

Gospel Generosity: Giving All We Have

Mark 12:41-44 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 10 January 2021

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: Who are the most generous people you know? Describe their patterns and attitudes of giving.

Worship: Romans 8:31-35 (*Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation to you?*)

Sermon Summary for Mark 12:41-44 (*Read the passage before reading the sermon summary.*)

In Christ, God entered the world and into our lives, calling us to come to Him daily. As we enter into relationship with the Living God, He will seek to heal us of our sinfulness, making us into the people we were created to be. Most of us will be tempted to pull back, resisting such an overhaul and God's authority. But as CS Lewis wrote, "*Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.*" Jesus is the fountain of all grace, and because He yearns to heal and redeem us completely, Gospel generosity must be total, or it is nothing. So when Christ tells us to give all we have, this is a call to:

Total Faith // Jesus honors the widow because through her gifts, she expressed total trust in God's great promises, entrusting her life in Him. Many of us may feel that the church has let us down, or hasn't done enough to care for the needy. But the challenge of Jesus is to faithfully give to the church because it is where He is alive and working. It is the means by which all may draw near and experience Christ's welcome and care and healing – even though this may sometimes seem hidden. This is an act of faith. And so, as we believe into Jesus by faith, we exercise what faith we have. Christ then grows that faith, and we become generous people of God, who give in total faith.

Total Poverty // Unlike those who give from their abundance, what sets the widow apart is that she gives from her poverty. God desires for us to see ourselves and our gifts rightly. No matter the size of our gifts, our giving is to be done from a sense of poverty, smallness and weakness. Because this shows a proper understanding of our relationship with God: of His greatness, of His abundant gifts, of His unwavering love. Poverty of spirit is the foundational quality of faith, where the blessed life begins (Luke 6:20). And when we give from a low place, our gifts tend to be more freely and joyfully offered. But more than this, those who give from a sense of poverty look for Jesus to come into their small gifts with His divine power and work miracles.

Total Release // Why is the widow's offering so great in Christ's eyes? Because she released *everything* she had to God. We need to remember: all we are and all that we have are gifts from our Creator. God has given abundantly so that we might release these gifts to bring about His Kingdom here on earth. We are called to give in this way, not as a set of rules to live by, but as a response to the great, sacrificial love we find in Christ. As we more and more deeply know the love we find in Jesus, a responsive love will be kindled in us. God wants us to fully rely on Him, so He can love us more deeply and transform us into the people He created us to be. Because even as we release all we have for God's purposes, we still have Jesus to live on. We will always have God. And so we have everything.

Discussion Questions (*You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.*)

- Read together the story of the fall of humanity in Genesis 3:1-7. How is a failure to believe in the generosity of God the gateway of all human sin and the distortions of our world?
 - Do you more often think of God as being generous with you or holding out on you and why? Receive some encouragement from your community group in this.

- How does the Gospel of Jesus prove to you that God will never hold out on giving His best, His all to you? (Read Romans 8:31-35)
 - How do you view the widow's offering in our text from Mark? What moved the widow to be so generous?
 - Are there types of generosity that come more easily to you?
 - What do you find yourself holding on to that keeps you from certain forms of generosity?
 - What does total giving back to God look like: being generous from total faith; giving out of our poverty rather than our excess; and releasing our gifts.
 - What would it look like for you to grow in each of these areas?
 - What encouraged or challenged you the most from this message? What is God inviting you to?
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Prayer: We are focusing on Generous Grace this week.. Pray for God to open your eyes to how He is moving in the world through His generous grace and the generous grace of His people. Pray that He would move your heart – and the hearts of our church – to live lives more and more marked by generous grace toward others. For the weekly Prayer Guide click [HERE](#). Use this guide for personal, group or family prayer times.

Engage & Experience: Generous Grace Justice, Peacemaking, Forgiveness, Mercy, Love – Each falls under the umbrella of practicing generosity through grace. Each flows from God's divine grace: His freely given, unmerited favor and love. Journal your thoughts, prayers and actions this week.

- Describe how you have experienced these in the past either toward you or toward someone else..
- Do you see people living this way in the world today? Where? Why?
- How are these forms of generosity a reflection of God's grace to us?
- What are the costs of extending generous grace? What are the costs of not extending generous grace?

Generous Grace - Biblical Peacemaking Workshop - Saturday // January 16 // 9-12

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.– *Matthew 5:9*

This Saturday! Our first Generosity workshop of the year is on peacemaking. Peacemakers are people who breathe Generous Grace. They draw continually on the goodness and power of Jesus Christ, and then they bring his love, mercy, forgiveness, strength and wisdom to the complexities of daily life. In this 3 hour interactive webinar we will explore ways that God breathes his grace through peacemakers and uses them to dissipate anger, improve understanding, promote justice and encourage repentance and reconciliation. The facilitator is Ken Sande the founder of Peacemaker Ministries and Relational Wisdom 360.

Cost is \$15/person. Register [HERE](#).