

Least of These, Lesson # 9 “Ministry in the New Testament Church”

Memory Verse

James 1:27 (NKJV) *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

[Matthew 25:31–46 Review]

Matthew 28:18–20 (NKJV) *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*

A New Kind of Community

Acts 2:42–47 (NKJV) *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

⁴³ *Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.* ⁴⁴ *Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,* ⁴⁵ *and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.* ⁴⁶ *So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,* ⁴⁷ *praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*

Acts 4:32–37 (NKJV) *Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.*

Deuteronomy 15:4 (NKJV) *except when there may be no poor among you; for the Lord will greatly bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance— Lush Islands*

Matthew 26:11 (NKJV) *For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always.*

God did not intend the church to be a vending machine for the poor

Acts 3:5–6 (NKJV) *So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.* ⁶ *Then Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.”*

2 Kings 4:1–2 (NKJV) *A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves.”* ² *So Elisha said to her, “What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?” And she said, “Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil.”*

***Acts 6:1** *In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. Food, not money.*

Matthew 25:35–36 (NKJV) *for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’*

Noticeably absent in this list, “I was broke and you gave me cash”.

1 Timothy 6:8 (NKJV) *And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.*

2 Thessalonians 3:10 (NKJV) *For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.*

James 1:27 (NKJV) *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

READ On Widows 1 Timothy 5:3–16

Dorcas’s Ministry and Witness

Acts 9:36–37 (NKJV) *At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, (gazelle) which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.* ³⁷ *But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room.*

Isaiah 58:7 (NKJV) *Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?*

***Acts 9:39 (NKJV)** *Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.*

Proverbs 31:13 (NKJV) *She seeks wool and flax, And willingly works with her hands. **Vs. 19–21** She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hand holds the spindle. ²⁰She extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. ²¹She is not afraid of snow for her household, For all her household is clothed with scarlet.*

Revelation 14:13 (NKJV) *... ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”*

Acts 9:40–42 (NKJV) *But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. ⁴¹Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. ⁴²And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.*

One lesson here is if you make yourself useful God may resurrect you!

Giving as a Way of Sharing

2 Corinthians 8:9–15 *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have. For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have. For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack—that there may be equality. As it is written, “He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack.”*

Galatians 2:9–10 (NKJV) *and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.*

2 Corinthians 9:6–9 (NKJV) *But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. ⁹As it is written: “He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.”*

Paul’s Guide to Living and Loving Well

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV) *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

***Romans 12:8 (NKJV)** *he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

Romans 12:19–21 (NKJV) *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Proverbs 25:21

James “the Just”

James 2:1–9

James 2:5–7 (NKJV) *Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? ⁶But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? ⁷Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?*