Series: Bad Times, Good God Scripture: Habakkuk 3:17-19 Date: Dec. 3 & 4, 2016

-[LET'S START]-

• What is your favorite Christmas tradition or memory?

-[LET'S TALK]-

- 1. What does it mean to be generous in bad times? What is God expecting of you and me when our resources are being depleted?
- 2. Do you believe that everything you own, your talents and skills, and all of your resources come from God's grace? If so, how does this belief change the way you live? If not, what do you believe and why?
- 3. Do you know any joyful givers? What do you think motivates their joy? How can you become a more joyful giver?
- 4. Is it difficult to give to the Church? Why or why not? What are some ways you've used money that has produced lasting joy for you?
- 5. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 and talk about how to give well.
 - Under what conditions/motivations does the author assert the Corinthians should give?
 - How does giving impact the giver and those receiving?
 - How is it possible for so much good to come from giving in the manner described here?
 - Where does the credit ultimately lie with giving? Why?

—[LET'S ACT]—

• Make a budget of sacrificial giving! When you make a budget for your next month, make "Giving" the first line item on your budget and devote money to this first before allocating to bills, entertainment, and anything else. When you do this, pay attention to what you are feeling. Are you hesitant? Indifferent? Anxious? Joyful? If you feel anything but joy and gratitude to God, be sure to talk to a trusted friend in Christ and get some encouragement for joyful giving!

-[SERMON REVIEW]-

- Losing material security can cause a great deal of stress and even suffering. Overcoming those times means rejoicing in them. To rejoice in our suffering means to remain generous in our giving, even in bad times!
- God defines generosity in terms of sacrifice, which means allocating a portion of your resources to give to God first, before allocating them to anything else—even before necessary things like food and clothing.
- Furthermore, sacrificial giving should be joyful. All that we are in Christ and everything we have is God given! Thus, the joy comes from the love we have for God and all He has done for us.
- We tend to spend effortlessly on the things we value, like, or love, but when it comes to things that we don't like, then it's hard to spend the money. So, if you don't find joy in spending resources on God, what does that say about how much you value, like, or love Him?
- God cares about changed lives like yours and mine, so God asks us to give back a sacrificial portion to His cause, but not out of obligation. Instead God asks us to joyfully and sacrificially be generous towards Him.

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