



Grace Fellowship of Morehead, KY

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Hearts of **GENEROSITY**

Series preached on Sunday, December 11th and 18th, 2022

The past couple weeks we have been talking about a missing ingredient in the lives of born-again Christians...being ON FIRE for Christ.

Especially, living with the burning with a passion/fire of winning souls to Christ.

It is both a sign of that fire being in you AND a catalyst to get the fire going bigger!

Changed people change people! Or changed people want people changed!

This week, the Holy Spirit has been working an area on the inside of me and I kind of kept meditating on it...I began understanding that EVEN THOUGH we are not on a series on this area...it fits with where we have been at the past couple of weeks.

How do we know when there is a FIRE problem on the inside of us?

How do we know when the FIRE is on embers...at risk of going out?

I can see another issue that creeps in or that develops in our lives that identifies that issue!

IN OTHER WORDS: The presence of this thing identifies the fire in you...the lack of this thing says you may be on embers and need to watch out.

John 6:1-13

- 1 After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.
- 2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.
- 3 ***And Jesus went up into a mountain***, and there he sat with his disciples.

NOTE: Jesus is tired...he has been teaching and praying for people...NON-STOP!

TRUST ME...that will wear you out.

QUESTION: What does He have to eat?

ANSWER: No record is given of what they had on hand. Nope! Most likely He is just happy to be off the beaten path to rest. Possibly they are going to concern themselves with eating later.

- 4 ***And the passover***, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

NOTE: This is a statement that is written down simply to identify the massive amount of people that would be taking the nearby road to Jerusalem.

- 5 When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

- 6 **And this he said to prove him:** for he himself knew what he would do.
 7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, **that every one of them may take a little.**
 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,
 9 **There is a lad here,** which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

I AM FACINATED by these three men...their focus and response to a GREAT situation.

- 1.) **JESUS** – He is tired and hungry Himself.

REMEMBER: Jesus didn't ask this because He was confused...He knew what He was going to do...He wanted to see what the disciples were thinking!

Why does He know the people are hungry? Because He is hungry!

YET...what is His question?

"How are WE going to feed all of these people?"

NOTE: Jesus' focus was NOT on how He was going to eat...but on how the 20 to 40,000 people were going to eat.

BELOVED: This presents us with the area that I want to focus on today...and I don't want you all to get nervous in the service. **But ONE GREAT symptom of being ON FIRE for Christ is GENEROSITY!**

THINK ABOUT vs. 9...a lot of people would have received that snack from the lad and said, "Sorry, folks...he gave it to me." and would have gobbled it up themselves. **JESUS** was focused on the needs of the 20 to 40,000...not on His own!

We will get back to Jesus' heart-set in a moment...but first let's look at the two other responses here is this portion of Scripture.

- 2.) **PHILIP** – He immediately looked in their bank account.

QUESTION: What was his assessment of taking care of 20 to 40,000? We don't have enough to make sure that all of them even get a little!

We don't have enough to do it!

That was his summation! We don't have enough! There isn't enough in our bank account!

How many of us have that mindset in our giving or in the presence of any kind of need?

I should be tithing? I don't have enough!

I should be giving? I don't have enough!

I should be generous? I don't have enough!

(again, I will focus a bit more on that in a few)

- 3.) **ANDREW** – He immediately started looking for what others had...what others would give him.

KINDA funny...it says that Jesus received the offering (so the boy gave it to Jesus); it doesn't say the boy gave it to Andrew...Andrew just saw what the boy had and thought it would be great to have.

HOW often is that our mindset in giving...Bob will take care of it...Mary has plenty to give for all of us! Zippy can write a check because he has plenty to give!
Often when needs come to ourselves...we set our focus on what other people have.

- 10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.
- 11 And **Jesus took the loaves**; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.
- 12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.
- 13 Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

Here is the KEY to having MORE THAN ENOUGH...put it in Jesus' hands!

Put it ALL in His hands!

Be generous with what you have...and you will have more!

Colossians 3:23,24

23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

When you give in the offering...give to the Lord.

When you pay for a lunch for a co-worker...give to the Lord.

When you do a favor for someone...do that favor for the Lord.

BELOVED: When you do it that way...you are putting it all in HIS HANDS and HE IS now responsible for the increase!

NICOLE CRANK: God told her, "I am not responsible to heal any hurt that you won't give to me."

BELOVED: That is the same thing with your giving. When you give it to man...or when you look to man...God is not responsible to increase it!

Why Talk About Money?

Not everyone likes to hear about money being preached or even asked for in church.

As a matter of fact it pretty much annoys a lot of people.

The only location people have a problem with giving or hearing on money is in the church (not at the grocery store, concerts, restaurants, etc.)

Many will even surmise that if the pastor is preaching on money then the church must be short...his family must need more money.

WELL...that wouldn't speak very highly of your man of God, would it?

BELOVED: The reason that money should be preached on is because MONEY IS THE GREAT REVEALER OF YOUR HEART!

Is your heart on fire for God or not! Generosity will tell that!

UNDERSTAND: Generosity has to do with MORE than money...but we will focus on the financial aspect (because Jesus did).

Matthew 6:21 – “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

1 Timothy 6:10 – “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

NOTICE: Again it is a reflection of the heart!

MANY WILL SAY: See, Pastor Thad, it is those who have a lot of money that have a bad heart towards money.

BELOVED: This says NOTHING about having a lot of money or not having a lot of money...it says you are not generous with it, because you love it!

Sure there are wealthy people who are stingy and hold on to money...

Some of the stingiest are those who don't have very much money...they hold on to every last dime!

Proverbs 11:24 (NLT) – “Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything.”

BELOVED: What people do with their money reveals what is inside their heart.

A heart that is on fire for the things of God will have a generous heart.

Will be quick to put things in His hands for Him to bless.

Will be quick to see needs and respond to needs.

What if I don't have much? How can I be generous?

We talked about this a bit earlier with Philips response to Jesus...“We don't have enough.”

Mark 12:41-44

- 41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and **beheld how the people cast money into the treasury:** and many that were rich cast in much.
- 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. **“Two brass coins”** – smallest in use of the Jews
- 43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:
- 44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

NOTICE: A few things

- 1.) Her total was SMALL...very SMALL...almost negligible...wouldn't make a difference in the finances of the church!
But she gave anyway!
- 2.) This account isn't even about HOW MUCH you give.
It is about the generosity of your heart!
- 3.) Nothing is said of those who didn't give!

BELOVED: When you don't give substantial amounts, because you don't make much money... God stills sees that as generous...if you give something.

LISTEN...Jesus didn't bash the rich! He was grateful for their offerings. He was just pointing out that the poor lady was GENEROUS...even MORE GENEROUS because she gave all she had!

NOTE: Doesn't mean you have to give all you have! It means that we need to work on our hearts towards giving...have a generous heart!

Jesus Had a Generous Heart

Many people feel that Jesus was poor, because of His statement about foxes and birds having homes, but He didn't have any place to lay His head.

- 1.) Jesus had a home! John tells us that!
- 2.) Jesus had a group of wealthy women who gave to Him! Luke 8:2,3
- 3.) Jesus had a treasurer, which is needed of a large operation!
- 4.) His treasurer was stealing from Him and no one knew.
- 5.) Jesus had Magi give him 400 million dollars when he was 2 years old.

But He wasn't just going around spending it on himself.

Acts 10:38 – “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: **who went about doing good**, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”

“Doing good” – philanthropist – giver

Only location in Scripture this word is used...it describes the work Jesus did!

John 14:12 – The works Jesus did, we will do and greater...

He was known for His giving! For His generous heart!

How giving was He? He gave it all for us!

He gave it all with love to those who were driving stakes into his hands and feet!

The Early Church Was Generous

Acts 2:42-45

- 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.
- 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.
- 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;
- 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

UNDERSTAND: This is NOT a requirement for being born again...selling all that you have and putting it in a kitty and distributing amongst everyone.

That is crazy!

But the picture of what we see here is HUGE...generosity.

REMEMBER: Thousand of people have come into Jerusalem to participate in the feast...and thousands of them stayed to be a part of this early church.

They left their jobs, homes, etc. They didn't have anything.

People that were in Jerusalem were generous with them. It was essential!

They got the Holy Spirit...they became soul-winners and generous!

The PROBLEM becomes when giving becomes legalistic!
When you HAVE to give...(see Acts 5).

Generosity comes from a grateful...giving heart! A want to heart!

NOTE: Moses during the building of the tabernacle said ONLY those of a willing heart should bring offerings.
The people gave and were told to stop!

NOTE: When David was collecting for the building of the temple...the people gave of a willing heart!

NOTE: The woman with the two mites gave of a willing heart!

2 Corinthians 8:1-3

- 1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;
- 2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy **and their deep poverty abounded** unto the riches of their liberality.
- 3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power **they were willing of themselves**;

The key was...even when they didn't have a lot of money...they were willing and generous!

God is Generous with the Generous

Luke 6:38 – “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

Proverbs 11:24 (NLT) – “Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything.”

Galatians 6:7 – “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

BELOVED: When you learn to be generous...God will become generous with you!

2 Chronicles 1:6,7 (Solomon just went up to bless the Lord)

- 6 And Solomon went up thither to the brasen altar before the LORD, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it.
- 7 In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, **Ask what I shall give thee.**

Solomon didn't give a 1000 offerings because he had to...but because he was grateful!
God ANSWERED his generosity with a blank check!

Solomon CONTINUED to learn this principle through his life...He gave and God gave!

1 Kings 8:5,10,11 – During the dedication of the temple and the placing of the ark!

- 5 And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.
- 10 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD,
- 11 So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

Some people think that generosity is the key only to your financial situation...but it is also key to your spiritual situation!

King David's Heart

1 Samuel 24:20-25 (70,000 had been killed by the plague)

David was so grateful that a plague had been stopped, by God, that he went to give a sacrifice at the exact spot the plague had stopped.

- 20 And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.
- 21 And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people.
- 22 And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood.
- 23 All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.
- 24 And the king said unto Araunah, ***Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.***
- 25 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

(**NOTE:** The land bought here is the very spot on which Solomon would later build the temple.)

One of the interesting parts of Old Testament offerings is that they first had to build altars. They couldn't just throw it in an envelope and throw it in the bucket!

They had to **FIRST** build the altar.

It took time!

It took thought!

By the time they gave...a lot of effort was put into the gift.

BELOVED: Don't necessarily wait until the last second to decide what to give.

Pray about it...ask the Lord about it...prepare it...THEN give it!

OF COURSE God can move on us spontaneously to give...but we **MUST** put thought into our giving.

Be ready to give!

