

by the grace of God.

Interesting that generosity not only means a willingness to share or to give money, help, or time freely; it also means nobility of character.

I.

he foundation of generosity – God’s gracious generosity with us!

Have you been touched by the good news of Jesus Christ? Let me ask that again, *have you been touched by the good news of Jesus Christ?*

If you have, then you know that your life has been eternally changed by the merciful, gracious, generous love of God through his son Jesus Christ!

God is not a taking God, he is a giving God! Every other religion is a taking religion. They demand from you.

The Christian faith at its very core is a giving faith

<sup>28</sup> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to GIVE His life a ransom for many.”

God says that he has given his very best for you.

Romans 8:31-32 (NASB95)

<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

2 Corinthians 8:9 (NLT)

<sup>9</sup> You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.

wages, then God's forgiveness of your sins is compared to your working 200,000 years to pay it off!

- God has given us everything we need for life and godliness 2 Peter 1:3
- God has given us his precious and magnificent promises 2 Peter 1:4
- God has promised us that we will share in the glory of his son, Jesus Christ Col 3:4
- God has promised us an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away. 1 Peter 1:3-4
- Need more? Ephesians 1:3-14 – God has blessed us with EVERY spiritual blessing.

Not only that, but God promises to be the source of your generosity!!!!

generous to others

God has entrusted wealth to us so we can distribute it to others.

## II.

life that counts will be generous with time – a servant

When you begin to understand the spirit of generosity, you will start by looking for opportunities where your time, energy, talent, and giftedness can be used to serve others and bring glory to God's kingdom!

Matthew 20:26-28 (NASB95)

<sup>26</sup>“It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, <sup>27</sup>and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; <sup>28</sup>just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

## stewards of the manifold grace of God.

When you see the gifts you have as on loan from God, you will begin to look for ways to put that gift to good use!

### III.

life that counts will be generous with money –  
a giver

Zaccheus Luke 19:1-10

Half of my possessions I will give to the poor.

Two things happened to Zaccheus

He met the real God, the God of love, the God of generosity.

He discovered that he had been worshipping a false god – MONEY!

What was his knee jerk response? It was a response

that your heart will follow your treasure!

Where your treasure is there your heart will be also.  
Matt 6:21.

What does generosity look like?

A. We give even when times are tough

2 Corinthians 8:1-4 <sup>(NLT)</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. <sup>2</sup>They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. <sup>3</sup>For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. <sup>4</sup>They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in

Wow! Sounds like Paul was writing to the Conejo Valley in 2010! But folks, compared to the Thessalonians, we are KINGS! Even now. Yes times are tough, but they are not as tough for us as they are for people in Haiti.

**Greed looks to people who are better off than you and enviously asks, *why not me?***

**Generosity looks to people worse off than you and asks, *how can I help?***

Paul doesn't stop with the great affliction and deep poverty. He goes on to give two more characteristics.

They were filled with abundant joy  
Their joy overflowed with rich generosity

The only way you can have overflowing joy and generosity in tough times is if your God isn't money!

Generosity is not a function of wealth, it is a reflection of a heart that has received God's generosity!

Look at what Paul is saying. They didn't stop at giving what they could afford, they gave beyond their ability.

Kind of reminds me of the widow that blew Jesus away.

Mark 12:41-44 (NLT)

<sup>41</sup> Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. <sup>42</sup> Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins. <sup>43</sup> Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions.

<sup>44</sup> For they gave a tiny part of their surplus,

For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. <sup>4</sup>They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.

These guys begged Paul **again and again** for the **privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem!**

**Conclusion: What keeps us from being generous**

Fear

Lack of trust

Selfishness

Generosity starts with an act of faith. Do you believe

may be the orphanage in Uganda, it may be a next door neighbor – start asking God for opportunities to be generous.

The first steps are kind of scary, but once you

Application:

Are you giving back to God?

Are you generous with your time as a servant?

Are you opening your home up to others?

Are you giving to meet needs?

Are you investing your life in others? Especially others who cannot ever pay you back?