

Message Discussion Guide

Date: March 23-24, 2024

Title: God's Math

NOTE: There is an example of a script you can use for hosting communion at the end of this week's guide.

Connect with Each Other:

Icebreakers

- Without looking, can you name whose face is on the front of the penny, nickel, dime and quarter?
- What is your favorite cardiovascular exercise?
- What are your favorite things to do on rainy days?
- What is a childhood memory you have of Easter?

Pray Together

Heavenly Father, thank you for the amazing and generous free gift that Jesus gave us on the cross. We thank you for all the things you have given us in this life and we know we can never repay you for all you have done for us. We ask that you help us to learn and practice generosity. Open our hearts and minds to understanding that generosity is a way we can diagnose our spiritual heart health. We lift this up in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Connect with God:

Key Bible Verses

Mark 12:41-44 (NLT) - Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins. Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on."

Matthew 6:19-21 (NLT) - “Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.”

Message Summary

Heart disease is the number one cause of death in the U.S. There are things we can do to diagnose and prevent it. Spiritual heart disease can cause distance between us and God. It is when our heart’s desires drift from what God desires. And, like heart disease, there are things we can do to diagnose and prevent spiritual heart disease.

Some things we know to prevent spiritual heart disease are gathering, connecting, and serving. Things we’ve been talking about in this series. But another is ... money. It’s not an easy conversation. But we can start with a pretty common belief that generosity is a good thing. The question then becomes, how generous should we be? In the passage from Mark, we see that Jesus is watching people who come to the Temple (church). He pays attention to their giving. Why? Because it can reveal their hearts. While the rich may give a larger amount, what they gave didn’t impact them based on all they had. It wasn’t a sacrifice in any way. Meanwhile, the poor widow gave only two coins, but it was all she had. Jesus recognized her heart was in the right place and while it was only two coins, based on God’s math, she gave more.

Jesus isn’t saying we can’t have nice things on earth. What he is saying is don’t store them up and make them the center of your life. Don’t make accumulating “stuff” what is important to you.

God isn’t money hungry. He doesn’t need our money. But when we give an amount that means something to us, it means something to Him because it shows where our heart is. Jesus didn’t just talk about generosity with the disciples - soon after the events in this week’s passage, Jesus gave himself as a sacrifice on the cross so we could live. He gave the ultimate gift.

Sticky statement

The Amount We Give Means More To God, When It Means More To Us

Discussion Questions

1. Why is the idea of generosity something we all generally agree to in principle, but find hard to practice?
2. If tithing isn't required, why should we?
3. What steps can we take to not only understand generosity but put it in practice?
4. What are you more generous with - your time or your money?
5. Have you ever benefited from the generosity of others?
6. Do you find it hard to distinguish between having "nice" things and letting them become a focus in your life? What can we do to avoid that problem?
7. What other insights do you have from this week's message?

GENEROSITY IS A WINDOW TO THE HEART



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- MARK 12:41-44 (NLT)

Communion Script

There are two parts in the Lord's Supper: The breaking and eating of bread, and the drinking of wine/grape juice. In the breaking and eating of bread we remember His body that was broken to the point of death for us. The drinking of wine or juice represents the new covenant between man and God that was sealed in His blood. It is through the blood of Christ, His life given for us on the cross, that we are saved.

[Pass out the bread and wine]

*From **Matthew 26:17-19**: On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal for you?" "As you go into the city," he told them, "you will see a certain man. Tell him, 'The Teacher says: My time has come, and I will eat the Passover meal with my disciples at your house.'" So the disciples did as Jesus told them and prepared the Passover meal there.*

*From **Matthew 26:26**: As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take this and eat it, for this is my body."*

I invite you to eat the bread...

[Eat the bread]

*From **Matthew 27:27-28**: And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, "Each of you drink from it, for this is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many.*

I invite you to drink the juice.

[Drink the wine/juice]

Thank you heavenly Father for the undeserved gift Jesus' sacrifice so that we could have a restored relationship with you and eternal life. We are grateful to have communion to remind us of His sacrifice and the new covenant. Amen.