

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series: The Way, Living like a Saint

It is that time of year we all love; the leaves are changing, the weather is crisp and cool, the kids are picking and carving pumpkins. And it's time to talk church finances!!!! It may also be that time of year we like to avoid or turn the radio station when the giving campaign comes on. That's right; the money talk. But what if this year, when we talk about stewardship, we talk about it with the saints? What if we look back to our shared church history to some faith leaders who patterned their life in such a way that their gratitude, generosity, and joy simply overflowed? What can they teach us today about our own generosity?

Join us for this October as we celebrate the witness of the saints and discover how a few we may not know lived their lives with joyful obedience and generosity. And may we be inspired to "go and do likewise."

Message description:

What does it mean to offer ourselves as holy and living sacrifices? As United Methodists, we believe that when we join a local church, we are committing to live out the mission of God with a particular group of people. And we commit to support that faith community with our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. We also believe that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses with the saints who have gone before us and set the example, and who still inform our faith today. We are called to be holy and to offer all that we have for the furtherance of God's Kingdom here. Sometimes that means giving out of necessity. When God moves, when the Spirit surprises, when the need arises; we respond. Much like Sarah Crosby and Simon Peter, we must be ready to give what we have to respond to the needs of the moment to share the gospel! Trusting that the Spirit will equip us with everything we truly need at that time.

Key Scriptures

Romans 12:1-1, Acts 11:1-18

Questions Related to This Week's Message:

1. We are called to be holy and living sacrifices, but really this is just another way to think about discipleship; offering all that we have to God to build God's Kingdom here. Have you ever thought about financial stewardship in this way, as a spiritual discipline of discipleship? Why or why not?
2. What makes you uncomfortable about talking about money, or giving, or tithing with your church community?
3. What surprised you about the re-telling of the story of Peter and Cornelius? Did you hear anything differently this time?
4. What inspired you about the story of Sarah Crosby?
5. Have you ever seen God move in surprising ways and you had to respond in ways not planned to meet a need?
6. What do you think are the greatest needs facing our church, community, and world today? How can the church offer what it has in these moments to meet the need and to glorify God in all that we do?

Going Deeper:

Read Matthew 14:13-21 and an essay on it here: <https://www.journeywithjesus.net/essays/3081-the-miracle-of-gathering>

From the essay by Debie Thomas?

"I know that there are any number of conversations or even debates to be had about what exactly happened with that crowd and that little boy's lunch two thousand years ago. Did Jesus really break the laws of science as we know them, and multiply those loaves and fish? Or was the actual miracle the opening of hearts and the channeling of generosity, such that five thousand people decided, as a result of their encounter with Jesus, to share their precious food with each other?"

- How did God move in this story in a surprising or unexpected ways?
- Have you ever considered that maybe the miracle was inspiring generosity the crowd to share what they had and that it was enough?
- How can this inspire us to share what we have and trust that God can take, bless, multiply, and use it to meet the needs of others and build the Kingdom?
- What sticks out to you about Debie's thoughts on the power of gathering? Reflecting on covid quarantine time, how do you appreciate gathering with people differently now?
- One of the ways we commit to supporting Revolution is through our presence- in worship, here at house group, at fellowship events, and the general life of the church. Why do you think physical presence together is so important for our discipleship?

Commitment card:

- Review the commitment card as a group.
- Share one way you are planning to respond.
- How can your group support, encourage, and hold each other accountable to fulfilling your commitment?