

## WEEK 4 : "GIVE GENEROUSLY"

Sunday, August 23, 2009

### BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Cnr Marcus and Thompsons Roads,  
LOWER TEMPLESTOWE VIC 3017

Notes by Rev. Gary Lockyer  
[www.bulleenbaptist.org.au](http://www.bulleenbaptist.org.au)



### Introducing the 50:50 Studies

We will be following the 50:50 themes in the five Sundays in August. This 5 week teaching and study program helps churches and individuals seek God's view on the poor and sets out practical ways that Christians can respond and make a difference. Each Sunday's teaching session is supplemented by linked Small Group Studies during the week.

These Studies have been prepared by the Australian staff of Baptist World Aid to celebrate 50 years of working on behalf of Australian Baptists with the world's poor, helping them to lift themselves out of extreme poverty.

Check out Baptist World Aid Australia's website at [www.shareanopportunity.org](http://www.shareanopportunity.org) and click on the 50:50 graphic on the home page of our website to go straight to the 50:50 website to explore the information, links and resources there as well.

### 1. A GENERAL PRINCIPLE ...

We are called, as God's people, when faced with another's need for food, shelter and clothing, to  
G \_ENEROUSLY S \_HARE O \_UR R \_ESOURCES

So far in the 50:50 Studies, we have referenced a number of Biblical passages that state this proposition clearly: The following verses from Isaiah 58:5-7 sum them all up -

Is this the kind of fast I have chosen - only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice ... to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor with shelter, when you see the naked, to clothe him ...

These verses teach us that a GENUINE faith cannot be expressed in "religious" ceremony alone, but must also show itself in how we RESPOND to human need.

The context of Isaiah 58 is the call for CONSISTENCY between our WORSHIP and our LIFE  
The NT confirms this.

If both faith and love are genuine, they will prove themselves in ACTION

Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. **James 2:15-17**

If anyone has material possessions & sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words ... but with actions. **1Jn3:17-18**

### 2. (The Call to be Generous Driven by) THREE REALITIES

**A. STEWARDSHIP** : The earth and its resources belong to God (The earth is the LORD'S, and everything in it. Psalm 24.1). The resources in our hands are not ours to use as we please, but to use to fulfil God's purposes for the world. David's prayer (1Chron29:14-16) on the dedication of the building materials assembled for the construction of the Temple illustrate this biblical reality.

Who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow ... O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.

**B. COMPASSION:** The parable of the Good Samaritan reminds us that our most basic connection with others is our shared humanity and that this transcends culture and nationality. Compassion should drive us to see the poor in other nations also as our neighbours and use our resources to serve them.

A Samaritan ... saw him and took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, ... Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he gave two silver coins to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

"(Who) was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." **Lk10:33-37**

**C. JUSTICE:** Study 2 highlighted that God has gifted the earth to mankind for their sustenance and enjoyment (eg Genesis 1.30-31). Sharing our resources with the poor is not just an issue of our "generosity," but more basic, one of justice - ensuring that they share in the richness of creation, as was God's intent. .

Read on from Leviticus 25:23, below, to see how God instructed Israel to ensure that people were not alienated from their share of the land if they met with misfortune.

The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants.

### 3. THE PRIME EXAMPLE

God so loved ... that he GAVE

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son ....

**Jn3:16**

### AN EXERCISE TODAY

**COMMITMENT:** Considering God's call to be generous to the poor, I commit myself to cut back on my discretionary spending so that I am able to make giving to those in desperate need a planned part of my financial affairs.

**ACT:** How is your \$50 gift going? Remember to bring your gift next Sunday - the last of our 5050 studies. Research the avenues available for future giving so that your gifts will have the maximum impact on lifting people out of poverty and dependence. Consider the story below. This is one of the projects that our \$50 gifts will support:

*Sulemon and her husband live in Bangladesh and struggled to get by on his meagre earnings as a rickshaw puller. The family's income barely provided adequate food; there was nothing for medical care or to send their children to school.*

*They determined things would change. Sulemon dreamed of starting her own business, but with no savings she couldn't afford the start-up costs, nor could she get a loan from a bank; and with no education she couldn't perform simple calculations, let alone administer financial records.*

*In 2001, Sulemon's life changed when she joined a savings group coordinated by one of Baptist World Aid Australia's local partners. Each week, members of the group met together to deposit a few cents into a savings pool. As the savings grew members could take loans for income generation activities. The group also organised education classes for its members covering basic reading and writing skills, hygiene, health care, nutrition and small business administration.*

*The pieces of the puzzle started to fall together for Sulemon. Armed with her new-found literacy and business skills, Sulemon borrowed 500 Taka (AU\$9) to buy some ducks and chickens. By breeding these she was able to earn a profit of 300 Taka per month. She quickly repaid her loan and borrowed again, this time adding goats to her livestock breeding business.*

*Sulemon's profits allowed the family to eat better, but weren't enough to send the children to school. This weighed heavily on Sulemon's heart. Having attended education classes and run a successful livestock business she felt confident to explore a bigger business idea: a tea stall in the park by the river. It was a great idea. The park was a popular picnic area and Sulemon's tea was soon in high demand. The business grew and Sulemon's husband now works with her in the stall. They earn over 3000 Taka (AU\$65) per month, plus their income from the livestock breeding business.*

*This has made all the difference. The family have enough to support themselves and to send the children to school.*

*Sulemon's life was turned around by the support of the savings group and her own hard work. It was also made possible by the giving of people in Australia, without whose generosity the savings group would not have existed and Sulemon would not have received the training she needed to get on her feet.*

Source: Baptist World Aid, Australia