

Giving and Receiving

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[0 : 00] Good morning, church. We are continuing on in our series on Jesus, on generosity, and let's see how much we've learned here.

! Are you ready? Are you ready? God gives. How do we give back? That's right. All right. We're going to try that each Sunday until we mean it. All right.

How many of you, you know what I don't have with me is my little clicker. Is it down there? Did I leave it in my office? You got me? God bless you, sir.

All right. Would y'all click through to the next slide? I want to show you a particular place in America. We used to see it all the time. It is called the Great Salt Lake.

How many of you guys have ever been to Utah and you have seen the Great Salt Lake? Anybody? I know y'all have. By the way, my in-laws are here. Pray for me. I'm kidding. They're really nice people.

[1 : 09] I actually have good in-laws. I hit the lottery of life, man. No, I think that was God's blessings. Favor ain't fair, I like to say. That was funnier in my head. All right.

My in-laws came up to visit us when we lived in that area and they are visiting us here. Man, they just go wherever we go. Actually, they came to Panama when we were missionaries in Central America. We're getting off on a rabbit trail. We used to live near Utah. We lived in northern Nevada and actually, Bo. Where's Bo?

Wave your hand, Bo. There you go. Nice and proud. Stand up so everybody can see you. All right. Sit down. So, sit down, boy. We're spiraling here, aren't we?

Bo was born in Utah. That doesn't mean he's a Mormon. That's not what happens just because you're born in Utah. All right. There's a lot of them up there. But he was born in Salt Lake City. When you live in Elko, Nevada, you're probably not going to use the hospital there for much other than emergencies. And so, we drove the three hours into Utah and had him born in Salt Lake City.

[2 : 17] And while you're driving there, you drive past this massive area. It's called the Salt Flats. God bless you, sir. Thank you so much. You can punch me later. The Great Salt Lake.

The Great Salt Lake is an awesome place. It is really cool. The only thing about it is it's not alive. It's dead. There are little streams that feed into it, but then the water goes nowhere.

There's hardly anything that lives in the Great Salt Lake. There's a few, like there's some brine shrimp. That's about it. Whatever can survive in its overly salty waters.

So, why do I want to show that to you today? Because in Matthew chapter 10, by the way, turn to Matthew chapter 10, we're going to read verse 8 together.

We're going to read more than that, but we're going to focus on verse 8. While you're turning there, I want to share this quote with you. You can stand and you can look at the Great Salt Lake and it's beautiful.

[3 : 28] It's really cool looking. It looks like snow, but you realize it's salt. It's not snow. And because of that incredibly high salt concentration, very little can live in its waters.

Here's the quote I want to share with you. The Holy Spirit is in you and he wants out. He is in you as a river, not a lake.

You understand the difference there? The Holy Spirit is in you as a river to flow through you, not just a lake to flow into you.

Matthew chapter 10 and verse 8, Jesus teaches us that principle and he says these words, Freely you have received, freely give.

Freely you have received, freely give. We've been talking about generosity. And whenever we tackle a new subject, the very first place we should go, like Jared said earlier, is to see what Jesus had to say about it.

[4 : 42] Let's go to the word of God himself. What is he teaching us about the principle of generosity? And so that's what we're studying in this series. Let's look at Matthew chapter 10 and we're going to read a few verses beginning in verse 5.

Matthew 10 and verse 5. Jesus sent out these 12 after giving them these instructions. Don't take the road that leads to the Gentiles. Don't enter any Samaritan town. Instead, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Right now they are on mission to the people that God chose for the foundation of the world. And they are here to tell them and show them and preach to them that their Messiah is here.

The long-awaited rescuer of their people who is going to restore the relationship between them and God. He's going to save them. He's here. And so he says, Go to these lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, here's what you say.

You proclaim the kingdom of heaven has come near. Heal the sick. Raise the dead. Cleanse those with leprosy. Drive out demons. Freely you have received.

[5 : 45] Freely give. Freely give. Freely give. This was the spirit in which Jesus sent out his followers. And let me tell you something today.

This is the spirit in which God always sends out his followers. It's the spirit of being a river. I've never held back from you, God says to us.

I've always been generous with you. I've always freely given to you. And the purpose of that is not to make you fat. So to speak.

Not just to keep giving and giving and giving and piling up more for you. He says the purpose is for you to pass it on.

To let it flow through. So this is a principle of giving and receiving. This is what we're going to study about today in our talk on Jesus on generosity.

[6 : 45] Giving and receiving. So. Let's look at Matthew chapter 10. Let's break it down. And let's see what he means when he says freely you've received.

Freely give. First of all we understand that from the very beginning God has been generous with us. From the very beginning of Coulter and Cason's relationship with God.

When it all started. Think back to you. Maybe it was not that long ago. Maybe it was a long time ago. When you very first started your journey with Jesus. When you first heard what we call the gospel.

The good news of Jesus. Do you know what the gospel is? It's the story of how God was generous to us. And still is generous to us.

The gospel. The good news of Jesus. Jesus applies to every area of your life. Cason I'm going to use your testimony again. He said God doesn't just want to be a part of your life.

[7 : 46] He wants to be in every part of your life. He wants to impact all of it. And the gospel does that. God is so generous to us.

Not in just the material things that he puts in our hands. He's generous in the immaterial. He's generous in his hope.

His joy. His comfort. His peace. His long suffering. He puts up with a lot. In other words. He is so generous to us.

And it all traces back to the gospel. Romans 5.8. While we were still sinners. Christ died for us. It wasn't while we were all dressed up. Looking nice and living right. He died for us in our sin. That's generosity.

[8 : 49] That's not just passing on what we feel like we deserve. That is God giving us grace. Do we know what grace is? Unmerited. Undeserved favor.

Mercy is withholding punishment that we rightfully deserve. But grace takes it a step farther and says. Not only am I going to show you mercy. And not give you the punishment you deserve. Which is sending you to an eternal hell. That I created for Satan. And all those without God. But instead I'm going to take it another step further. And I'm going to offer you something you don't deserve.

Which is all of me. It's my presence. It's my joy. My peace. My salvation. Jesus is generous.

And we see that in the gospel. Second Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 9. Paul was writing about this in his second letter to the church at Corinth. By the way we talked about that on Wednesday night.

[9 : 49] Shameless plug for Wednesday night. If you're not here fellowshiping with your brothers and sisters in Christ. And you can be. Please make that change in your weekly schedule. Please come here if you can.

And be together with your family from church. Lindsay posted something on social media. If you didn't see it. She said Wednesdays are where we see. What was it? Wednesdays are where we see church as family.

Or something along those lines. That was basically it. She said it better than I did. But that was awesome. And so we looked at this. And we talked about Paul's second letter to the Corinthian church. And dived into that together.

But he says you know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich. You think God's rich? It's an understatement of the year. Right? Yeah he's got a little bit.

He's got some resources. Though he was rich. Yet for your sakes. For our sakes. He became poor. He didn't have anything walking around this earth.

[10 : 45] He didn't even have anywhere to lay his head. So that he could make us rich. By his poverty. That's the spirit of generosity. I will do whatever it takes.

To help you. And that's what Jesus did. With the gospel. So far that he was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice. He was God. He owed us nothing. He never sinned.

He never broke his own law. And he said. I will suffer for you. For your wrong. For my wrong. That's generosity. That is grace.

And that's what Jesus showed us. Through the gospel. So. There's a truth here. Generosity is a mirror. Of God's grace. Not a measure.

Of our effort. So often times. We get this backwards. When we think. God wants me to be generous. Or we use that other G word.

[11 : 39] God wants me to give. We always go to dollar signs. We always go to an amount. We always think. Well. What can I afford? What do I have extra?

Laying around. Maybe I could give that. And maybe God will put a dollar sign on your mind. Maybe he'll show you something extra. That you could share. But that's not where it starts.

It starts. It starts in the heart. It starts by being overcome. By God's gracious generosity toward us. And then us saying.

God make me a mirror of that. Make me reflect that. That when people look at me. They don't say. Wow.

What a generous guy. Instead they say. Wow. What a generous God. God's been so generous to him.

[12 : 37] God's been so generous to her. That they act like that toward me now. I want to meet her God.

I want to meet his Jesus. That's what God has called us to do. By being generous. Imitate God in everything you do.

Because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love. Following the example of Christ. He loved us. He offered himself as a sacrifice for us.

We are called to imitate him. Because we're his kids. Anybody have little kids in the room? I don't have to be in the room right now. Any of you have little kids?

Some of you that have little kids. Are not raising your hand. It's all right. It's all right. How many of your little kids imitate you? How many of you imitate? How many of them imitate you at times when they wish.

[13 : 36] When you wish they didn't. They repeat something you said. Where did you hear that? Well you said it. Oh great. Do what I say. Not what I do. Don't do that that I said.

Sometimes they imitate us. Sometimes they imitate us. And it doesn't work out well. Sometimes it's awesome when they imitate us. And it just warms our heart. And they see us.

They see that. We see them trying to be like us. And it's just so special. It's so heartwarming.

Because they look up to us. Because they love us.

And as much as you think your kids maybe don't always feel warm and fuzzy about you. You're still the most important person in their life. And so much of what they learn and then put into practice will come from their experience with you.

No pressure. Right? As I say that to myself. Imitate God in everything you do. Because you are his dear children.

[14 : 38] Why wouldn't we imitate our dad? Why wouldn't we imitate our good, good father? Why wouldn't we then put into practice what we learn from him?

Because he is a perfect parent. He is the one who will never lead us astray or say, Ah, don't do that. Don't do what I just did.

Don't say what I just said. We're never going to have that with Jesus. So because we are his dear children, imitate everything. Be a mirror of God's generous grace.

Generosity isn't obligation. It's imitation. I'm not asking you for more money because I want the church to be rich.

I'm asking you to be generous in every area of your life because I think we should all be imitating Jesus. That's what this whole series is about.

[15 : 36] If our church began to mirror the master more effectively, then our church would be fulfilling what God put us here to do.

Otherwise, let's close it up. Let's go home because we could all probably find something else to do with our Sundays. But if we're serious about this and we really do believe in him, then let's try to imitate him.

Let's try to mirror him. Not out of obligation. Not saying, Ah, man, God's going to get me. Or the church isn't going to think very well of me. Somebody's not going to like it if I don't give the right amount.

That's not what it's about. Hold on to your gifts. And pray that God changes you. To imitate him. Not out of obligation, but out of love. Out of gratitude. And that leads us to number two. Generosity reflects a heart of worship. When we stop and we look at the gospel, we look what Jesus did and how generous he was to us.

[16 : 41] And we've tasted his grace and we say, Well, that grace is amazing. Somebody should write a song about that. Amazing grace. How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

Then that's naturally going to lead us to worship him. How do we worship him? By being stingy and keeping everything we have for ourselves. That's how we worship God, right?

No. No. We worship him by opening up and saying, I'm going to live hands open, eyes up to the master.

And say, Master, what do you do with what I have? What do you want with what you've given me? That's what we talked about last week with the treasure principle. The treasure test.

We said, whoever your master is determines what you'll do with your valuables. Determines what's important to you. And so we say, generosity reflects a heart of worship.

[17 : 41] Romans chapter 12 and verse 1 spells it out how this works. Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he's done for you.

Paul's always got to take us back and remind us, what has he done for us? I'm not asking you something unreasonable here. Fact is, in the next verse, he says, this is reasonable to do this.

So he says, because of all he's done for you, let your bodies be a living and holy sacrifice.

This isn't weird. We're not asking you to go make some kind of animal sacrifice and kill something. All right? We're asking for a living sacrifice.

While you have breath in your lungs and you never know when your last day of breath in your lungs will come.

[18 : 38] People across this country probably thought they had more time until it was gone. So while we can be a living sacrifice, because of all he's done for us, let us present our bodies to God as a living and holy sacrifice.

That's what he will find acceptable. Not out of obligation. Not saying, man, it's just what you do. You just give to the church. No.

No. You give back to Jesus. Out of a heart of worship. Saying, God, look who you are. Look at all you've done.

Look what you've given me. All that is right to do is offer it back to you. Such as it is. I don't think it's all that great compared to you. But you say, you see it as valuable.

You tell me that it's worth something. You tell me it's important to you. And so I'm offering it up to you. This is truly the way to worship him. This is how you do it.

[19 : 49] So, dear brothers and sisters, worship him this way. Takes us to a truth. Generosity is worship when it flows from gratitude, not guilt.

Somebody was telling me the other day. And they were telling it almost as a way of confession. They said, you know, I had a chance to do something for somebody. It didn't seem like a great situation.

And I wasn't confident it would be used in the right way. And so I kind of turned them down at first. And then they kept kind of hanging around. And they wouldn't leave. And I said, okay, fine. I'll go help you. And this person was saying, you know, I knew in the moment, like, this isn't really right. I'm doing this out of guilt. I'm doing this to kind of get them off my porch, so to speak. And just, ah, this isn't the right way to give. But sometimes that's how we end up giving.

Out of compulsion. Out of being compelled to do it. Not out of a sense of worship. Not out of a sense of, God, I want to give back to you because you've given so much to me. Here's a chance to do that. Instead, it's our guilt.

[20 : 52] It's a complex. We feel obligated. It's not what generosity is about. It's not what giving is about. And for you and your relationship with Jesus, who you say you love and is important to you, I want you to get this.

I want me to continually get this. Generosity is not something you do. It's what God makes you. It's what God turns you into. A generous person. It flows out of gratitude, not guilt. We talked about this a little bit last week, so I'm not going to spend a lot of time on it.

But I wanted to remind you, it's the difference in bounded set and centered set. Just by way of a refresher, if you weren't here last week, that's okay.

I'll trust that you'll be here next week. Even after Saturday night at Pioneer Union, I trust you'll all be back here next week in your seats, right? Bounded set versus centered set.

[21 : 51] Bounded set creates these boundaries that people are either inside or outside. And they'll help the people inside. They'll care about the people inside.

The people on the outside, they'll look down their nose at. The people on the outside, you can't sit with us. The people on the outside, I don't like you. I'm mad at you. And until you conform and get inside my lines, you're not one of us.

And unfortunately, that describes a lot of religion. A lot of what people's understanding of church is, what their experience with church can be.

But that's not who Jesus is. Jesus wants us to be centered set in our faith. That means we are moving toward him as the center. He's the only line.

He deals with us all individually. And so we look at people that way. And we don't judge people whether they're inside or outside my lines that I created. We judge people based on whether they're moving toward the one we're moving toward or away from the one we're moving toward.

[23 : 01] Because the truth is, people both inside and outside that circle might be moving away from Jesus. They might check the boxes of how someone inside the circle ought to live.

But in their hearts, they're not moving toward Jesus. They've been moving away from him for a long time. So there's a difference there. Generosity is moving toward the person of Jesus.

So, Proverbs chapter 3, verse 9 and 10 gives us real practical instructions on this. How do you do this?

Honor the Lord with your wealth. And with the best part of everything you produce. Some of you are saying, okay, yes, I can honor the Lord with my wealth.

Some of you are saying, wealth and me have never been in the same sentence. Nobody looks at me and says, wealth. But God says, listen, I have given you so much.

[24 : 02] Don't immediately go to your bank account. Now, don't withhold your bank account because God wants to do something there too. But he wants to touch every part of who you are.

And he's given you so much. So he says, honor him with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain and your vats will overflow with good wine.

There's a principle here. What's he teaching? By the way, Proverbs is full of principles. If you can't figure life out and you're having a hard time, go to Proverbs. Proverbs, you'll find all kinds of wealth and wisdom and instruction hidden in there.

All kinds of principles that can apply to business, to families, to relationships, personal habits.

Proverbs is full of these nuggets. So what's the nugget here?

If you give it back to God, he will give it back to you in abundance. Doesn't mean if you write him a check for \$100, he's going to write you a check for \$100,000.

[25 : 05] If so, we'd have a way nicer building here, you know? Of course, that's not what he's talking about. Because he doesn't give in terms of what we in the moment think is important.

Somebody might be all about something at this moment in their life. And then their taste changed. Their interest changed. They learn more. And now that's not important anymore. And something else is important. Have you ever asked a kid what they want to be when they grow up?

It stays the same from toddler to adult, right? Never changes? Of course it changes. Well, we do too. So God doesn't always give us right in the moment what we think is most important.

He gives us what he knows is best and most important for us. Because he knows what we should be when we grow up. And some of us, he's still waiting on us to grow up. But he'll help us there. He'll help us in that maturing process. So if we honor him, and that's what it is. It's honoring him. If we honor him, then he'll pour it back out.

[26 : 12] He'll pour it back out on us. If we give him our best, the first, not the leftovers, not the scraps, God pours out his best on us.

I don't know about you, but I'm very interested in God's best. I don't want his scraps or leftovers. Sure, they'd be better than what I have.

But if he's willing to give me his best, like his one and only son, that's what I want. And that's what he's willing to give.

So what have we learned today? Worship isn't just what leave your lips. It's what leaves your hands. Worship isn't just what leaves your lips.

It's what leaves your hands. There's a very practical side to this. I'd love to just say, give love, give joy, give peace, give hope.

[27 : 14] But you know what that looks like? Taking time out of your day to help somebody. Taking money out of your bank to help somebody. Taking energy when you're tired and helping somebody.

God might demand something from your hands. So what do we do? We open our hands. Say, God, here it is.

All that I have, here it is. Grace flows best when it flows through us, not just into us. Generosity isn't a duty.

It's a mirror that can reflect God's grace. And how we give reveals our gratitude to God. So I want to share this quote.

We'll be finished. Grace. I receive grace. Through me, grace could flow on. Like a cycle of water in continuous movement, grace is meant to fall.

[28 : 18] A rain. Again, again, again. Thank God for the rain we have received this year. The verses that talk about God as though he is a rain when he is depicted that way in scripture, that should mean so much to people in this part of the world.

You depend on the rain, don't you? Our community depends on the rain. We felt it last year when there was very little rain. Grace is meant to fall like a rain over and over and over again that never runs out.

It never runs dry. The cattle, we, the sheep, never starve. We continually have rain to go back to. And what I could do is I could share the grace.

Multiply the joy. Extend the table of God's feast that he's invited me to. To enlarge the paradise of his presence. I am blessed. Don't miss those last words.

I am blessed. I can bless. How many of you? I'm going to ask for full participation if I can get it. How many of you would say, I am blessed by God?

[29 : 36] Thank you. Now I'm not going to ask you to lift your hand on this one. Please don't. Take this to God. How many of you would say, I have blessed just like how God has blessed me?

I can't say that. But I want to. I want to be a river through which blessing flows. How God has been a river, a blessing to me.

So, how do you do that this week? Notice God's grace every day. Gratitude will help us be generous.

If we aren't grateful, it's because we aren't noticing. We aren't seeing what God's doing. So every day, put it into practice. What did God do for me today?

What did he do for my spouse, for my children? What did he do? What kind of blessings did I receive from God today? It starts very basic. He allowed me to wake up today.

[30 : 43] Not everybody gets to. He allowed me to have a place to sleep. He allowed me to have food to eat. The very basics. But don't just stay there. He does so much more than that every day

for us. Make a list.

And then start a flow list. God has given this to me. I have freely received. How then can I freely give? What are some ways that God's grace can flow through me specifically today?

And if we do that this week, we might wake up when we come to church next Sunday morning, right? Y'all coming next Sunday morning, right? And we might say, God helped me be generous this week.

God is changing me into a generous person because I saw what he's doing for me. And then I opened my hands and opened my heart and said, God, flow through me.

Church, let's say it together. God gives. We give back. How do we give back? Thanks for what we can do. God, we thank you for giving so freely, so generously.

[31 : 46] We have received from you. Let us now give. In the same way, with the same spirit, teach us how to do that. We'll give you all the glory for it.

It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Church, would you bow your heads very briefly? We're going to have a moment of prayer. Linda's going to come and play. Sorry about that, Linda. I didn't mean to put you on the spot.

June's over here and she's playing today. June's going to play on the organ for just a moment. Use this brief moment to do some business with God. Maybe God's working on something through his teaching from Matthew today.

Maybe it was one of the other verses. Maybe something sparked something in your heart and mind that now you need to respond to. Maybe there's an action to take.

Maybe there's a change to make. Maybe you're praying for someone else. God's put someone on your heart this morning. Maybe you need to go across the aisle to somebody and make something right.

[32 : 48] Whatever God is wanting you to do right now, you do business with God. I'll ask this question as I do every Sunday.

We talked about how Jesus was so generous to us. How he offered up himself as the payment for our sin. We heard a wonderful testimony from Cason when he got baptized. Is there anyone in the room who would say, I need to choose today to follow Jesus.

I need to ask him to forgive my sin. Put all my faith in him to save me. Become my father. Would you slip your hand up now if that's you?

Thank you. Jared's down here if you need somebody to pray with. If you want to remain in your seat. Use these moments.

Where it's just you and God. Amen.