

GOD THE GIVER

Stewardship Narrative Series presented by TENS

*The Feast of All Saints
John 11:32-44*

When Jesus found out that his friend Lazarus was dead, he started his journey toward “unbinding” him. Jesus had been teaching and showing his followers the abundance of living in God’s realm. God gives life, not takes it. God releases resources, not buries them. God expects us to circulate and “flow” our gifts, not bind and restrict them. Perhaps Jesus was “greatly disturbed in spirit” because of the way the people around him resisted his movement toward showing God’s abundance. First they declared Lazarus dead and buried him; there was no hope and there was nothing anyone could do. Then they blamed Jesus for his death: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus insisted that they take away the stone, they complained: “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.”

How often do we use the same techniques to resist giving and releasing our resources? We might say: How can we give when we

are still grieving our loss. We blame it on the bad economy. Some of us blame God for not doing something to turn our economy around. In fear of losing more, we lock up our resources. And yet, we complain that it might smell really bad if we open it since we instinctively know that by stopping the flow of resources, they will decay and turn rotten. Resources are like water: When it doesn’t flow, it turns rotten and smells and becomes opportunities for destructive things to grow.

Jesus finally confronts us by naming the heart of the issue: “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”

Do you believe in God the giver? Do you believe in the abundance that Jesus had shown us? Do you believe in the resurrection? When we believe in the abundance of God, we can have the courage to open and unbind our resources. In doing so, we join Jesus,



with all the saints in the past and in the future, in becoming the extension of God the Giver causing resources to flow and rejuvenate our lives, communities and creation.

Reflection Questions:

In what ways do you resist giving and releasing your resources?

How has giving in the past opened your heart to God and others?

What steps might you take to “unbind” your spirit of generosity and abundance?



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The Episcopal Network for Stewardship