

**January 19, 2020 – Elmont Baptist Church**

**Text: John 6:1-14; Matthew 6:19-24**

**Message Series: GeneroUS: Growing a Community of Giving**

**Week 2: Generosity Displays Trust**

**Introduction:**

1. Before last January I stayed away from this subject intentionally over the past 9+ yrs, and while many may think that's commendable, I apologized to you for neglecting to deal with the difficult and important subject.
2. If I am to faithfully preach the whole counsel of God, then we cannot avoid dealing with this subject of money and possessions.
3. Why? Because 1 out of every 10 verses in the Gospels deal with money in some way. That's 288 in all. 16 of Jesus' 38 parables deal with how to handle money and possessions. In the Bible there are 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 on faith, and over 2,000 on money and possessions.
4. According to most scholars 20-25% of everything Jesus taught dealt with money and possessions in some way.
5. Yet the Scriptures never record Jesus taking up an offering or asking from anyone to give Him money.
6. As we walk into this, I am not going to going to ask you to give more or even mention the church budget. There are times for that, but it's not right now.
7. The goal over the next few weeks is not a bigger church budget, but it's just what Jesus emphasized – pressing in on this subject to press in on our hearts.
8. I hope you will be encouraged as we highlight how your generosity helps US together be generous in local ministry and global missions.
9. The key word we want to focus on is Generosity. That definitely includes finances, but it's a heart issue before it's a money issue. Generosity overflows in giving of time, hospitality, gifts, skills, and abilities.
10. It's far more about who we are becoming before it's about what we are doing. It's when we come to understand better and better that our God is a great giver, and we are to become more like Him in this way.
11. The hope today is that we will be encouraged and challenged to understand the connection between our generosity with our resources is a direct reflection of our level of trust in our God.

## Read Matthew 6:19-24 and then John 6:1-14

1. This story from John 6 is a great story and one of Jesus' most famous miracles. Other than the resurrection of Jesus, it is the only miracle recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – the books of the Bible that record the life and ministry of Jesus.
2. John includes some details that the other three writers do not. He mentions how the disciples found the little bit of food they did, and it adds quite a bit as you think about it.
3. Jesus sees this crowd (up to 20,000 people in all) and suggests that the disciples should furnish a meal for them.
4. His disciples pretty much make fun of the idea and dismiss it. Except for Andrew.
5. He somehow finds one kid in the midst of the crowd that brought a lunch with him. One kid whose mom actually cared about his health and well-being.
6. Andrew brings this boy to Jesus and says, "look what I found" and then it's as if he looks around at the other disciples and realizes what a worthless solution he is suggesting.
7. But then Jesus takes over.
8. And these passages help us see that...

## Generosity Displays Trust as...

1. **We have a Need for Safety & Security**
  - a. **But we often look to the wrong source**
  - b. **And we often confuse wants and needs**
    - i. Matthew 6:19-24 captures the heart of the problem and the problem with our human solution.
    - ii. We have a need to feel safe. We have a need for long term security. That's in us.
    - iii. I don't think it's always that you are either greedy or generous and those are the only options.
    - iv. We've learned from training and now living as foster parents that most of the children that you take in need food and water at least every 2 hours for quite some time in order to reteach their minds and bodies that they are going to be provided for.

- v. You cannot just tell them that they are safe. They have to come to learn and understand it over time, through different interactions and circumstances.
- vi. That need for safety and security is real, but we look to things that have no guarantee to provide it.
- vii. If I just save a little more or buy this or have that. And Jesus says those things have no guarantee of being here tomorrow much less years down the road.
- viii. This is not an anti-planning text or anti-retirement fund text. It's not even a "you can't have nice things text." But it is a warning not to put your hope in things that can't deliver.
- ix. Don't let your wealth terminate on you. Remember that there is a life after this one and it's forever.
- x. Ultimate safety and security come when we quit trying to protect and plan for every conceivable possibility and trust the God who holds us forever.
- xi. That we would know and really grasp that our days are numbered by Him and may our life motto begin to be Philippians 1:21, "To live is Christ. To die is gain." In other words, "While I'm alive, I will live for Christ, and when I die, that'll be the best thing because I'll be with Jesus."
- xii. When that safety and security begin to be found in Christ, then the line between wants and needs begins to not be so blurry.
- xiii. By that I don't mean that everything that is a want and not a need is wrong. Just because you don't need it doesn't mean you can't buy it.
- xiv. The problem is when our wants keep us from being generous. Pastor, Matt Chandler said it this way, "If it keeps you from being generous, you can't afford it."
- xv. Selfishness comes naturally to all of us. Generosity requires being diligent and disciplined in giving things to others whether it be time, money, or other kinds of help.

- xvi. One thing that can help us and makes it easier to display trust by being generous is to better understand God and His wealth.
- xvii. Generosity displays trust as...

## **2. We Better Understand God's Wealth**

### **a. It can never run out**

### **b. He is a good Father**

### **c. Who gives only good gifts**

- i. There is a saying for those that teach that says, "you can't give what you don't know", and it's also true that you cannot trust who you don't know.
- ii. To better understand God's wealth, we first need to better understand and know God.
- iii. Our culture is post-Christian and our churches are biblically illiterate, and that's a bad combination.
- iv. Far too many in the church are much more comfortable with their understanding of God than they are with the God of the Bible.
- v. This side of death, we can only know about God what creation and the Scriptures tell us. And nothing creation tells us can contradict the Scriptures.
- vi. God is everything that the Scriptures say He is and is nothing that the Scriptures say He isn't. He is not good because we know what good is and He lives up to our definition.
- vii. God is good because good is defined by Him. He defines perfection. He is righteousness. He is holiness.
- viii. And when we press into the Scriptures and begin to see glimpses and scratch surfaces of who our God is, we begin to find our safety and security in who He is and what He has.
- ix. We read Romans 8:32 and it encourages us that if God didn't spare His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us, then how will He not freely give us all things?

- x. And Paul can say that in Romans because the Psalmists tell us over and over that God owns everything.
- xi. 1 Timothy 6:12 reminds us that God gives life to all things, and James 1:17 tells us that anything that's good comes to us from God and you never have to worry that He will change.
- xii. This means our God is good all the time and He is a giver of good gifts and He has saved us and changed our heart to know Him, love Him, and be transformed to be more like Him.
- xiii. This means we will desire righteousness, however imperfectly we pursue it, and will become givers more and more like our Father.
- xiv. We should see this in our personal lives as we pursue Christ and then it overflows in the life of the faith family.
- xv. Every resource that you give personally whether it be finances, time, or abilities help this faith family impact lives locally in ministry and globally in missions.
- xvi. Generosity Displays Trust as...

**3. We Steward All We've Been Given**

- a. Personally – every detail matters**
- b. Locally – Student Ministry**
- c. Globally – Go Live Dare**

- i. We should strive to be more like this little boy in John 6 and the faithful disciple named Andrew in that we seek to trust Jesus with every little detail.
- ii. That we live like we really believe that when we put even the smallest things He's entrusted to us in His hands, He can do the impossible.
- iii. And then together we can see God do the impossible in areas of local ministry. Last week we highlighted our disciple-making small groups and how thankful we are that we serve a faith family that goes all in to support and be involved in these groups.

- iv. Another area I want to highlight today is our Student Ministry. I know I joke a lot about middle and high school students, and they will too one day, but never doubt how thankful I am for our students and a church that supports and encourages them so faithfully.
- v. Three of our staff members have served as the Student Minister as one point in their time here.
- vi. That ministry is now entrusted to the capable hands of DeeJay, as he seeks to build on the work of the two men before him to help students accomplish two things – to know Jesus and to live like Jesus.
- vii. It's incredible to see up to 70 students gather and worship at LIVE on Wednesday nights. It's wonderful to hear of students getting up early to meet for mentoring or digging in the Word.
- viii. It's encouraging to hear of students failing and repenting and asking for forgiveness and restoration.
- ix. Be encouraged Elmont Family... Your generosity is helping shape a generation.
- x. And not just here, but also across the world in South Africa and surrounding countries through the ministry of GO LIVE DARE.
- xi. They are one of the dozen or so mission efforts that we directly support financially.
- xii. We partner with them to help reach teens within their reach with the gospel. And they are doing just that. Reaching them, teaching them, and launching them into their world to change the spiritual landscape of a nation.
- xiii. You sharing the time, abilities, and finances that you have been entrusted with personally is making a Kingdom difference right here with this faith family and globally just as much.

## **Closing**

1. We can be thankful together for the great things that we are able to accomplish together for the Kingdom through the faithful giving of time, talent, and treasure of this faith family.

2. And so the goal today is two-fold. To encourage you to remember that the goal is to use what God has given you to help others through the ministry and mission efforts of the faith family that you are connected to.
3. And also to encourage you to look at how you use your time, talent, and treasure and ask, “Am I displaying trust in God with the details of my life in how I give to Him to advance the Kingdom?”