



281.890.1900
TheMETonline.org

Jones Road Campus
13000 Jones Road | Houston, TX 77070

Fry Road Campus | Hopper Middle School
7811 Fry Road | Houston, TX 77433

[The MET Worship Band performs *Kingdom of Comfort* by *Delirious?* while a video shows an increasing pile of pictures being placed on a table top depicting creature-comforts typically enjoyed by Americans. Handwritten notes are attached to the pictures spelling out the lyrics as they are sung.]

That video is a sobering reminder of the country in which we live and the spiritual battle that probably is fought nowhere else but here in this country; and that is, with stuff and materialism and things that so deaden our heart to all the good things that God wants to do with us and through us and the good things that God wants to do for us.

Now before I start my message this morning I want to introduce you to a very special friend. You're going to be hearing a lot more from him on the 13th of this month. You've heard me refer to him before—you've heard me talk about The Ghost—the African pastor whom the Muslims have tried to kill seven different times. You're going to hear more about his story on the 13th. One of those times—though they did not kill him—they managed to break his hip, and he is here in our country at our invitation. We have—our church—has set up for him an operation to get his hip fixed.

And so the Muslims said: We could not kill him, but we can make him limp. And when he is through with this operation I told him: We're going to buy you a pair of tennis shoes, some jogging shorts and you're going to run around the mosque and say: We're not limping any more.

Please welcome Pastor Zachariah Sserwadda and his wife Robinah. Would you stand up, Zachariah? We welcome you, my brother. Thank you for being here, Zachariah. What an exciting testimony he has and work that he is doing in Uganda.

Many of you remember Pastor Henry [Ssevviiri]. Pastor Henry came from Pastor Zack's ministry. We're going to be telling more of those stories on the 13th when we have our in-gathering offering for the *Big Give*.

Take your Bibles, if you will, and turn to *1 Timothy, chapter 6*.

I think that all of us can probably agree in this room—myself included—that we get caught up in what we just saw [on the introductory music video]. It is so easy to get caught up in the rat race of: I've got to have more so that I can prove that I've got a good life. All over our country, especially this time of year, we are getting all types of advertisement—all types of marketing—that keeps me thinking: I don't have enough and I deserve more. And that somehow their product—

- Their toy
- Their video game
- Their coat
- Their car
- Their stuff
- Their fishing things

—that’s going to finally, finally make me happy because I am entitled to be happy. In fact, the nature of advertising is not just to tell us about a product but to make me feel discontent and to make me feel entitled.

If we could just have contentment—if we in our hearts could manage the spiritual gift of being content—then we would be so much more useful to God. The things that God has given us—especially in this country—the things that God has given us can be really leveraged by the Holy Spirit of God to do so much good around the world. But yet in this country—more so than any other country I’ve ever been in—

- The constant pressure to have more
- The constant pressure to be more
- The constant pressure to make more
- The constant pressure to show everybody around you that you have stuff

—many times kills what the Spirit of God may want to do through the finances that He has given us.

We really believe that we are entitled to the good life. The only thing that can combat that entitlement is contentment. And that’s addressed in *1 Timothy, chapter 6*.

Now in *1 Timothy*, he begins in *verse 3* (kind of) introducing the scripture that I want to lead you up to by talking about false teachers, who twist the Bible—who take the Word of God and use it for their own means—and cause dissension and arguments and strife. And then the bottom line is:

- They use the Bible
- They use Christianity
- They use the Scripture

—to profit for themselves because they “think that godliness is a means of financial gain.” [*1 Timothy 6:5 (NIV)*] They believe that following God is a means (byway) that you will become rich. And these false teachers have as their motive: to get rich.

So their belief in God led them to a behavior of getting rich. Because what we believe really does matter in our behavior. The way that we believe about God, and the things and the money that God gives us, determines how we’re going to behave with those things.

BEHAVIOR FOLLOWS BELIEF

These people believed that God was going to make them rich for themselves. Therefore—

- They served God
- They preached the Gospel
- They took money from people

—for the sole end of becoming rich themselves.

But look in *chapter 6*, in *verse 7*, and here’s the principle here. He says that they believe “that godliness is a means of financial gain” [*1 Timothy 6:5 (NIV)*] and that’s wrong thinking. He says the target is not for us to get rich, but the target for us is much different as believers. In

verse 9 (I've totally lost my place here—What did I say?—give me a verse right up here—verse 7. Thank you very much. I knew it. Now if I could just find the book in the Bible, we'll be going.)

⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

1 Timothy 6:7-8 (NIV)

Now, here's the bottom line on our entitlement mentality in America. Nowhere else in the world have I found any other type of people that would say that they're entitled to certain things. In fact, most people in the world struggle just to get food and water—just to get a meal to get by. But here in America we believe that we're entitled to everything:

- To nice transportation
- To a beautiful home
- To a [cushy] retirement
- To nice vacations
- To the type of medical care that we believe that we deserve

We believe we are entitled to it. And the only way to bust that entitlement is to understand that what God gives us we should be content with. In other words, we should choose contentment.

ENTITLEMENT BUSTERS... CHOOSE CONTENTMENT

Paul says:

⁶ [But] godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁸ [But] if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

1 Timothy 6:6, 8 (NIV)

Now honestly (and I will confess to you this morning) many of the things that I have at my house I don't need. Do you?

- Are there things in your home
- Are there things in your garage
- Are there things in your attic
- Are there things in storage sheds
- Are there things in a safe somewhere

—that if you didn't have them, that you would continue to live?—yeah. What does that mean?—that we have more than what we need.

Now here's the problem:

- You're going to see something else on the television (or)
- You're going to drive by something (or)
- A friend's going to tell you something that they have (or)
- You're going to see something in a magazine

And this is what's going to happen when you see that thing—here's what you're going to say: I *need* that—just when we said I already have stuff that I don't need. And really what we're saying is: I *want* that. And we'll spend money on it. Why?—because we have more money than we need so that we can go out and buy things that we don't need. Only in America does that happen.

I've got things that I don't need. I've got more money than I need. So I can go out and buy more things that I do not need so that I can go and make somebody else rich by renting out the storage unit that they just built. Isn't that the truth?

Think about last Christmas. Where's the stuff that was given to you or you bought and gave to your kids or to your spouse or to a friend? Where is that stuff?—they don't know. Most of them took it back and got a gift card for it because they didn't like it anyway. They wanted to get something else that they didn't *need* but that they *wanted*—“...godliness with contentment is great gain.” [1 Timothy 6:6 (NIV)] The only thing that we really need—and the baseline/bottom [for] contentment: if I have food and if I have clothing, then I have enough.

You know what really still haunts me even though it's been six to eight weeks removed now? When I look up there at that picture of Samuel, [who] lives in Henry's village and I asked him: What do you think about when you think about your life and when you think about your future?—

- He didn't mention college
- He didn't mention getting married
- He didn't mention going to the homecoming or playing on the football team
- He didn't mention what he's going to get for Christmas

You know what he thought about?—he said: I don't think about my future. All I think about is how am I going to find food to eat today.

That's the difference. In any other country [than America] that would be the preoccupation. Of all the countries that we minister in, that's what it's like. But here in America, it's like *Disney Land*®. We just stand in line and do the rides and eat the stuff and get the souvenirs until we can't even be entertained anymore. Life is not about prosperity and getting rich. Life is not about your stuff.

TO CHOOSE CONTENTMENT, YOU MUST REALIZE: LIFE IS NOT DEFINED BY YOUR “STUFF”

All of us spend time and money on stuff that breaks down, that we grow tired of, that we don't use anymore and ends up in a garage sale somewhere. Which, by the way, if you haven't had a garage sale lately, have one and give the money to the *Big Give* on December 13th. You know you've got stuff up there. Hey, sell your Christmas decorations that you're not using anymore. They're up in your attic too. Or even better yet, go to the storage shed you haven't been in awhile and pull out what's there.

I read a statistic the other day that almost half of the people that store stuff in there forget what's in there and forget that it's stored and they never go back to it. And most of it is sold by the

people who own those places—which, by the way, I’m investing in one of those. That sounds like a good deal.

Look, Paul reminds us our stuff is very, very temporal.

For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of this world.

1 Timothy 6:7(NIV)

Nothing was a more sober reminder to me of that than this past week when I went to Las Vegas and my brother and I cleaned out my mother’s apartment. Do you know why?—because she doesn’t need that stuff anymore. My mom’s dead and she’s in Heaven. And in about a half of a day every material thing that my mother owned was taken out of that apartment and given away to a family who needed that stuff—right down to her clothes. And right now—other than a marker that will be in Newfoundland, Canada, that bears her name of her final resting place—there will be no material reminder that my mother ever walked this earth.

The same is going to be true of me and you. One day every remembrance of me that has a material aspect to it is going to be gone, including this body. This body will decay and blow into dust and you’ll never see it again.

- And so with my bank accounts
- And so with my truck
- And so with everything else that I own

It will go away and nothing will ever say again, “This belongs to Sal,” because Sal’s gone.

Let me tell you what happens to our material stuff that our culture makes us go and buy and tells us:

- You can’t live without this
- This is the mark of who you are
- When you drive this then people are going to know you’re somebody

Let me tell you: when you die you’re nobody, and that car is nothing, and your kids are going to fight over your stuff anyway. All of it’s going to be gone. When we die we take nothing with us—period.

Have you ever seen the show on *A&E [TV]* called *Hoarders*? How many of you have ever seen that? [Illustrates with a raised hand an affirmative response] Yeah, only in America could you do that. Here’s a reality show about people who hoard. Everything they get they keep. They have hoarded so much you can’t even (barely) walk into their homes. Their homes are unlivable because they have so much stuff. Their life is such a mess because of this stuff that they have to go in and do an intervention. Only in our country will people have to have an intervention from having too much stuff. Maybe I need an intervention. Maybe you need an intervention. Maybe we ought to be on that reality show, the *Hoarders*.

Jesus told a story one time about a guy who hoarded. He said: There was a certain rich man who had many goods. And he said to himself (in his heart, you know): What should I do now? I’ve got a lot of stuff here. I know what I’ll do. I’ll build bigger barns. I’ll go plant more stuff. And

then at the end when I fill all those barns up, here's what I'm going to say: Soul, be at rest now. You have much goods; eat, drink and be merry. But then Jesus said: You fool! Don't you know your soul is going to be required of you this night? Then who shall get everything that you've worked for? [Luke 12:16-20 (paraphrased)]

It is a sobering reality to know that everything that I have materially really isn't going to go with me:

- Every stitch of clothes
- Every piece of jewelry
- Every piece of property

Every anything—even my hair products—don't go with me. Nothing goes. It all stays behind. That's why their caskets are made for one person and barely enough room for one—because nothing goes with them.

TO CHOOSE CONTENTMENT, YOU MUST REALIZE: MATERIALISM AND ENTITLEMENT ARE A TRAP

Verse 9 in 1 Timothy says this:

People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

1 Timothy 6:9 (NIV)

Now notice what it says. It doesn't say those who *are* rich are the ones that fall into temptation and a trap and foolish things and harmful things; but those who *want* to be rich.

Now the Bible is clear: The blessing of the Lord makes a man rich [Proverbs 10:22 (paraphrased)].

God blesses his people with exactly what they need and then He blesses beyond that and gives them more than what they need. But if our eye is constantly focused on what we *need* and not on Jesus, then we *want* to get rich and we start doing things that plunge us into ruin trying to *get* rich:

- Working two and three jobs
- Going off in silly investment schemes
- Doing all types of stuff

Why?—so I can get more. Let me tell you something: once you get more it's never going to be enough. Whatever it is, when you get it, it's going to be: If I just had a little bit more.

I can't remember if I shared it in this service last week or not. If I did, stop me (or you can try anyway) but:

- They surveyed people that were making \$30,000 a year—\$32,000 a year is the mean income of the Average-Joe in America—and they asked them: How much money would

it take for you to be content with what you have and you would be all right with? You know what they said?—\$50,000—if I had \$50,000 man, I would be set up.

- So they asked people [making] \$50,000: What would it take for you to feel secure and content that you had enough money? You know what they said? If I had \$75,000—man!—that would do it.
- So they asked the people [making] \$75,000: How much would it take? They said: You know what? If I had \$100,000 I'd be content and I know all my needs would be met.
- They asked the guy making \$100,000: How much would it take? He said: It would take at least \$200,000 to make me content.

So, what's the point? The point is this: If you're not content now, you're not going to be content then. If you don't have enough now, you're not going to have enough then when you get whatever it is that you think you need. Why is it a trap?—because it is the wrong life measurement.

The love of money is not about how much money I have in the bank, it's about how much greed I have in my heart. It's not about how much money you have in the bank. It's not about what you drive or where you live. It's about what is in your heart concerning money.

Look what Paul says in *verse 17, chapter 6, of 1 Timothy*:

Command those who are rich in this [present] world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

1 Timothy 6:17 (NIV)

Don't be arrogant, he says. Don't put your "hope in wealth, which is so uncertain...."

TO CHOOSE CONTENTMENT, YOU MUST REALIZE: ARROGANCE IS A TEMPTATION IF YOU HAVE A LOT

Now, why does he say it's a temptation for people who have money to be arrogant? A couple of reasons—number one: Because when you have money you think you actually control more than you really do—you think you actually control (like):

- You can control where you're going to vacation.
- You can control which doctor you're going to.
- You can control what your yard looks like.
- You can control what furniture that you have.
- You can control where you're going to live.
- You can control where you're going to eat.
- You can control where your kids are going to go to school.

So you think. And then, after awhile, you actually think: I control my life because I have money.

The second thing is that you begin to think that your wealth is a result of your knowledge and skill, and not a gift from God. Anybody in this place that has anything at all (is) you have it because the grace of God has granted you whatever ability that you have, and whatever knowledge that you have for you to get what you have. It is all a gift of God. You shouldn't boast about anything.

So, you're the President of a company. Would you be the President of that company if you were born—

- Somewhere else?
- To different parents?
- At a different time?
- In a different state or a different country?

Or what about if you were born without that IQ? What if your IQ was subnormal? What would you do then?

Everything we have is a gift of God—everything—and it should be received with grace and thankfulness. But not everything we have is for us. That's why we should never put our hope in money.

TO CHOOSE CONTENTMENT: DO NOT PUT YOUR HOPE IN MONEY

Just think about that. How uncertain is money? Well, two years ago—I guarantee you—the majority of us in this room had a whole lot more than what we have right now. And everybody said? [Congregational response: Amen!]

You know what it's like. Man, we were riding a number ten wave on the ocean of indulgence. We had everything we needed:

- Our 401(k)'s were going up.
- Man, our bonuses were going up.
- We were going to move up into another house.
- We've got the kids get to go to college wherever they want.

And all of a sudden in a matter of hours—hours!—everything came tumbling down.

My brother lives in Las Vegas, Nevada. Maybe 20 years ago, maybe a little less than that, he bought a house for \$140,000. Prior to two years ago his house was worth a half a million dollars. It's barely worth \$200,000 now. In fact the majority of people that live in Las Vegas, Nevada, owe more money on their house than what it's worth.

That's how quickly [snaps his fingers] things can change—just like that [snaps his fingers]. One minute you're on top of the world, the next minute you find out that the President of your company has squandered away the money and now you're bankrupt and you don't have a job. That's why you should never put your hope in riches. And those of us who have experienced that agree with *Proverbs 23:4 and 5*:

- ⁴ Don't weary yourself trying to get rich. Why waste your time?
⁵ For riches can disappear as though they had the wings of a bird!
Proverbs 23:4-5 (NLT)

Money sprouts itself wings and flies away—it's called children.

We need to choose contentment. Here's what the Apostle Paul says in *Philippians, chapter 4, verse 12*. He says:

I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little.
Philippians 4:12 (NLT)

Contentment is never based on what we have or what we don't have. It is a matter of choice. Whatever the economy sends our way we say: Thank you, God. I have food and I have clothing. With that I am content. I'm content.

Now, when Kristi and I first started out—literally—we didn't have anything. We had boxes that she would put table cloths over so it looked like we had furniture. It was almost playing house. We had an apartment, but we had no furniture. We had very little stuff. And over the years—guess what?—you accumulate a lot of stuff.

I often wonder: Could I go back to having nothing now that I've had stuff? [Could I] go back to having nothing and be just as content and happy as when I had stuff as we were when we didn't have stuff?

My happiness and my contentment is my choice. It has nothing to do with my circumstance or with my income. Now, if we are going to be content and you can get content with what you have, then the second thing is going to be easy to apply to breaking the entitlement mentality; and that is, practice generosity.

ENTITLEMENT BUSTERS...

PRACTICE GENEROSITY

We have a model here at our church called a *Generous Giving Model* where:

- We start out not giving
- Then we give a little
- Then we become consistent in our giving
- Then we give [more than] what our tithe is
- Then we become what I would like to call (those of us who are) *Spontaneous Givers*—where the Spirit of God speaks to your heart and you go into all the treasure that God has given you and say: The Spirit of God wanted me to give this—that you are a prompted giver by the Spirit of God. When you hear peoples' stories, when God speaks to your

heart and there's a need, there's no struggle, there's no argument: I have that. Here, God, here is what You gave me so that I could meet that need.

Let me take you to an *Old Testament* story. In the *Old Testament* there was a time when the people of Samaria were being attacked by the Arameans. Rather than the Arameans going down and just slaughtering all the people and losing some of their soldiers in the process, they decided just to starve the Israelites out—just to wait it out. Inside of the city a tremendous famine was going on; so much so that people were actually killing their children and boiling them and eating them—it was so bad. [*II Kings 6:24-29* (summarized)]

Outside of the city were four leprous men. They had this conversation with one another. They said: Look, if we go into the city we're going to die. There's no food there. If we stay out here, there's nothing out here either. We're going to die. But if we go to the camp of our enemy—if we go to the Aramean camp—there is food there. They might take us in and take care of us or they might kill us. Either choice we make, we die. We make the one choice to go into the camp of the enemy, we might live. And so they took a vote and they said: We're going to go into the camp of the enemy. We're going to go to the Aramean camp. [*II Kings 7:3-4* (paraphrased)]

Well, when they decided to risk at that moment—when they said: It may cost us our life, but we're going to die anyway. We're going to go into the camp—at that moment God caused confusion to come upon the camps of their enemy and all of the soldiers got up and ran away as if a giant army were chasing them. [*II Kings 7:5-7* (summarized)]

And here—come hobbling in—are four vile lepers, who walk into this camp:

- There's food cooking in the tents
- There are horses that are tied up
- There are clothes that are strewn about
- There's silver
- There's gold

They walk in and they start eating and they start taking the clothes and wrapping themselves in the clothes. [*II Kings 7:8* (paraphrased)]

We pick up the story now in *II Kings*.

⁸ When the lepers arrived at the edge of the camp, they went into one tent after another, eating, drinking wine, and carrying out silver and gold and clothing and hiding it. {That was the first reality show, *Hoarders*, right there.} ⁹ Finally, they said to each other, "This is not right. This is wonderful news, and we aren't sharing it with anyone! If we wait until morning, some terrible calamity will certainly [fall upon] us. Come on, let's go back and tell the people at the palace."

II Kings 7:8-9 (NLT, 1996 edition)

Do you see what they were doing? They were in *Disney World*®. They were in the land of plenty:

- They were sitting down and they were eating food they hadn't cooked—God had given them.
- They were wearing clothes they hadn't bought—God had given them.
- They were hoarding away silver and gold that they hadn't earned—God had given it to them.

Then all of a sudden it dawns on them: This isn't right. Man, I love that line, "This is not right." We are so blessed, "and we aren't sharing it with anyone!"

Every time I think about—

- Children that don't eat
- Orphans that have nowhere to go
- People who have no church
- Around the world: no missionary sent
- ...no Gospel preached to them

And I look at us and everything that we enjoy, inside of my heart I say: This is not right. This isn't right to have so much and do so little with so much.

Do you know what they did? They went back down to the city and said: Hey! They're gone. Look at everything that we have. You all come get some. [*III Kings 7:10* (paraphrased)]

Now, is it wrong to have stuff? No, God blesses us. It's not wrong. Is it wrong to have so much stuff and watch others go without anything—without the basics of life which Paul says in 1 Timothy [is] food and clothing? That's not right. And so we have to challenge ourselves. We have to learn to live on less. We have to let our money do good. That's what Paul says.

TO PRACTICE GENEROSITY: USE YOUR MONEY TO DO GOOD

1 Timothy 6, verse 18—look what he says:

Tell them to use their money to do good. [They should] be rich in good works, [and should] give generously to those that need, always being ready to share with others {What does it say?} whatever God has given them.

1 Timothy 6:18 (NLT, 1996 edition)

Now here's what he's saying—he said: I am preparing you so that you can do—look how many things:

- "do good"
- "rich in good works"
- "give generously"
- "always...ready to share"

God has blessed Kristi and [me] with so much so that we can be ready at any time to give *anything* that God has given us.

Now here's the principle—you ready?—here's the principle: **Hold loosely the things that you have been given; hold tightly to the things of God.**

Hold loosely to the things that you've been given because they're not really yours. The proof of that: when you die, you're [not] taking them, pal. Hold tightly to the things of God to do good:

- To give generously
- To make sure the Gospel goes around the world
- To make sure the poor are fed and clothed
- To make sure that those who are treated unjustly finally get justice in this life

Hold tightly to the things of God, hold loosely to the things of this world.

The Apostle Paul was right. I don't think people are impressed with our buildings and our worship services and all the other things that (maybe) people in this world count as success for a church. I believe that they're impressed when the church shows up with more than a talking head preaching the Gospel, but a full body living the Gospel and meeting desperate needs—

- Where people who need food get fed
- People who need medicine get it
- People who need to hear the Gospel get that

We show up not just with a “be warm and fed” but with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and here [are] some clothes and here's some food in the Name of Jesus. That's what we're going to be doing as a church.

God has blessed us with much; and to whom much has been given, much shall be required [*Luke 12:48* (paraphrased)].

Fast forward to the early church. Here's what you're going to find that they did—it's all through the Scripture. Here's what you're going to find in the early church there in the book of *Acts*:

All the believers were of one heart and {of one} mind, [and] they felt that what they owned was {What?} not their own; {There it is again—it's not their own—so} they shared everything they had.

Acts 4:32 (NIV)

Listen! It's not ours. Proof of it: When we die others are going to get it—not taking it with us. Proof of it: God says—I'll bless you with everything that you need and on top of that I'll bless you with more than you need so that when you get more that you need—

We need to ask ourselves this question: Why do I have this extra stuff? Why do I have this extra stuff? I mean:

- After you've paid your bills
- After you've put money in your bank account and you've saved
- After you've met the needs of your family

—and you still have money left over we ought to just bow and say: God, thank You so much, why do I have this? Because I have everything I *need*.

Could it be that God has given us so much extra because someone else, somewhere else, needs something else? We're not talking about big needs here. We're talking about food.

I'm going to challenge you this morning. I'm going to challenge you to eat what we feed at the feeding centers: rice and beans. We couldn't find *poché* because we don't have it over here; but we do have rice and beans.

I want you to see a video of a feeding station that we operate in Henry's village in Uganda. Afterwards I'm going to show you how you can eat the same things and be able to give to the *Big Give* by simply eating rice and beans. So turn your attention to the video screen.

[Pastor Sal speaking on video:] So we're at the *Good Shepherd School* once again at our feeding center. I'm going to lay a challenge out to our church that for one week for us to eat the same food that they would eat, which is a good subsistence-diet based on rice and beans. What we're going to do is: during that week, put aside the money we normally would spend at a restaurant or we would spend buying groceries and set that aside to be able to give that during the *Big Give* specifically for our feeding centers here in Africa.

Now, the good news is that the cook that we have here by the name of Jin has a great recipe for the beans and the rice portion. So follow me and we'll go talk to Jin about what she puts in the beans.

[Pastor Sal addressing the Jin's translator:] When does she start cooking the beans and the rice and what does she put inside the beans that makes them taste so good?

[Jin responds in her language with translation superimposed on the video in English:]

In the evening, I sort rocks out of the beans. I get up very early and start to boil the beans for 2-3 hours. When they are done, I mix them with oil, onions and curry powder. I must make sure that the beans are ready by 12:30 so they are ready for the kids at 1 p.m.

[Pastor Sal:] If I remember correctly, she gets oil and heats oil up. Is that right?

[Translator responds:] Yeah, when they are ready.

[Pastor Sal:] Yes, and then she puts in the onions. She puts in salt. She used an Indian spice—what was it?

[Translator responds:] Curry powder.

[Pastor Sal:] Curry powder, and all of that in the hot oil and she browns it and then sticks it into the beans and cooks it.

[Cooking notes superimposed on the video:]

To heated oil add: onions, salt to taste, curry powder, add to cooked beans.

[Pastor Sal:] That's a secret recipe that only Americans know now. All right, now for myself, I think I'm also going to put in some bacon fat; because Americans need fat, and so I'm going to put that in mine. But Jin is the best cook that you'll ever taste. And so if you follow her recipe not only will you eat them for a week but I'll bet you'll eat them for a lifetime.

Thank you, Jin, for sharing your recipe with us and for allowing us to cook them the same way that you do back in America. Thank you so much.

[Translator responds that Jin said:] Thank you.

[Pastor Sal:] Remember, the challenge is for one week. Set aside the money that you would spend at restaurants and for groceries. Allow us to give you the beans and rice. Follow Jin's recipe and for one week, then you'll be amazed at how much money you'll be able to give to keep this project going.

[Children are shown getting their food while these instructions are superimposed on the video:]

Pick up your packages of rice and beans in the lobby after the service! Cooking tips are included with each package...



All right, now, when you go outside, you're going to find a bag like this [displaying one of the handled plastic bags containing the rice and beans]. This is rice and beans enough for two people for one week. Now if you want more and you want to do more—if we have any left over—you're more than welcome to it.

Not only that but today I'm buying you lunch. There'll be rice and beans as you leave. That's a meal right there—you know you're going to spend \$60/\$70 out in the restaurant today—it's free right out there. Just grab a bowl of beans and rice. Tell your children: This is how they're going to be happy this week by being able to eat beans and rice and then take that money and give it to the *Big Give*.

Now if any of you are entrepreneurial in mind and spirit, you ought to be setting up a *Beano*® booth out there for all the folks that are going to be participating in this. Please do that.

Outside you'll also see a fabrication of a mud hut [like those] that are all in Henry's villages and literally all over Uganda. That's in place of the Christmas tree this year. I would love for you and your family to take a picture by that hut—as you would a normal Christmas tree—when you send out your [Christmas cards with] pictures this year. Rather than sending gifts say: I gave a gift today in your name to my church to feed children that will make an eternal difference in the lives of people you may never meet (before). Merry Christmas and God bless you. Go and do that. (Besides our Christmas tree is broken and it takes \$10-grand to buy a tree and right now that's a waste of money in my mind.) So go out there and take a picture by the [hut].

We partner with *Manna Worldwide*. The leader of *Manna Worldwide* and his wife are here with us today. So I want them to come up—this is Sandi and Karen Baird—why don't you all come up here real quickly. I want you to hear what their ministry does generally; and then specifically how we have partnered together in a particular place in Africa. Sandi and Karen, welcome; glad you're with us. Give us a little bit of an overview of what *Manna Worldwide* does.

[Mr. Sandi Baird:]

Thank you very much, Pastor. We do humanitarian work around the world: feeding centers, orphanages, clinics, and schools. We partner with churches like The MET to make a difference in the lives of children, their families, and their communities.

Two and a half years ago my wife and myself, and Terri Hill and Lauren Hill from The MET, walked through—unexpectedly through—a slum outside of Nairobi, Kenya, called Kibera. Kibera is the largest slum in Africa—1.2 million people in one square mile. And we didn't expect—we were on our way to Uganda; we hadn't really expected to go with this slum—but it was a divine appointment from God that we walked through that slum that day. And from that moment, we felt a responsibility—our organization and The MET felt a responsibility—to do something in that slum.

Two years ago you met Pastor Simon, who pastors in that slum and has a school. And from that moment, The MET began to help us to feed the children of that school—about 200 children at that time. And in the two and a half years that The MET has been helping in that slum, incredible things have happened:

- The school has grown to 450 children, who are being fed 3 meals a day 7 days a week
- The church has gone from 60 to over 300.

- We have a new scholarship program that my grown children have started to get the children from the elementary school into high school; providing an education that is paid for.
- My wife has begun a new program of micro-loans for the women, to get them jobs so they can care for their own families.

And because of everything The MET has done—the name of the church-school was the *Kibera Bible Baptist Church School* and now—in red paint they have painted, over the top of that sign, they have painted: *New Hope Church School*; because The MET has made a difference in that community. They’ve made a difference in Uganda in Henry’s community. And they are making a difference around the world.

[Pastor Sal:]

God bless you. Thank you, brother. Thank you for being with us this morning. All over the world, we partner with ministries just like Sandi and Karen’s where they know how to do a certain thing and we have a heart for it. And because they are the experts in it, we turn that over to them.

That little feeding center that you saw is primitive, but very, very effective—very low cost. The woman, Jin, that you saw that was cooking the food—do you remember last week when I shared with you about the woman that they found naked on the side of the road, who had run away from an abusive husband with her two children?—that’s her. That’s the kind of hope that we’re giving around the world. She loves God, she’s in her right mind—she has hope for those children of hers. Nearly—almost—an entire village of kids is being fed now.

So what is the pay-off? What’s the pay-off? The pay-off like when we give like we are supposed to give and we just don’t spend on ourselves for things that really aren’t going to last is that we pay it forward.

TO PRACTICE GENEROSITY: PAY IT FORWARD

There are things you can take to Heaven with you. There are some investments that you can make that when you die, they have gained tremendous interest and they are there to meet you when you get to Heaven.

There are two things that I know that are going to be in Heaven:

- God is going to be in Heaven with His word (and)
- People that we have won to Christ will be in Heaven

Every dime that we give—that goes to feed children, or goes to support a missionary, or goes to help good men of God like Pastor Zachariah down here—all has a tremendous interest for us when we die.

It’s put like this in the Bible, *1 Timothy, chapter 6, verse 19*:

In this way they will lay up a treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

1 Timothy 6:19 (NIV)

It's cheap life down here. It's things that glitter and shine and make noise and make people think better of us, that we might have a whole lot more money than what they have. But real life—real life—is only found in Jesus. Real compassion and real love is only found in Jesus. And I can guarantee you this: anything you give to those who deserve it and need it will meet you when you get to Heaven. There will be people speaking languages I've never heard or could ever understand that will greet you—and will greet me—when we get there because of the giving we have done.

Everybody has a chance to give something this time:

- You can give what you were going to spend for lunch [today].
- You can give that one meal a day that you're going to be eating beans and rice.

You can take some of those beans and rice and, when you're eating them at work, you can tell your work people (that you work with): This is what we are doing. I guarantee you, if they hear that, they may want to do it as well.

Are we ready for that kind of challenge? Where we can say to God: Here is everything You have given me, God, whatever You want, I'm going to give it wherever You want to give it.

Let's stand now with heads bowed and our eyes closed. In a moment we're going to be walking out of this room. If you do not know Christ, now is your time to give your life to Jesus. If you've never given your life to Christ, you pray this prayer and it goes just like this—in your heart do it silently as I do aloud:

Dear God, I need to have Jesus in my heart. I need to be saved. I turn from my sin. I ask Jesus to forgive me, cleanse me with His blood, and come into my life.

If you just prayed that prayer, in a minute when we are dismissed, right here on the lower floor to your right there is an *Encouragement Room*; make your way back there. We have some pastors that will pray for you.

Father, as we get ready to leave this place now, we want to lift up our brother Simon for his operation that he's going to have on the 7th of this month. I pray that You would take those surgeons and I ask You, Lord, that You would guide every thought that they have, every action that they take, every move, every instrument that they use would be guided by Your hand. And that Pastor Simon would be a testimony to Your grace; a testimony to Your goodness, Lord; and that You would give him many, many more years of fruitful service there in Uganda.

God, for us as we walk out of this building, we want to thank You, God, that You have given us so much. And because You've given us so much, we know that You are asking much of us for Your kingdom. And I pray, God, that You would speak to all of our hearts so on the 13th of this month, when we come back into this place with our *Big Give* bags, that they would be filled with hope, they would be filled with love, and they would be filled with the Gospel of Jesus Christ; because what is contained in there is going to result in that.

Bless Your people and bless Your Church now, God. May we honor You in all ways and all things. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

God bless you and we'll see you next week.

Lead Pastor: Dr. Sal Sberna

The MET
Metropolitan Baptist Church
13000 Jones Rd
Houston, TX 77070

Sermon Transcript Ministry
resource@TheMETonline.org

If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use—large or small—it will be used to measure what is given back to you.

Luke 6:38

(New Living Translation)

Legend:

(words in parentheses) = spoken by the preacher *but unnecessary* to the core sentence idea

[words in square brackets] = additional explanation for clarity *not spoken* by the preacher

{words in curly brackets within indented quote} = spoken explanation *not part of the quote*