

Icebreaker:

If you had to feed 5,000 at a picnic, and had the means to do so, what would you serve?

Read this week's scripture and discuss:

1. Who is the most generous person you know? How would you describe their generosity?
2. In Matthew 14:13-14, with what thoughts and feelings did Jesus (and the disciples) seek a deserted place? How might those feelings have colored their experience? When he saw the crowds, how did Jesus respond?
3. When we read God is capable of feeding thousands using just a few loaves of bread and fish, does it change the way you think about what God can do with your resources?
4. Have you seen Jesus stretch your resources, or the resources of someone close to you, beyond what you can imagine? If yes, please share that story with your group.
5. In Luke 16:19-31, the parable says the rich man's brothers knew what Moses and the prophets said, but did not listen. How do you think generosity is learned or can be best cultivated?
6. How does it feel when someone you don't know well knows your name?
7. Brene Brown says that it's sometimes difficult to give freely because we find it hard to receive the generosity of others. Do you find it a challenge to receive the generosity of others?

Activity for this week:

Please read this scripture several times this week, inserting your first name into the blank spaces. When we realize God values us, it encourages us to value others, to know their names, and to be generous to them.

"But now thus says the LORD,

he who created you, _____,

he who formed you, _____,

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you _____,

I have called you by name, you are mine." Isaiah 43:1

Prayer:

As you are praying with your group, please remember our congregational prayer requests:

prayer requests

- > Continued prayers for Walker Brewer, born 7 weeks early, as he grows stronger.
- > Prayers of healing for Ed Nelson.
- > Prayers of comfort for Dave and Diedra Rausch in the death of Dave's sister.

[The following are from ZPC's prayer calendar, which is available at the Welcome Center or at zpc.org/prayer.]

- > Pray for our country and all local, state and national elections being decided this week.
- > Pray for Michael and Kristin Cary to transform lives with biblical solutions to sexual brokenness through their Living Truth Ministry.

The parable in Luke 16, is the only parable that Jesus gives a name to someone in the story. The poor man's name is Lazarus. Names matter. When someone knows our name, it matters. God knows your name. You have value and you matter to God. In the same way, we are called to know others, to know their names, to give them value. We are called to be generous to God and to others, for every person has a name and matters to God.

1. In your group, simply have people share stories of generous people they know. You don't have to share names if it is helpful to maintain confidentiality about their generosity.
2. Jesus and the disciples had probably just discovered that John the Baptist had been beheaded. This would have colored their feelings by making them sad, be in grief, and want time alone from the crowds. Jesus had compassion. He was a shepherd and a teacher. The crowds were like sheep without a shepherd and needed Jesus.
3. Our hope is that we can be awed and inspired by God doing so much with so little. We can't do miracles on our own, but the God of the universe can use us to do His work. Each of us has been given certain gifts. We have a calling and an obligation to use our gifts and to give to God and others generously.
4. In your group, think about how God stretch resources in an amazing way. Share that story so that we can remember how God has "moved mountains" and provided for you or others.
5. Jesus said that if the rich man's brothers had not been changed by Moses or the prophets, even a messenger from the dead wouldn't change their hearts or minds about giving or their wealth. Share what helps to cultivate generosity. Perhaps it is God's giving to us, the sacrifice of Jesus, or the example of giving from someone you know or admire.
6. It can make you embarrassed if you don't know their name. Or it can make you feel valued and surprised because they know your name. Names are important to God and to us. God values us and so do other people. We are to value others as God does.
7. It can make us uncomfortable to receive the gifts of others. Maybe we feel guilty. When we can receive other's generosity with a healthy and humble thankfulness, then we can realize that others care for us and be generous when we see others in need.