

Genero\$\$ity

Mark 12:41-44; Proverbs 3:9-10; Malachi 3:10-12

Many churches avoid talking about money out of fear of turning off unbelievers, who think, “*they always talk about money.*” And yet, Jesus said more about money than any other topic, including heaven and hell combined. When we do teach on money, we tend to focus on the principles of stewardship and wisely managing what God has given us. In so doing, we neglect the principle of generosity, that God loves a cheerful and generous giver.

The sermons in this 4-week series aim to change our minds about money. Rather than approaching the topic with a scarcity mentality—there’s only so much to go around so we better not squander it—we want to approach it with an abundance mentality—God has blessed us so that we can bless others.

Generosity demonstrates our Dependence on God (Mark 12:41-44)

⁴¹ And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴² And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. ⁴³ 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. ⁴⁴ 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.”

Jesus observes a widow giving her last two pennies as an offering. He comments that she gave more than anyone who came to the temple that day. It points out that no gift is insignificant.

There is a great difference between giving out of abundance and giving our all.

Generosity is not determined by amount, but by attitude.

The question is not, “How much did you give?” but, “How much did it cost you to give?”

Generosity is an Act of Worship (Proverbs 3:9-10)

⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; ¹⁰ then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

God wants us to give our first and our best.

We give, and *then* God blesses.

If we don’t faithfully give to God, we don’t really trust God.

Generosity is an Act of Obedience & Faith (Malachi 3:10-12)

¹⁰ Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ¹¹ I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. ¹² Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.

God challenges us to test him to see if his promises are true regarding giving.

We are to give, and then see how God blesses.

If we take God at his word and give, what might he do to meet our needs?

The Old Testament commands and principle of giving are repeated in the New Testament.

Luke 6:38

³⁸ 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.”

2 Corinthians 9:6–11

⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” ¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

I will take the 90-Day Challenge

Between now and April 6,

- I will worship God with my giving
- I will give generously
- I will give my first and my best
- I will trust God to provide for my needs
- I will look to see how God meets my needs
- I will share the results so others can praise God

Signature

Date