

Casting Bread on the Water Part 1

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of generosity, giving, and faithfulness, and encourages listeners to cast their bread upon the waters, trusting that God will reward them.

Duration: 25:04

Scripture: Proverbs 11:24, Proverbs 19:17, Ecclesiastes 11:1, Matthew 10:42, Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians 9:6, Galatians 6:9

Topics: "Trust"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the principle of giving and sowing. He emphasizes the importance of being generous and giving to others, as it can lead to receiving help in times of need. Pastor Chuck shares a story of a man who had a vision of an old man calling for help in Panama, which led him to become a missionary there and experience great success. The sermon also includes a reference to Ecclesiastes 11:1, which encourages casting bread upon the water and trusting in God's provision.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life And make you whole
And now with today's message, here's Pastor Chuck. Cast your bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days. Now, there are those who understand this and interpret it as the bread meaning the wheat or the grain from which the bread is made.

And in Egypt, they used to have a practice in the flooding of the Nile River when it was overflowing its banks, to just stand there where the banks were overflowing and toss their wheat into the water. And that was the way they spread their seed rather than going through the fields. They would just toss it on the water and let the river carry it into the fields that were beside the river at the time of overflow.

And then it would take root and they would have a rich, rich harvest of wheat. And they think that Solomon is making reference to that practice of casting the wheat on the water. And you will find it after many days.

It'll grow. It'll come up and you'll have a rich harvest. The idea is that of receiving by giving away.

Now, it is a strange principle that is taught in the Bible, a spiritual principle. And that is, a person who gives shall receive. And you gain by giving.

Jesus expressed the principle. He said, give, and it shall be given unto you, pressed down, measured out, and running over shall men give into your bosom. He said, by whatsoever measure you meted out, it will be meted back to you again.

Paul said that. If you sow sparingly, you're going to reap sparingly. If you sow bountifully, you will reap bountifully.

So the more you give to the Lord, to others, the more you're going to receive. God will never be a debtor to you. The more you give to God, the more God is going to return to you.

He'll never be your debtor. It's an important spiritual principle that many people do not follow because they cannot logically understand it. It doesn't make sense that the more I give, the more I'm going to get.

My logic tells me the more I hoard, the more I'm going to have. But when Paul made this analogy, I can begin to understand it. He who sows sparingly, in other words, if you go out to sow your wheat and you just drop a seed here and drop a seed there and you sow very sparingly, I want to be very careful how I sow my wheat, then you're going to have just a little shoot here, a little shoot there.

You're not going to have much of a crop. But if you go out and just throw out the seed everywhere as you're sowing the wheat, then you're going to have a bumper crop of wheat. You're going to have wheat coming up all over the place.

So the more you give, the more you get. It's the idea that Paul is seeking to put across in this illustrating the principle of giving. Sowing sparingly, reaping sparingly, sowing bountifully, reaping bountifully.

So cast your bread upon the water, for you will find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, also to eight. Be giving, for you know not what evil shall be upon the earth.

You don't know what's going to happen to you in days to come. It may be that you're going to need help one of these days. If you're generous, if you're giving to people, then if you are in need, they will be helpful and generous to you.

And you don't know what the future may hold for you. And thus the encouragement to go ahead and be generous with others. Because it may be in the future they'll be in a good position and you'll be in a poor position.

And they'll be able to return then the favor to you. You remember Jesus gave the parable of the steward who was the accountant for his master. And his master said, Get the books in order, you're going to be fired.

Two weeks. So the fellow said, Man, I don't know, what shall I do? I'm too proud to beg, and I'm too weak to dig ditches to labor. I know what I'll do.

And he called in all of the creditors of his master and he cut their bills in half. How much do you owe my master? A hundred barrels of boil here, let me have your bill. And he wrote fifty.

And he cut all of the bills in half so that when he got fired, he could go around and say, Hey, you remember what I did for you? I cut your bill in half. I need, you know, five bucks. You know, I suppose you can spare it.

And so he took advantage of his position to set himself up for the future. Jesus said he was wise. He didn't say he was honest.

He just said he was wise. And he commended the wisdom of the man because he took advantage of his present position to set himself up for the future. And so Jesus said, Make use of the unrighteousness of money so that when you fail, when you die, you might be received into the everlasting habitations.

So the idea is you don't know what the future holds and so be generous with what you have. And you'll find that it will come back to you in the future. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth.

And if the tree falls toward the south or toward the north in the place where the tree falls, there it lies, there it shall be. So the clouds, you see them, cloudy day, but yet they empty themselves upon the earth. They give what they have.

And then they seem to keep having sufficient to keep giving. And as the tree falls, so it lies. Now he that observes the wind, you see there are always difficulties that we can imagine if I give what I have to others.

And if you start considering the difficulties of these things, many times you will not do them. He that observes the wind will not sow. Looks like it's a windy day today.

I better not plant the seed. I'll just stay in and sit by the fire and kick back today. It's too windy to sow.

But if you don't sow, you can't reap. And so he that regards the wind will not sow and he who regards the clouds shall not reap. You can't let problems or difficulties stop you from doing what is necessary in life.

Anything and everything that we do is fraught with danger or with problems or with difficulties. But you can't just say, well, I'm not going to do it because there are real problems that could rise from that. Now people oftentimes do that.

They let the difficulties stop them from important activities for God. And there are some people that can always see and define the difficulties. But if you just are looking for trouble, it's there.

I mean, you can find problems and you can find possibilities for problems in everything. I have a friend who was a professor of mine and a man who taught me so much, and I admire him tremendously. He has been a mentor to me for years, my younger years.

I traveled with him extensively just to glean from him. And his wife was one of those persons who could always see the problems or the dangers that might exist. And she was always saying, but that could be dangerous.

Don't you realize that this could happen or that could happen? And she was always pointing out the potential or possible dangers in anything and everything that you might want to do. And finally, one day he just turned to her and he said, Honey, living is dangerous. And that's true.

Living is dangerous. But you can't quit living just because it's dangerous. So, sort of the warning against that kind of inactivity that rises out of the possible difficulties that may exist.

Now, even as you don't know what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones grow in the womb of the mother who is with child, even so you do not know the works of God who makes all things. We don't really

know or understand the works of God. We don't really know the way of the Spirit.

Jesus said concerning the Spirit in John 3, The Spirit blows wherever it wishes. You hear the sound of it, but you can't really tell where it's coming from or where it's going. So is He that is born of the Spirit.

And so talking about the Spirit, the Spirit moves in interesting ways. We don't understand the moving of the Spirit. There are sometimes when I feel, Oh, the Spirit ought to really move now, and it doesn't seem to move.

And then there are other times, Man, what a quench. The Spirit sure can't move here. And He does.

And we just don't understand the moving of the Spirit. And that's what Solomon is saying here. We really don't understand how the bones of the child are formed within the womb.

Marvelous. The ways of God, the formation of new life within the womb. And so we don't really know the works, the ways of God who makes all things, makes that child in the womb.

Marvelous, marvelous, marvelous miracle. So in the morning, sow your seed, whether it's windy or not. In the evening, do not withhold your hand, that is from helping others, giving to others.

For you know not whether it will prosper either in this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. So get out and do your work, give to others, don't slack. And you really don't know what may come of it, but it isn't necessary.

It's just necessary that we do what the Lord has commanded us to do. It's necessary that I sow seed. It isn't really necessary that I reap the harvest.

God has called us to be his witnesses. Whether or not people accept or reject is not your problem. You are to just share the truth of God.

You're just to share the love of God. You're to share the word of God. Plant the seed in their hearts.

Sow the seed of God's word to people and then leave with God what comes of it. Don't worry about it. I was witnessing all week long.

No one would listen to me. Keep witnessing. Go out and do your job.

Do what you're supposed to do. And leave the rest with the Lord. Truly the light is sweet and it's a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun.

Daytime is a great time. But if a man lives many years and he rejoices in all of them, let him remember the days of darkness. For they shall be many.

All that come is vanity. You might live a good life, a long life, see a lot of daylight and all, but a day of darkness is coming, man, is what Solomon is saying. And there are going to be many too.

And all that you've done is going to come to nothing. Well, not quite so. Paul the Apostle encourages us in 1 Corinthians 15 by declaring to us that your labor for the Lord is not in vain.

Whatever you do for God is never in vain. And as I said, God calls you to sow the seed, to plant the seed, His word in the hearts of people, in the minds of people. Now, you're paid not by commission.

You're just paid a salary for doing the job of sowing the seed. And you get the same pay whether or not there's any fruit or lots of fruit. You're not paid by the amount of fruit that comes from sowing the seed.

You're just paid to sow the seed. So, it's not up to you to say, well, I just, you know, have no success in sharing my faith with others. Whatever you do for the Lord is never in vain.

God takes account of all that you do for Him. And your work for the Lord will be rewarded by Him. And the reward is not according to the amount of fruit that comes from it.

You may not see any fruit of your labor. God may not call you to reap. As Paul said, one sows, one waters.

God gives the increase. So, he that sows is nothing, he that waters is nothing, but it is God who gives the increase. I knew a man, a missionary, who has long since gone to be with the Lord, who was a bank president in San Jose, California when he accepted the Lord.

And he felt called of God as a result of a vision to go to Panama to preach the gospel, to be a missionary to Panama. He had this vision. And in his vision, he saw this old, gray-haired, gray-bearded man standing with one of these wooden plows.

And there was a big field here that was needing cultivating. And the old man in the vision was just too weak, and he was calling, come and help me to reap the harvest. And in the vision, he was aware that the call was in Panama, and so he resigned as the president of the bank, and he sold things that he had, and he went to school and studied the language and prepared, and he went to Panama as a missionary.

And he had tremendous success. He was a brilliant man, and he had tremendous success in his missionary endeavors in Panama. Built a very large church.

Became well-known throughout all of Panama. And one day, he received a call from the hospital there in Panama. And they said, we have an old man here in the hospital who is dying.

He is sort of incoherent. He's sort of babbling. We can't understand what he is saying.

And we don't have much background on this man, but we know that he was a Christian, and he was some kind of a missionary. But we feel that some Christian should come and pray with him because he's not going to last long. Could you come over to the hospital and visit this man? And so Dr. Edwards went over to the hospital, and when he walked into the room, he saw the gray-haired man with a gray beard that he had seen in his vision, and he prayed with the man.

The man was just there praying in the Spirit. That's why they didn't understand him. He was just praying in tongues.

And they said to him, we don't understand what he's saying. And Dr. Edwards said, don't worry, you never will. And the man died.

And Dr. Edwards became so interested because this was the man that he had seen in the vision that he began to inquire about him, and he found out that he was a Cumberland Presbyterian missionary. He had been down in Panama for years, and yet they could not find any converts. But he had been planting seed for years in Panama.

And God gave to Dr. Edwards the privilege of going down and reaping the harvest from the seed that was planted by this man. Now, when they stand before the Lord to receive the rewards for the things done in their bodies, and the Lord gives the rewards for this great missionary work that was done in Panama, the thousands of people who came to Jesus Christ, according to God's books and God's accounting, that old gray-haired Cumberland missionary will get the same or equal reward as Dr. Edwards, who had the privilege of reaping the harvest that came from the seeds that were planted by this old man. Because God rewards you for your faithfulness in doing what He has called you to do.

He's called you to sow the seed in windy days or cloudy days or whatever. Cast the bread upon the waters. We'll return with more of our verse-by-verse study through the book of Ecclesiastes in our next lesson, as Pastor Chuck Smith continues with more of Casting Bread Upon the Water.

And we do hope you'll make plans to join us. But right now, I'd like to remind you that if you'd like to secure a copy of today's message, simply order Ecclesiastes chapter 11, verse 1 when visiting the thewordfortoday.org. And while there, we encourage you to browse the many additional biblical resources by Pastor Chuck. You can also subscribe to the Word for Today podcast or sign up for our email subscription.

Once again, all this can be found at thewordfortoday.org. And if you wish to call, our toll-free number is 1-800-272-WORD. And our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time. Again, that's 1-800-272-9673.

And for those of you preferring to write, our mailing address is The Word for Today, P.O. Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California, 92628. And now, on behalf of The Word for Today, we'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry with your prayers and financial support. And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck continues his verse-by-verse study through the Bible.

That's right here on the next edition of The Word for Today. And now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck with today's closing prayer. Father, we thank you for the words of wisdom, instruction in righteousness and in truth and in equity.

May we walk, Lord, in that righteousness and in that truth. May we incline our hearts to understanding, to knowledge and to wisdom, and that we might, Lord, receive the rewards of the righteous. In Jesus' name, amen.

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