Loving the Least of These
Lesson 2 – I Was Hungry and Thirsty

Review (Matthew 25:31-46)

"The least of these" are Jesus' _____, a phrase Jesus only uses to describe his _____.

This does not mean that our kindness should not also extend _____ the body of Christ.

However, needs outside the community of faith present us with _____,

but not with the same degree of _____.

Jesus uses this parable to warn that those who profess _____ but who do not practice it in _____

may not be professing _____ faith and may be _____ in the end.

This is not about how to _____ salvation, but rather how to _____ it.

Old Testament Regulation

In ***Deuteronomy 15:4-6***, God says that there should be no _____ people in Israel.
What is the condition of that promise?

A few verses later, in ***Deuteronomy 15:11***, what reality does God declare about society?

Because there will _____ be poor people, God commands _____.
*What does **verse 10** say about the form that generosity should take?*

The civil code seen in ***Leviticus 19:9-10*** was given so that even the poor could have _____ to food.

They were not _____ the food they needed, but they were given the chance to _____ for it.
We see an example of this in Ruth 2 (and note how hard Ruth works)

The Bible sets forth an example of caring for the hungry while also preserving their _____.

New Testament Adaptation

One of the big differences between the context of Canaan and the context of New Testament Christianity

is the switch from a _____ culture to an _____ culture.

Though this changes _____ feeding the hungry is carried out, it does not change the _____ of it.

From the very beginning, the New Testament church prioritized feeding the hungry _____ _____.

Acts 2:44-45; ***4:34-35***; (in ***Acts 6:1***, the office of _____ is created to oversee food distribution)

What is often overlooked in these accounts is that giving was a _____ response to the gospel.
Acts 5:4 *– What was the nature of Ananias' sin? See also* ***2 Corinthians 9:7***

An essential component of the ministry of the Apostles was to _____ the poor – ***Galatians 2:9-10***

Paul's letters include significant portions devoted to a _____ from the churches

for those affected by _____ (***Acts 11:27-30***).
see also ***Romans 15:26-28***; ***1 Corinthians 16:1-4***; ***2 Corinthians 8-9***

In ***2 Corinthians 9:8-11***, Paul emphasizes the same principle of ***Deuteronomy 15:11***,

that God blesses us with more than we need ___ _____ we can help others.

Biblical Boundaries on Generosity

If we only looked at ***Matthew 5:42***, we would not have any _____ on who we feed.

But the Bible gives a fuller picture on this topic than just one verse...

How does ***2 Thessalonians 3:8-12*** give us a better understanding of how to feed the hungry?

How is this consistent with what we saw in the Old Testament?

What further instruction to we see in ***1 Timothy 5:4, 8, 16***?

Important! The context of this passage is ***verse 3***, where we see the word "honor"

The word is **τιμάω** (*timaō*), which in some contexts means to _____ support. (***v17-18***)

Paul is talking about financially supporting the _____ of the church,

who are singled out because in that culture, they uniquely represented

those who would have an _____ need to be fed.

But there are _____ regarding which widows the church should support:

In ***verses 3-16***, Paul calls them to consider factors like:

*age (**v9, 11**), family (**v4, 16**), sincerity of faith (**v10**),*
*absence of other possible sources of support (**v5**), etc.*

The point is, yes, we are to feed the hungry; and in doing so, we minister to the _____ of Christ himself.

However, we are also called to exercise _____ in discerning _____ need

so that grace does not encourage _____.

Hunger will not be _____ until we feast in the kingdom of God (***Isaiah 25:6***)

But as Christians, we can ensure that no member of the _____ body of Christ goes without food,

while also giving towards the needs of our brothers and sisters throughout the _____;

and, as we have opportunity (***Galatians 6:10***), expressing that gospel generosity to _____.

Practical Application (*What does this look like at TCPC today?)*

Following the New Testament pattern and command, we have deacons who minister to

the _____ needs of our members.

As our ability to help _____ the needs of our church members, we _____ our sphere of giving.

The deacons practice _____ principles of prioritization and investigation to determine genuine _____.

We _____ with ministries in the _____ that specifically work to feed the hungry.

We encourage our members to live with an "_____ _____" towards their brothers and sisters,

to the extent that the Lord makes you _____.

Feeding the hungry is a practice of generosity that:

-imitates the _____ _____ of the gospel;

-expresses the transformed _____ of the Christian; and

-points to a world where hunger no longer _____, due to the eternal _____ of God (***Rev 7:15-17***)