

THEOLOGY OF GENEROSITY

Sunday Symposium



Generosity?

- ▶ What do we mean by “generosity”?
- ▶ When have you experienced unexpected generosity toward you?
 - ▶ What did it feel like?
 - ▶ How did you respond?
- ▶ When have you been generous beyond your expectations?
 - ▶ What did it feel like?
 - ▶ What motivated your generosity?



How important is being generous to your faith and spirituality?

- ▶ 1: Not important
- ▶ 2: Somewhat important
- ▶ 3: Important
- ▶ 4: Very important
- ▶ 5: Never gave it much thought



In the beginning... Generosity!

▶ Genesis 1:1

- ▶ In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth...
- ▶ Creation is generosity
- ▶ God creates out of a gift for the creation's sake
- ▶ What difference does it make to see creation as a gift of God?

▶ Psalm 104:24-28

- ▶ O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it. These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.
- ▶ What is your practice of giving thanks at meal time?
- ▶ Why does it matter that we receive food as a gift of a generous God?



Theology of Generosity in Second Corinthians: The Need

- ▶ 2 Corinthians 8:1-8

- ▶ We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; ² for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³ For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, ⁴ begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints-- ⁵ and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, ⁶ so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. ⁷ Now as you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you-- so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. ⁸ I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others.

Theology of Generosity in Second Corinthians: The Theological Inspiration

- ▶ 2 Corinthians 8:9
- ▶ For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

Theology of Generosity in Second Corinthians: The Implication

- ▶ 2 Corinthians 8:10-15
- ▶ And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something-- ¹¹ now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. ¹² For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has-- not according to what one does not have. ¹³ I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between ¹⁴ your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. ¹⁵ As it is written, "The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little."

Learning and Teaching Generosity

- ▶ Who taught you about being generous? How did they instill that in you?
- ▶ Who have you modeled generosity for?
- ▶ How does/can our faith community inspire a culture of generosity?

Generosity: A Way of Living

