

Our Generous God

Preached: 11/8/2020 – Germantown;

Welcome:

Welcome to Germantown Church of God. Thank you for joining us today for this time of Worship, Prayer and the Study of Scripture. We appreciate you taking time for worship.

Opening Scripture

Psalm 131

Scripture

Psalm 103

Message

Our Generous God

We are entering the season of the year when we will be receiving appeals for financial gifts. It is a Year End Tradition. So far I have received requests for donations from 2 different Rescue Missions, and another ministry to those who are Homeless. I learned this week that the 1st Tuesday in December is **Giving Tuesday**. Black Friday is the day after Thanksgiving, then Cyber Monday – a day to do your shopping online, THEN after we have gorged ourselves with stuff we have **Giving Tuesday!** It is a day when people are encouraged to make a financial contribution to a particular ministry or organization, who depend on the gifts of others for their support. I was asked by 3 different organizations to remember them on **Giving Tuesday**. Here at the Church we are encouraging people to consider providing financial support for the ministry of Help Hotline, and the Hagerstown Recue Mission.

Now, many of these appeals for donations come from legitimate ministries and needs. But it is not realistic to think that we can help everyone who asks for money. Who do we support? How much should we give? This year, for many people giving will be even more challenging. Many people have lost jobs or have experienced a reduction in income because of the COVID Pandemic. They just do not have the financial resources to give. Some people are being more cautious this year. Because of the pandemic, there may be uncertainty about our future. We may feel that we have to hold on rather than give away. But at the same time, I suspect that many people do want to help others. They want to be generous. So we have to make some difficult choices about generosity.

For the next several weeks as we approach the Thanksgiving Holiday, I want to talk about Generosity. Does the Bible have anything to say about being generous? The answer to that question is a resounding Yes. The Bible has a lot to say. So if we are followers of Jesus, whose lives, and behavior and choices are guided by the Bible we must study and discover what the Bible says. I believe that followers of Jesus are to develop a lifestyle of Year Round Generosity.

Our Generous God: We are going to begin this study about generosity with a study of the character of God. Our practice of Generosity will be influenced by what we know to be true about the character of God.

It is important that Christians know what God is like. What we believe to be true about God will have an impact on the way we think and behave. A. W. Tozer writes, “**A right conception of God is basic...to practical Christian living.**” Tozer warns us against the sin of idolatry. He is not talking about the practice of fashioning idols of gold and bowing down before them or offering sacrifices tot them. But he is talking about the practice of creating an image of God in our minds that is not consistent with the truth about God that is presented in the Bible. Making up our own ideas about God is just as dangerous are bowing down before a graven image. Our understanding of who God is and what God is like must be based on the truth that we learn in the Bible. And then we live our lives and adjust our beliefs and behaviors based on what we know to be true about God.

The Bible teaches us about many characteristics of God. He is **Loving, Good, All knowing, All powerful, Merciful, Forgiving, Self-Sustaining.....** But we don't often hear **Generosity** listed as one of the Attributes of God. But Generosity is certainly something that is true about God.

What do we mean when we say “God is Generous?” Merriam Webster's Dictionary defines Generosity as: “**The Quality or fact of being generous**”. Here are some synonyms for generosity:

Bigheartedness
Largesse
Openheartedness

Bountifulness
Openhandedness

Some Antonyms for Generosity

Cheapness
Pinching
Tightness

miserliness
Stinginess

Psalm – 103 – is a recitation of the evidence of God’s generosity. His generosity is expressed to humans in His material gifts, but also in His attitudes, in His grace, in the way He treats people.

- **Vs. 3 – Forgives all your sins**
- **Vs. 3 – Heals all your diseases**
- **Vs. 4 – Redeems your life from the pit**
- **Vs. 4 – Crowns you with love and compassion**
- **Vs. 5 – Satisfies your desires with good things**

God is a God who gives to people. He gives generously. Many religious systems and beliefs emphasize the importance of the worshipper bringing gifts to the deity. But the God of the Bible is a God who is oriented to giving to His subjects, his worshipers.

The Bible helps us too understand some important lessons about God’s generosity:

Acts 14:17 ¹⁷ Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.

His generosity is manifested toward all people.

From our Psalm 103, we learn that He demonstrates His generosity toward those who sin. There are many stories in the Bible where God blesses sinful and broken people.

So we don’t have to be “good enough”. And His generosity is **consistent**. Humans can sometimes be fickle in their generosity. We might withhold from those who are hurt us, or failed. But God’s generosity does not ebb and wane like waves on the seashore.

I think we also learn that God is **not reluctant** in showing generosity. Sometimes when you ask someone for help, they may help you but they give you the impression that they are not pleased to do so. But we learn that God delights in being kind to His people. Matthew 7:9-11: ⁹ ***“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!***

God’s generosity even is sacrificial. John 3:16 ¹⁶ ***For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.***

There is much more that the Bible teaches us about our Generous God. What are the practical results of our understanding that God is Generous:

- Knowing that God is generous, helps us to more clearly relate to God as our **Father**. He is not some inanimate Being who is unfeeling or uncaring about what is going on in our world and in our lives. He is a personal God who takes delight in caring for His children. Do not ever think that God is unsympathetic.
- Because we know that God is generous, we should be motivated to pray. The Bible teaches us to **Cast all our cares on Him for He cares for you**. Because we know that He delights in giving good gifts to His children, we can ask. If you know that the person you are asking for help is not a generous person, you will be less likely to go to Him, to relate to Him.

- Knowing that God is Generous, strengthens our faith when asking. We know His history. We know how He has treated others. And so we believe that he will grant us the desires of our heart. We can pray with confidence. Now, sometimes His plan is different than ours, and we must learn to trust Him when the answer is no, but we can be bold in asking
- Paul says in Philippians 4: ***I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*** I think that one of the secrets to being content is to understand that God is generous. Paul learned that God was not “Holding back” because He is a generous God. So he was able to live a life of contentment, believing that God would give Him what He needed for the moment. Is “**Contentment**” an attitude that characterizes your life?

I wanted to start this study of Generosity by looking at how God is generous. Our practice of generosity is a response to God’s generosity to us. So next time we will ask the question: ***If God is generous to me, how do I practice generosity toward others?***

Homework: Make a list of all of the ways God demonstrates His generosity toward you in this coming week. Then bring that list with you as we gather next weekend.