questions? Also, how does it give us a basis for telling others of who Jesus is?

If you look at John's telling of the story (John 6:1-15), he concludes with the crowd saying "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." How does this add to our understanding? That chapter ends with Jesus describing *himself* as the "bread of life". What more does this imagery add?

In the light of Tom Wright's words above, how do we, and how should we react, to seemingly overwhelming need?

Getting the crowd together (verse 11) must have required a lot of people to tell someone else about Jesus. The Message describes it in these words: "the crowds got wind of it and followed". What sort of things have we spoken to others about in the past week?

*"No one has ever become poor by giving."* (Anne Frank)