

Jesus and the Poor – OneGenAway Day, 23 January 2022

1. This is a day to honor those who care for the poor, but it is also a day for us to think about our own attitudes toward money, work, and the poor.
2. I want to start this with a difficult passage. Matthew 26:6-13. This seems a bit harsh and selfish of Jesus. Is he dismissing the poor and their needs? Is he endorsing the wasting of money?
3. He was acknowledging the value of the sacrifice being made. He was also giving us permission to eat, drink, celebrate and honor others without feelings of guilt.
4. But he was also doing something else: he was reminding them of the Torah. He was quoting the first part of a very well known passage. Deuteronomy 15:11. We are to be the people of open hands.
5. Throughout scripture, God reminds us of our obligation to work hard so that we can help others. That is one of the major reasons we work in the first place – to share with those who do not have. Ephesians 4:28.
6. In Luke 14:12-14, Jesus emphasizes this core teaching. In Matthew 25, it is brought home as one of the criteria of being welcomed into heaven.
7. We are given permission to celebrate and even splurge as long as we remember to keep our eyes open and our hearts and hands open. We do that here by working through ministries we know and trust.

Show the OneGenAway video. Invite Chris and Elaine Whitney to the stage.

The interview, discussion should be natural and simple. Here are some guiding questions I may ask:

What brought you to this ministry? We all know we are to love and care for the poor but you took action. What was the tipping point in your life that led you here?

Tell me a story – just an open ended request. You can make it about you, someone you fed, someone who was changed by feeding others...whatever. We love stories so just tell us one or more you like.

What are your biggest needs? We assume that you need prayer, funds and volunteers. If that is all, that's fine, but talk about why you need them and what your situation is like at the present.

How can viewers around the world do what you are doing on an individual scale? We have scores of house churches setting up all over the US and even across Europe into Asia and some Muslim countries. What can they do for the poor? (we always try to show that love is scalable. When we recently had a new coat and winter gear drive, we found that people in Turkey and Australia, among others, shared one coat or one warm meal as that is what they could do).

And, of course, the Spirit can take us where He wants us to go. After the lesson, would the two of you lead us in our communion devotional?