

2.07.10 EGCC Middle School Class

Theme: Giving

WATCH: Nooma video entitled, "Rich"

ASK

In the clip, Rob Bell says, "We're told, what we have isn't good enough. We're told, "Buy this. Consume That. Get this. And then we'll be happy."

- What are things that you think kids your age are being told they need more of?
- What do you personally want more of?

Bell also says that sometimes we like the stuff we have, but then we start to think due to commercials and what our friends have, that our stuff is too boring and that we need other things, different things, newer things.

- Are some of the things you want more of just newer versions of something you already have?

Rob Bell at the end of the clip says, "May you come to see that you are rich."

- Do you think your "richness" is a hard thing to see? Why?

Bell also says, "What can you do to be more generous? What is the next step for you?" This is probably the main message of this clip: To get us to think about how we can offer more.

But before we do that, let's look at the story of Jesus feeding the thousands.

READ *Mark 6:30 - 44*

30 The apostles (the word 'apostle' means "sent out") returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. 31 And Jesus said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while." For many people were coming and going, and the disciples had no leisure even to eat. 32 And so Jesus and the disciples went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves. 33 Now many saw them going, and knew them, and they ran to where Jesus was going on foot from all the towns, and got there ahead of Jesus and the disciples. 34 So when Jesus went ashore he saw a great throng. But he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. 35 And when it grew late, Jesus' disciples came to him and said, "This is a lonely place, and the hour is now late; 36 send the people away, to go into the country and villages round about and buy themselves something to eat." 37 But Jesus answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy ten thousand dollars worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" 38 And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." And when the disciples had found out, they said, "Five loaves and two fish." 39 Then Jesus commanded them all to sit in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. 41 And taking the five

loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. 42 And they all ate and were satisfied. 43 And the disciples took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44 And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men plus women and children.

ASK

- In verse 34, what did Jesus have for the crowd of people? (compassion)
- At the end of verse 34, what does Jesus do? (he teaches)
- Using these last two questions and answers, what gifts would you say Jesus gave the crowd? (care and knowledge)
- In verse 38, how much food does Jesus have to give to the people? (no food at all – but the disciples somehow find 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish)

TELL

- This brings us to verse 41, which is a key verse.
- In this verse is a pattern we see Jesus also do at the Last Supper and in Emmaus after he's resurrected.
- This pattern can also be helpful to us in answering Bell's question of how we can offer more.
- Here's the pattern: Jesus **takes** the bread and fish. Jesus **blesses** what he's taken. Jesus **breaks** the bread and then Jesus **gives** what he has taken, blessed and broken.

Let's break that down.

- **Take:** We can't give what we don't have. So these gifts that God gives us, whether they be skills or talents or things that other people give to us...we have to take it. We have to own it and possess it.
- **Bless:** Once we have taken what has been offered to us, then we give thanks for it and invite God into our using of the gift. We ask God to show us how to use this gift.
- **Break:** Often times, there will have to be some preparing of the gift that we have taken. Once we know how God is calling us to use what has been given to us, then we'll have to get it ready. This is the breaking part.
- **Give:** Once the gift we took is ready to be used, then we share it, give it in the ways we understand God is calling us to share and give it.

In the video, Rob Bell says, "The point isn't how can God bless America more, the point is how can America bless others? Who are *you* going to bless?"

These can be tricky questions to answer. The take, bless, break, give pattern can help us to answer these questions.

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- List the things that have been given to you, that you have taken and made your own (skills, talents, things).
- Choosing three of the things from the list, write down your thanksgiving to God for each of the three things.
- Then write down questions for God about how you are to use these gifts.
- Sit still for a few minutes.
- Then write down how you think God might want you to share these gifts.
- Write down what ways you have to prepare or “break” these gifts to make them ready for use.
- Write down how and to whom you think you are to share these gifts with.

If there's time:

ACTIVITY: Selling the Unknown (why it's hard to give without preparing/knowing).

- Appoint a student to be the “salesperson.” Pick someone who is good at making excuses or is comfortable answering questions about things they don't anything about.
- Explain that the sales person must persuasively sell the class on the contents inside a backpack without knowing what's inside.
- Once you have that person chosen, send that person out of the room for a minute or two to come up with some talking points. Feel free to send a teacher or shepherd out there to help.
- During that time, show the rest of the class what the person will be selling: A roll of toilet paper!
- Put the roll back in the backpack.
- Tell them that they need to listen respectfully, though it might be hard.
- Tell them to think of some questions to ask the sales person, like (How soft is it? What color is it? What can I use it for? Why should I buy your product and not your competitor's product?)
- Call in the salesperson to give his/her sales pitch.
- Ask questions.
- Have the salesperson pull out what s/he has been selling.
- Laugh hysterically.
- Ask them how they think this fits with what they've just discussed in class. (It's good to know what you got before you try to give it away.)