

Coach House Church BEACONS

GENEROSITY

11TH FEBRUARY 2021

We all love a well-chosen gift. For my 18th birthday my brother got me surreal, rubber horse mask. On another occasion he got me a mug with a Monsters Inc. meme printed on the front of it. My housemate, Daniel, got me a basic Casio watch that I've worn almost every day for the past two years, and it survived plenty of punishment as I took it into school with me every day. None of these gifts were extravagant, but all of them were well chosen and fitted me perfectly. Well-chosen gifts reflect an attitude of attention and interest in the person to whom they are given. They reflect willingness to give and willingness to search out something that is personally valuable.

By contrast, we all know that gifts can be given with the opposite attitude. A gift rushed together at last minute. A flashy and expensive gift not suited to you, and perhaps given to win you over. A cheap gift given with little thought. However generosity goes beyond the gifts someone is able to give and spills into a whole attitude of giving. I'm actually a rubbish present buyer and the perfect gift often comes into my head weeks after I gave one that wasn't so good. Thankfully we can be generous in all kinds of ways with the resources God has given us, so have a look at this passage from 2 Corinthians 9:6-8: 9:6-8: The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

The Corinthians had arranged with Paul to give a financial gift to struggling believers, and here Paul is giving them the big picture reasons why, and how, they should go ahead with it. Let's look at each verse:

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

This one is the simple principle behind generosity in God's economy. A farmer who sows a bit of seed will only get a bit of wheat at the end. A person who puts a little money into stocks will only get small dividends. And if you're with

any UK savings account with only 0.01% interest, then you're probably best keeping the money under the mattress. Joking aside, Paul's point is that those who give a lot, will get a lot in return – we will come back to the exact nature of the 'what' that we receive later, as that is a really important point.

Next, verse 7

7 Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Paul could have forced them, or exhorted them to give, as they had intended to do, but he doesn't do that. He emphasises 'cheerful giving', which builds on the principle given in the verse before. Why? Paul wants believers to give cheerfully and willingly out of faith that God is enough and will provide – the attitude matters more than the amount given. Furthermore, we can give cheerfully because we can know with certainty that God will provide for our needs.

Let's look at the final verse:

8 And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work

This verse looks towards the end results of generosity. God provides abundantly, and the result is that the believers can share abundantly. God's generous provision to us means that we can give even more to others. We can be sure we can share in 'every good work' because God will give us exactly what we need for the work he wants us to do.

What do we receive in turn for our generosity? Some people falsely claim that God will always recompense us with money, but that isn't what God promises here, and it misses the point of the passage. Instead, we're provided with the fact that God can supply us with all things in abundance and that we will reap a large blessing from it – God will always give us what we need, so we are to seek him rather than material gain,

This leads me to a second point: all that we receive as a blessing for generosity doesn't come from some karmic system or the will of the universe – it comes from God who created literally everything. Everything in the universe was, ultimately, brought into being by God and his miraculous power. He is always able to provide for us. More than that, God's love for us means that he wants to provide us with good things that truly enrich us (whether that's material wealth or not). Most of all, God has given us himself through Jesus – we receive him as the ultimate gift that we don't deserve, out of God's pure generosity.

So, what stops you from giving? Addressing the practical side – 'what, how much and where' questions are another message. There are wise and unwise ways to give. However, like with the Corinthians, God is primarily concerned

with developing generosity in us which reflects his character so that we can even begin to ask the more practical questions.

Here is one way to think of generosity which has encouraged me as I've read about it. I see it as a chain reaction. If you are stepping out in faith and becoming generous, God will probably give you more, because you can be trusted to generously share the gift, whether sharing the Gospel, money, material things, time, energy effort etc., and to pass it on to other people. It's amazing, because in doing that, we reflect the generous character of God. We become one small conduit that God uses in his plan to bless the world, in whichever ways he is calling you to give.



JONNY KNIGHT



Coach House Church

leadership@coachhousechurch.org // 0161 432 5604

the coach house church, 222 wellington road north, stockport sk4 2qn