

The Rev. Duane A. Jesse, Senior Pastor  
Zion Lutheran Church, Youngstown, Ohio

**Weekend of Sunday, October 21, 2018**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost/Lectionary 29/Proper 24/Year B**  
**Primary Text: Mark 10:35-45**  
**Sermon Title: “The Seven Faith Practices - Give”**

## **Theme**

*On the way to Jerusalem the disciples ask Jesus to grant them seats of honor. Jesus responds by announcing that he and his followers will “rule” through self-giving service.*

## **Text**

<sup>35</sup>James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” <sup>36</sup>And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” <sup>37</sup>And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” <sup>38</sup>But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” <sup>39</sup>They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; <sup>40</sup>but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

<sup>41</sup>When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. <sup>42</sup>So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. <sup>43</sup>But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup>and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup>For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

## Sermon

Welcome to the last installment of this seven-part sermon series on the Seven Faith Practices. Today we are focusing on the last of the seven, Give, and today's sermon will serve as the launching pad for a three-part annual stewardship campaign that will begin next week.

Giving is part of daily life. You may have never thought about it, but it's true. If you are hearing my voice, you are giving me your attention, and you are giving the LORD your worship and praise.

I don't know what your routine is on Sunday afternoons, but ours is to gather as a family and for dinner. Carol loves to make a big fancy fuss over her family. It is her gift to the rest of us that she loves to give. Elliott and his parents and I value the time too and so we give ourselves to the event.

Come Monday morning, those of us who work outside the home give ourselves to our work.

In about sixty days (can you believe it?) we will give Christmas gifts to our loved ones, a custom Christians have adopted as we reflect on God's gift of his Messiah given to us.

Over the next three weeks we will explore this deeper, but every Christian is expected to give of their time, talent, and treasure.

This week, like almost every week, Art Roden volunteers his *time* to manage the church's funds as our treasurer.

Each week, the Saturday singers and on Sunday, the choir uses their *talents* to lead us in worship.

And none of this would happen if we didn't contribute *treasure*, money, out of what God has first given us.

Like the Seven Faith Practices themselves, each of us have been given all three; time, talent, and treasure. Each of us is likely more blessed in one of the three areas than the other two. Each of us has to figure that out, but we don't get to just skip

one. To be a good steward means that it is our duty and delight to be good stewards of God's graces given to us to prosper God's Kingdom.

Good stewards know that giving really flows from receiving, and we have who received so much want to give back to God through God's church.

I know from my own life that giving treasure has not always been easy, but it was in those times, when Carol and I felt the most vulnerable, that we committed to living generously. And you know what? God has always been faithful to us. And while we might have been surprised in those moments early in our life together as a couple, the continued awareness of God's grace continuously flowing out upon us, and through us, has only built our faith to the point that of the three stewardship areas, time, talent and treasure, treasure is the area we speak of the least. We simply agree that we want to live generously. But more on that in the next three weeks.

Now Steve Rogers is the leaders of the Give Table, and in a moment he is going to tell you about the responsibilities that are on the Give Table. Last week, Bob Fleet, the leader of the Worship Table said that as he sees it, the spiritual life of the disciple flows out of worship. And he may be right, but Steve might just tell us that the spiritual life of the disciple flows out of giving. And I can see how he might take that position since, all the Seven Faith Practice presentations have included opportunities for you to participate, and your participation in the ministry here at Zion is a way for you to *give* of yourself. Now here is Steve.

### **Steve's Presentation:**

Good (afternoon) (morning) Zion! My name is Steve Rogers and I am the leader of the Give Table.

I have been a member of Zion for nine years, and my wife, Linda, has been a member for eighteen years. I can say it's been an honor for us to be active members of Zion and proud to call it our church home.

And yes, Pr. Jesse, I would agree with you. The spiritual life of the disciple does seem to flow out through our duty and delight to give.

The purpose of the Give Table is to provide oversight of all financial affairs of the congregation; to ensure that they are conducted in an efficiently and fiscally sound manner, and in alignment with the congregation's mission.

The opportunities to participate in the ministries of the Give Table are more administrative than physically demanding, but then it may be just what you are looking for. Let me begin by giving you the eight areas that are on the Give Table.

(Pastor: Steve, you know what would make those 8 areas interesting and memorable? If you do them in chant!)

They are:

*(Steve to chant)*

**Audit** – It is the responsible thing to do to audit our finances every year. This is a short term, detail-oriented opportunity to give your time too.

**Counting Teams** – Counting up the offering and preparing the deposit is done by Counting teams who give of their time for a month at a time once a quarter. More counting teams would mean a longer rotation. The work is tedious but not difficult.

**Columbarium** – The responsibility for the columbarium is also on the Give Table, and honestly does not require anyone but the Executive Committee and Don Lepore.

**Endowment Fund Board** – The newly re-constituted Endowment Fund and its yet to be elected board require a little time of four elected members who have an interest in seeing the church's endowment fund grow

**Red Cross Blood Drive** – This is a new ministry at Zion. Keith and Karen Kuppler are preparing to make Zion a regular blood drawing location. You can help by giving blood, giving time to host the event, or giving donations of cookies or other food to the canteen. See the Kupplers to give of yourself.

**Scholarship Board** – Zion's Postsecondary Scholarship Fund is also a re-constituted ministry that combines Raithel and Alber Scholarship funds which are

managed by the Endowment Board and awards given by a committee called for by Mrs. Raithel.

**Stewardship** – Is the general heading for all year-round giving opportunities – giving being time, talent, and treasure – including the campaign that will start next week as Pr. Jesse said earlier.

**Treasurer** – The Give Table provides oversight to the work of our treasurer, currently, Art Roden, the Assistant Treasurer, Larry Maughn, and the Financial Secretary, Judy Heisler

In addition, the Give Table provides guidance only to the Council when it deliberates spending anything over \$500 and all non-budgeted expenses.

Of course, anybody who has an interest and a desire to assist us in any of these areas, please do not hesitate to contact me! We would love to have you.

(Pastor: You know Steve, each week I have asked the presenter to give us some Takeaways, you know, maybe five key points to take away. And you know what would make those takeaways interesting and memorable? If we did them as a slow jam! Do we have any slow jam music up there?)

### **Five Takeaways:**

- It could be argued that the Faith Practice of Give is at the heart of the disciple's spiritual life.
- The opportunities to give of oneself are varied, and have a variety of different commitment levels and required skill levels.
- Some are fun. Some are work. All are rewarding and vital to the ongoing success of our church.
- Remember Give includes Time, Talent, and Treasure.
- And you thought all I was going to talk about was money.
- And remember folks, "You belong here. We belong together."

## **Conclusion:**

You know, the church is like many other clubs, organizations, fraternal orders, even other non-profits and charities that constantly clamor for our time, talent, and treasure. And without judgement, all of them do good work for the community and for the causes they serve. And if you are a member of them, I want to encourage you to do for them what you can.

But the church is unlike any of those organizations, we are the church of Jesus Christ, who gave himself on the cross for the forgiveness of the sins of the world. God revealed in Jesus Christ requires nothing of us. His grace is free and unmerited.

But because God revealed in Jesus Christ gave himself for the sins of the world, especially mine, I choose to devote myself to him and his cause, and I do that through the good stewardship of my time, talent and treasure. And I trust in faith that when my days are done, God will take me to himself, not because of anything I've done, but simply because of who God is.

It is my prayer as we conclude this sermon series, that you feel better informed about what these Seven Faith Practices are, and what opportunities they present for us to be good stewards of all that God has given us.

And I also pray that God will send his Holy Spirit upon this congregation and anoint us with glad and generous hearts as we begin this 2019 Stewardship Campaign entitled, "Reflecting God's Goodness." Please plan to attend because "You belong here. We belong together." Amen? Amen!

## **Prayer**

Gracious God, we give you thanks for the leadership of this church who, over the last seven weeks, has given of themselves to explain how we all can do ministry in your Son's name through the Seven Faith Practices. Bless our current leaders, and bless this congregation with a steady stream of leaders who desire to serve you and your people through leadership.

And now as we enter into our 2019 annual stewardship campaign, send us your Spirit to anoint us with generosity so that this church, your church, our church may

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continue to thrive. We pray this in the name who gave all for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen