

Generous Giving - The Joy of Generosity

Generosity is at the very heart of the Bible and, therefore, our faith. As you are reading this, I would encourage you to consider generosity in a much wider form than merely money and wealth. We should be considering, **Time, Talents** and **Treasure** amongst other things. Before we do, though, let's first consider the generosity of God.

Probably the most famous verse in the Bible is John 3:16,

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

God gave His one and only Son to us so that we can have eternal life. There is no greater gift that we could have received than the gift of eternal life.

In Luke 11:13 it says,

"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

We know our heavenly Father will give the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who ask. During Jesus' ministry on earth, He did many miracles of provision from turning water into wine at a wedding, to feeding 5,000 people with just five loaves and two fish.

James 1:17 sums it up very well that,

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."

We see God's abundant generosity yet, so often, we find ourselves holding back, unsure if we have enough or whether our giving truly matters. Today, let us discover the joy that comes from generous giving and how it leads to a life overflowing with joy.

The apostle Paul writes,

"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." - 2 Corinthians 9:7

Generosity is not just an act but an attitude, a joyful response to God's blessings. Jesus Himself taught,

"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." - Luke 6:38.

As we open our hands to give, God opens His to bless us abundantly.

Having spent a large part of my career in financial services, it would be natural to tell people to save money, be careful what you give. My experience of God's kingdom, however, is the more we give, the more we receive, not necessarily in material wealth but in spiritual richness and overflowing joy.

Proverbs 11:25 declares,

"The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed."

When we give, we participate in God's work and He fills our lives with meaning, purpose, and joy.

Generosity in Practise

As stated earlier, generosity is so much more than money and wealth; it encompasses time, talents, and treasure, all given freely as an act of love for others and love for Jesus.

Time – This can take many forms including visiting people, sending a message of encouragement to somebody, praying for people, or just being a listening ear. There are also many opportunities to serve in the Church or community. Time is one of the most precious things we have, and therefore giving your time to someone is so valuable.

Talent – What talents has the Lord blessed you with? Perhaps you are a very good cook and could take somebody a meal to bless them. Perhaps you are great at DIY and can help somebody in need. You could be strong in financial management and help people budget and steward their finances better. The list is endless. What are your talents and how can you be generous with them?

Treasure – One of my favourite passages in the Bible is of the widow who gave two small coins,

"And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'" - Mark 12:41-44.

She was commended by Jesus, not for the amount she gave but for the heart behind her gift. God delights in our willingness to share.

Summary

Being generous transforms us. As we give, we reflect Christ, who,

"though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich." - 2 Corinthians 8:9b.

The greatest joy comes when we follow His example of giving freely, loving deeply and living with open hands.

Take a few minutes to reflect:

1. How has the Lord been generous to you?
2. When have you experienced the joy of giving to others?
3. How can you practise generosity in new ways this week?

Generosity is not just about what we do, it is about who we are in Christ. As we give, our lives become vessels of His love, overflowing to bless the world around us and by doing so, we have great joy.

I started with John 3:16 which reminds us that God gave His one and only Son, so that whoever believes in Him can have eternal life. If you haven't made the decision to follow Jesus and would like to explore further, please speak to your pastor.

Prayer

Thank you, God, for your boundless generosity to me. Help me to give freely and joyfully, trusting in your provision. May my life overflow with your love and may others see your grace through my acts of generosity. In Jesus' name, Amen.