



Holy Inconvenience | Chad Bruegman | 12.16.2017

LG Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

If money were not an obstacle, what gift would you buy for someone this Christmas and why?

SHARE

Welcome to our brand new series, entitled "The Grace of Giving."

Giving is a grace. Giving is a privilege. Giving changes lives. When God's people rally together to give to the purposes of God, lives are changed. We are to give back to God in obedience, but we are also to give above and beyond out of abundance. As followers of Jesus, we want to make an impact in the world by cultivating a spirit of generosity.

The Apostle Paul talks about excelling in the things of God in his letter to the church in Corinth. They excelled in everything, they were excellent in ministry; a people full of faith and knowledge. But Paul points out that for the church to excel in all things, it includes this grace of giving.

2 Corinthians 8:1-7

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this

act of grace on your part. But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

When we excel in the grace of giving and become rich in generosity, lives are changed and the Kingdom continues to expand.

This weekend, Chad followed up last week’s message on holy irresponsibility with the challenge to walk in a perpetual state of holy inconvenience. In our culture today, we don’t have much patience for being inconvenienced—especially during the holidays. We go from one Christmas party to the next, hurrying to get presents wrapped and cookies baked, with a one-track mind towards making it to December 25th.

Yet as a result of our hurried search for convenience, we can miss the opportunity to be generous. It’s ironic how in this season of giving it’s so easy to become blinded to the chance to give. We fill our lives with gadgets and practices that are supposed to make life easier, expecting we’ll be able to do more with the time it saves us. But because so much of convenience is about maximizing time, we become entitled to the time we have. We don’t allow ourselves to be inconvenienced, rather, we expect someone else to put off his schedule or change her plans. And just like that we miss out on experiencing the grace of God to walk in a state of holy inconvenience.

What is your shameless guilt of convenience (i.e. a cleaning service, Uber Eats, Amazon Prime)?

How do you respond to being inconvenienced in a culture of convenience?

G R O W

Read Matthew 1:18-25

The story of Jesus’ birth is all but convenient. Both Mary and Joseph had their own plans for their lives, but so did God. Mary was a teenage girl, betrothed to a hard-working carpenter. She took care of household chores in her family’s house and would take on the same responsibility in her new household upon marrying. Joseph, was a respectable young man in

the community who had planned to get married, carry on the family business and raise a family. Joseph and Mary had hopes to live in Nazareth and make a simple life.

But when the angel of the Lord came to them, they had to choose to embrace the calling on their lives as carriers of Jesus' story. It was an unexpected trajectory that radically shifted their own dreams and the dreams they had for one another. Though the story sounds beautiful to us thousands of years later, the inconvenience of Christmas cost Mary and Joseph greatly. Upon their decision to say, "yes" to this invitation to holy inconvenience, everything changed. Relationships were broken. Their social status plummeted; their dreams were misplaced. They were suddenly outsiders in their small, close-knit community.

The miracle of Jesus' birth was a holy invitation for Mary and Joseph to experience the grace of walking in holy inconvenience. Though they didn't know the full extent of their decision—how Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection was all part of God's perfect plan to save the world—the reward of faithfully following God in obedience was far greater than the cost. It was the plan from the beginning. It was always plan A...even though to them it felt more like plan B. Still, Mary and Joseph were faithfully obedient to God and continued to live generous, grace-saturated lives—walking in a perpetual state of Holy inconvenience.

Identify some of the additional inconveniences surrounding the birth of Christ.

In addition to Mary and Joseph, who else in Scripture serves as a model of someone who walked in holy inconvenience?

When have you said "Yes" to an invitation to walk in holy inconvenience and seen God's blessing on the other side?

What keeps you from saying "yes" to walking in holy inconvenience?

MOVE

While many of us won't have the surprising luxury of angels appearing in dreams detailing how inconvenient the next stage of our life will be (like Mary and Joseph in the Christmas narrative), the Spirit will call us to walk in holy inconvenience. Whether it's a prompting to invite neighbors over for dinner during a busy week, take the time to sit with a grieving friend,

or secretly give Christmas presents to a family from work, we cannot be blinded to the opportunities of generosity around us. Whatever the call, as followers of Christ we have the responsibility to be the tangible hands and feet of Jesus even when it's inconvenient. The examples of Mary and Joseph and the whole story of Christmas inspire us to walk in holy inconvenience remembering our calling as change agents for God to bring restoration to a broken world through the message of Jesus.

What stirs up inside of you when you hear the challenge to walk in a perpetual state of holy inconvenience?

How has your obedience to Jesus been based upon what is convenient for you?

Is there something God's calling you towards that you've been avoiding because it seems too inconvenient?

P R A Y

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely. Ask that God would open your eyes to the opportunities to walk in holy inconvenience this Christmas season.

G O

As you go, remember the Savior born to us is Immanuel, God with us.

Ephesians 3:20-21

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, **to Him be the glory** in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen!"

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