

Be Openhanded

Preached: 11/15/2020 – Germantown;

Welcome:

Welcome to Germantown Church of God. We are located in Cascade, MD. I am Pastor Mark Hosler. I want to thank you for joining me today for this time of Worship, Prayer and the Study of Scripture. I appreciate you taking time for worship. If you would like to learn more about our Church, you can check out our web page, or our Facebook Page.

Opening Scripture

Psalm 91:1-6

Scripture

1 Timothy 6:17-19

Message

Be Openhanded

Last weekend, we began a study on the topic of generosity. We are entering the season of the year when we are being encouraged to be generous to others. The Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays are seasons when many people will think about giving to others. We began this study by considering Our Generous God. When we realize how good God has been to us in the Thanksgiving season, many people in response to God's generosity, are prompted to be generous to others. Sometimes it is referred to as "Paying it Forward". Doing good to someone, because someone has been good to us. It is appropriate for us to do so.

As we study the Bible we learn that God is a generous God. He gives what we need for life. He gives grace, forgiveness, salvation through His Son that He gave.

Homework – Make a list of all of the ways God demonstrates His generosity toward you

Prayer of Thanks

Now, how does that list impact your love for God?

How does that list impact your faith and trust in God?

How does that list inspire you to live? How will you respond toward others, knowing that God has been so generous to you?

The reason we started this study by considering the Generosity of God, is because God's generosity toward us becomes the foundation for the way we express generosity toward others.

Jonathan Bailey, in his little book entitled **The Eternal Journey: Daily Meditations on the Stages of Transformation** write this: ***When the Trinity's love saturates our souls, we'll...give to the greedy, befriend the unfriendly, pardon the unpardonable – not with clenched teeth, but with great gladness. Like obedience, charity is never forced.*** In other words, when we are aware of God's generosity toward us, that will flow out of our lives in acts of generosity toward others.

The Text: We are considering this passage from 1 Timothy as we learn about generosity. The letter is written by the apostle Paul to a young pastor named Timothy. He is giving him counsel about how he is to perform his tasks as a pastor, what he is to teach, etc. It appears that Timothy sometimes struggled with being timid, especially around powerful people. But Paul is encouraging him to be bold. Don't be intimidated by others. In particular, he counsels Timothy to boldly challenge those who are wealthy. Now we may not consider ourselves to be in the category of the "Rich", but I think Paul's instruction can be applied to all of us. First of all, Timothy is to help those who are rich to have the **proper attitude** toward their wealth. Wealth sometimes will corrupt a person's attitude. Paul says: ***Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain.*** Don't be fooled. Wealth is uncertain. The rich may feel as if they are immune from trouble or disaster. But wealth can be gone in an instant. Instead,

they must **put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment**. Instead of feeling safe and confident in your wealth, put your confidence in the one who provided you with the wealth. So here is that point again that I'm trying to make. Understand all that God has done for you and then take action toward others.

Paul says that one of the ways those who are blessed can break free from the false sense of security that wealth provides is by giving it away. ¹⁸ **Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share**. If we are trusting in our material resources to protect us from danger and disaster, we will likely be more prone to hold on to it. But when we understand that God is the One who is our hope, we don't need to hold on. We can be **OPENHANDED**. Jonathan Bailey writes: **"People filled with charity have expanded their circle of concern. They're so free of the self-ward gaze that they instinctively look other-ward. That is, they look to the good of another person with ease, even delight."** (page 38) So if you have material resources do not put your confidence for protection from danger or disaster in those resources. Instead, use them to enrich the life of someone else, especially those who are in need. Be Generous.

Paul concludes this challenge to be generous with this word of promise: ¹⁹ **In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life**. He is echoing Jesus' teaching from the Sermon on the Mount. **"Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...."** Life is not in what we have, but true life is found in our acts of Generosity toward others. True life can only be found when we are living a life controlled by the kingdom of heaven, when we are living a life to please our heavenly Father.

So Paul's challenge here is to be generous toward others. This is not a new thought by the time we get to Paul. Generosity is taught all through the Bible. In the Old Testament book of Leviticus (chapter 25) we read the following instructions to God's people:

³⁵ **"If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you. ³⁶ Do not take interest or any profit from them, but fear your God, so that they may continue to live among you. ³⁷ You must not lend them money at interest or sell them food at a profit. ³⁸ I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.**

The foundation for acts of generosity toward others, again is God's generosity toward us. Moses reminds the people of Israel of God's mercy to them. God's people are to be characterized by generosity because God had been generous to them. And as we read this instruction, we conclude that generosity is to be a lifestyle, not an occasional action at certain times of the year. Chris Willard, and Jim Sheppard, in their book Contagious Generosity write: **Generosity is at its core a lifestyle, a lifestyle in which we share all that we have, are and ever will become as a demonstration of God's love and a response to God's grace.**

So we learn then that generosity is a way of breaking the enslaving hold that material possessions can have over us. Generosity is not to be limited. It is not limited to people we know or like. Generosity is not to be reluctant. Our generosity toward others is in response to God's generosity toward us.

Where can you express generosity? I know that there are opportunities for generosity around the holidays. How can you make Generosity a part of your lifestyle throughout the whole year.

Prayer Time

Benediction

May the Lord bless you and keep you

May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you

May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.