

Money & The Mission of God

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Date: 01 December 2024

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[0 : 0 0] You're listening to a sermon recorded at Providence Community Church, Truth and Beauty in Community. If you are in the Kansas City area, please consider joining us in person next Sunday.

We meet in Lenexa, Kansas at 10 a.m. every Lord's Day. Until then, we pray that as you open your Bibles, the Lord will open your heart to receive His Word.

Our primary text this morning will be two, actually, Exodus chapters 35 through 36 and 2 Corinthians 8 through 9. One of the great privileges of preaching through a book like Exodus is that we get to live out what Jesus told us in Matthew 13.

If you're wondering kind of where I developed my philosophy of preaching and how I've thought through these things for a number of years, this is a very important text to me.

In Matthew 13, Jesus says that there is a kind of scribe who was trained for the kingdom of heaven, and he is like a master of a house, bringing out of his treasure both what is old and what is new.

[1 : 1 4] Jesus is saying that someone who has been trained and taught how to preach or teach the Word of God is sort of like a man who has an almost limitless inventory of both old and new treasures to present.

And so what we typically do, if you're visiting here at Providence, is we look at particular text and then see all of the other texts or many of the other texts in Scripture that have to do with this one text that we've landed on.

Today we're almost wrapping up our time in Exodus. We've got one more sermon next week that we'll finish up with. And it's John after that, by the way. We haven't published that yet, but we'll be going through John following our conclusion in Exodus.

What we're going to do today is look at two passages, one from the Old Testament and one from the New, that have to do with generosity. And one of the great riches that the church has is we have this book written over thousands of years by dozens and dozens of authors.

And what we can do is we can land on sort of bedrock truth. If we compare one text written at one point, fast forward a thousand years and look at another text written by another person in a different circumstance about the same basic thing, we're able to arrive at sort of fundamental truth, sort of things that don't change, no matter the cultural context, no matter the time and so forth.

[2 : 3 9] And that's what we'll be doing today. So let me get you into these two texts and then we'll make some analysis of the things that they have in common. The first one is in Exodus 35 and 36.

And the context really for Exodus, as we mentioned last week, the last 15 chapters is all about them building the tabernacle, which I suppose you might say is the physical infrastructure for their worship.

And it's important to understand that as these folks are building the tabernacle and the priestly garments and the utensils for the altar and so forth, that the thing that they're building is the thing that they're going to be using for the next 500 years in their worship until Solomon comes and builds the temple.

And I just want to read a few representative texts from this section of scripture in Exodus 35 and 36. So look with me first at chapter 35, verses four through five.

Moses said to the congregation, the people of Israel, this is the thing that the Lord has commanded. Take from among you a contribution to the Lord. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the Lord's contribution.

[3 : 47] In chapter 35, verse 20, and they came, everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him and brought the Lord's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments.

So they came, both men and women, all who were of a willing heart, brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and armlets and all sorts of gold objects, every man dedicating an offering of gold to the Lord.

Look at chapter 36, and let's read verses two through seven. Moses called Bezalel and Ohaliab and every craftsman in whose mind the Lord had put skill and everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work.

And they received from Moses all the contribution that the people of Israel had brought for doing the work of the sanctuary. And they still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning so that all the craftsmen who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came each from his own task that he was doing and said to Moses, the people bring much more than enough for doing the work that the Lord has commanded us to do.

So Moses gave command and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing for the material that they had was sufficient to do all the work and more.

[5 : 13] So that's our Exodus passage. Now we go to 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 and let's talk about the context of that for a minute. So in Exodus, they're building the tabernacle that will eventually land up in Jerusalem at some point in the future.

In 2 Corinthians 8 through 9, we see Paul doing something he does actually quite a bit in his letters. A big part of Paul's ministry, I mean, people might not realize this, was to raise funds for famine relief for the saints who were still living in Jerusalem.

There was a mighty famine that had fallen on the city of Jerusalem. Famines back then were extremely ugly. There really was, they were just constantly living on that edge between enough and starving to death.

And so famines were extremely disruptive. On top of that, the Christians in Jerusalem were actively being persecuted by the Jews. And so they were the bottom rung of society in Jerusalem at that time.

So one of the things that Paul did, in addition to sharing the gospel over the Gentile world, was he would go back to the churches that he had planted in the Gentile world and he would raise funds to support these saints who were still living in Jerusalem.

[6 : 25] So that's the context in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. It's another giving passage about something different. We're not building a tabernacle here. We're taking care of some people who need help.

But let's read this passage and then we'll pull out some thoughts. Look at chapter 9 of 2 Corinthians, verse 1. Paul is arranging to meet with them and to take the offering that they would have already had prepared.

He's really just making sure that they're ready. They'd said that they were ready, but he just wants to make sure that there's no drama when he gets there. So in chapter 9 of 2 Corinthians, he says in verse 1, Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Acacia has already been ready since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them.

But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready as I said you would be. Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find out that you're not ready, we would be humiliated to say nothing of you for being so confident.

So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as exaction.

[7 : 45] Now look at verse 6. We're going to go from 6 to 14. He's just reminding them that this generosity they've already chosen to participate in is a really wise choice.

And in 2 Corinthians 9, verse 6, he says, The point is this. Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided to in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, He has distributed freely.

He has given to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.

[8 : 59] By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession, the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.

Thanks be to God for this inexpressible gift. All right, so we've got two passages on giving separated by about 1,500 years, two completely different leaders, two completely different tasks.

Now, if we find similarities here, we've landed on bedrock truth. That's the proposition. If we find things that these two passages have in common, in spite of all that separation of time, in spite of the diversity of the authors and circumstances, we've landed on some things that we can take to the bank so that we can take the money out of the bank.

No, okay. So we've landed on some things that we can be confident in. So what are some of those patterns that we see in these two passages? And I'm going to use two passages today, but I can assure you that this lines up with pretty much all the passages about giving in the Bible.

And one conclusion we can draw from these two passages is that money makes a difference in the mission of God. For whatever reason, God has decided in his wisdom to require his mission to be funded.

[10 : 19] He doesn't need to do it that way, but he's determined to do it that way. And so one of the conclusions we can see is that whenever God is doing something out in the world, whenever God has a mission that he wants to accomplish out in the world, he will usually use faith expressed in financial generosity to do what he is going to do.

I was thinking about something. I don't know if you'd ever noticed this. It was the first time for me that there are all these Josephs in the Bible and that they're all kind of pivotal in their generosity to advance the mission of God at a particular moment.

The Old Testament Joseph, of course, welcomes his brothers who had wronged and betrayed him into his wealth and shares his wealth and therefore saves the whole nation of Israel.

And then we get to the New Testament. We've got this guy named Joseph who's the earthly father of Jesus. And what does this Joseph do? He shares his reputation. He essentially risks his reputation. He shares his life.

He provides a home for the baby Jesus. At the end of Jesus's life, after he has died on the cross, another Joseph emerges, Joseph of Arimathea. What does he give?

[11 : 30] Does anybody remember? Remember, he gives the tomb that is necessary. The staging ground for the triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ is a tomb that God had given to the people of God through one Joseph's generosity.

And then you get to the book of Acts and there's this guy named Joseph who sells a field and gives the contribution to the apostles so that the poor could be taken care of. And his given name is Joseph, but he's also nicknamed Barnabas.

So one conclusion we can see is that whenever God's out to accomplish a mission, he actually stirs up faith in individuals, not just those named Joseph, by the way, but in other people as well.

He stirs up faith and they do something in terms of generosity that advances the story to the next step. So that's one thing. The second thing, and this is really important, and that is that the emphasis on giving in the Bible is always focused on voluntary, heart-based, cheerful, free will giving.

We see that in both of our passages. In Exodus 35 and 36, you see this phrase over and over again in verse 5 and verse 21 and verse 22 and verse 29.

[12 : 44] In chapter 36, you see it a bunch. You see they gave from their heart. Their hearts were stirred. Their hearts were willing, so on and so forth. And then when you get to the passage in the New Testament, you see the exact same thing.

Paul's saying, we're not gonna do this in a way that is exacting or under compulsion. I want you to give freely. He says in verse 1 and 2, it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, for I know the readiness of which I boast to you.

In verse 5, I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead, but you are ready to give, not as a willing gift and not as exaction. It's interesting that actually all of the biblical data about generosity is really focused strongly, strongly on volitional free will offering, not manipulated, not under compulsion, not under exaction.

Even when you get to ideas like the tithe in the Old Testament, which was mandated, of course, you realize a few things when you think about it for a minute. Number one, there was really no way to know whether people were actually tithing or not.

And number two, even when he would call the people to tithe, he would reason with them so as to stir up their own desire to give. A classic passage for that idea is Malachi 3, 8 through 10.

[14 : 07] God could just as easily say, give because I told you to. Give because I told you to. And over and over again, we see him going the extra mile, not only to command giving, but to teach the people so that their hearts would be willing.

In Malachi 3, 8 through 10, God says, will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, how have we robbed you and your tithes and contributions? You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you.

Now, how does he speak to them about their obedience? He tells them what the problem is. How does he speak to them about their obedience? Look at verse 10. Bring the full tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house, and thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no need.

So he is really focused, not just on giving, because he obviously doesn't need the money. He's really focused on hearts full of faith to sacrifice their finances as they trust him, as they believe him.

So we've got two ideas so far. Number one, whenever God is advancing his mission, he typically uses money. Number two, not just any money, though. He's really focused on willing, heart-motivated generosity.

[15 : 28] It's very important to him. Now, number three, and this one I think is very important as well, what we can draw as a conclusion from these two passages is something very important for each one of you to understand, and that is by looking at these two passages and a number of others in the Bible, we can see this.

Generosity is not, is not an expression of elite Christianity. Generosity is not an expression of elite Christianity.

Both of our subjects, the Exodus generation and the Corinthians, were infamous for their immaturity. These are not the heroes of the Bible, full of faith, full of obedience.

These are not highly mature people. These are highly immature people. I think it's important that each one of you understand that generosity is more like a pulse, evidence of the new life in Christ, than it is some kind of feat of strength.

This is definitely more like a white belt than a black belt. This is definitely more like something that you just simply begin to do as an expression of your salvation, than it is something you grow up into and mature into.

[16 : 46] Any suggestion that the last thing to be converted in a people is their pocketbook is simply not what the Bible teaches. Over and over again, we find that generosity is actually a low-hanging fruit, that the majority of people, when they are truly converted, participate in gladly.

You could think of someone like Zacchaeus in Luke chapter 19. Jesus says of Zacchaeus in verse 9, Today salvation has come to this house. How did he know that?

I mean, well, he was Jesus. But what is he responding to that causes him to say that? Well, the very first thing that Zacchaeus does when he is converted is recorded in verse 8. And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.

Do you understand, as a tax collector, how much money left Zacchaeus' account on that day, that very first day of being a Christian? Like a newborn baby breathes, and we know he's okay because he breathes, a newborn Christian gives.

Generosity is not some accomplishment of elite Christianity. It's really more like a pulse. It's really more like a vital sign than it is some kind of virtue that's dancing out there somewhere.

[18 : 06] In Acts chapter 16, our first European convert, a lady named Lydia, what does she do? The moment she's saved, she opens her whole household up to the apostles and insists that they take of her possessions.

If you've ever been in third world context, you understand what kind of cost is associated with hospitality. It really is just a blank check. And Lydia, the first thing she does when she's saved is she gives in a sacrificial way.

We talked about Barnabas, also known as Joseph, in Acts 2. What is his deal? You know, what's he giving? How long has he been a Christian? He's only been a Christian for a couple moments, and he sells a field, and he gives the proceeds to the apostles.

So it's very important that we understand that generosity is not an expression of elite Christianity. It's just an expression of average Christianity. It's really just a basic sign that you understand the nature of the story that you're in.

I remembered, this is embarrassing to admit, I remember one time when I lied, just bald-faced lied to my wife back in 2000 or 2001.

[19 : 15] I really wanted to see a movie. Now back then we had no money, you know, and movies were a very important decision. Like, if we're going to pay to go to a movie, we both have to really agree to go to this movie. You know, we both have to want to.

And I said, let's go to a movie tonight. She's like, okay, but I want to see a comedy. And I said, cool. Now I really wanted to see this movie called Signs, which is a great movie. It's a great movie.

And she's like, I really want to see a comedy tonight. And I said, cool, there's this movie called Signs. It's a comedy. Let's go together. So we both go into the theater and we're both having completely different experiences.

Because I knew what the movie was about. She didn't. She kept waiting for the comedy and she was not in a comedy movie. Friends, we are all in a comedy.

The comedy is that the God of the universe has given us his son. We got to know the nature of the story we're in. Generosity is not because you've ascended to some kind of kung fu level of Christian mastery.

[20 : 16] It's just you know the punchline. The punchline is the God of the universe emptied himself and took the form of a servant and gave himself. Maybe one idea to help you with this is there's this Latin phrase called sui generis.

What sui generis means is that it's a type or a species that cannot be classified in any other way. It's from the word genus, which is actually where generosity comes from as well.

Sui generis is this idea of an unclassifiable kind of thing. And what we have in the gospel is an unclassifiable, stand-alone, completely unique act of generosity that dwarfs whatever it is you could possibly give in response to it.

Our generosity in many respects is in response to the sui generosity of Jesus Christ. And that's in our text. Our folks that, where did this faith come from suddenly for these folks that had just recently been golden carring to suddenly just have such generosity that they had to be told to stop.

There was just, there was too much material. It was too hard to manage the giving that was occurring. Where did that come from? Well, friends, they had just experienced the grace of God. They had just experienced God renewing covenant with them when they deserved to be destroyed.

[21 : 37] The grace of God is the thing that sparks this heartfelt generosity that then advances the mission of God. In 2 Corinthians 9.13 Paul says it very clearly that the reason that the Corinthians are giving is because they understand the basic nature of the gospel.

Look at verse 13 of 2 Corinthians 9. By their approval of this service they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ.

Where is their generosity coming from? The gospel of Jesus Christ. This is what Paul says earlier in chapter 8 when he's reminding them he's getting them prepared to give.

He says in chapter 8 verse 9 For you know you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Generosity is just a sign that you understand the basics of the Christian faith. In Luke chapter 7 Jesus is meeting with a Pharisee and as he's meeting with the Pharisees having dinner a woman comes in crashes in uninvited and starts weeping all over him and washing his feet with her tears and there's quite a bit of scandal going on here.

[22 : 59] This is not a woman of good repute and things are being thought in the Pharisees heads as they watch this whole scene and the main thing is an indictment on Jesus. After all if he really was a prophet he would know that this woman is not the kind of woman you want leaping on your feet.

And Jesus in response to the thoughts that they're having tells the following parable in Luke 7 verse 41 a certain money lender had two debtors one owed 500 denarii and the other 50 when they could not pay he canceled the debt of both now which of them will love him more?

Simon answered that's the Pharisee the one I suppose for whom he canceled the larger debt and he said to him you have judged rightly then turning toward the woman he said to Simon do you see this woman?

I entered this house and you gave me no water for my feet but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair you gave me no kiss but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet you did not anoint my head with oil but she has anointed my feet with ointment therefore I tell you her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much but he who is forgiven little loves little generosity is not some sort of kung fu that you eventually graduate to it's really just a sign that you get the basics of Christianity that you were in a sin debt unpayable by you in any effort you might ever extend and that God in his rich sui generosity reached down and demonstrated his own love for you and that while you were his enemy he sent his son to die for you and to make an atonement for your sins and to satisfy your sin debt and so if you realize how much you've been forgiven giving is not really that big of a deal number four fourth conclusion from comparison comparing these two texts is simply this generosity does not leave you poor generosity does not leave you poor some of you know that I've watched

UFC ultimate fighting championship for basically the whole time it's been around and I've plagued my wife with that viewing as well I told her it was a comedy there was a particular moment I won't get into the details but there's a particular moment when a guy he not only had one championship secured but he had this brilliant fight on the night just a brilliant fight and he won a second championship in a second weight division it was the first time we had a champ champ two weight division champ Joe Rogan gets up to interview him this is a sassy guy not anybody I'd come in to follow exactly but Joe Rogan comes up to interview him and the guy says I'd like to take this opportunity to apologize to absolutely nobody friends I would like to take this moment to apologize for preaching on generosity to absolutely nobody why well all the things I just said but also this generosity does not leave you poor I'm doing you a favor here right now as Jim

[26 : 12] Elliot said one time he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose generosity does not leave you poorer Paul says this very thing in 2nd Corinthians in verse in chapter 9 verse 6 he says whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully generosity is not going to leave you poorer it might leave you poorer in one measurement and richer in another but boy we can trust God you will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way which through us will produce thanksgiving to God number five generosity is not usually spontaneous this is our fifth point our fifth observation from comparing these two texts generosity is not usually spontaneous now this is a tricky one and the reason it's tricky is that you want generosity to flow out of a willing heart that's really the only kind that God accepts so you want that and as a leader then you have to understand you just can't constantly harp on this you can't manipulate people you can't bully them rhetorically you can't harp on this all the time because if you do that willing heart evaporates and it's sort of like what check can I write to get you to shut up which is not what we're looking for here we're looking to bless

God and so if you're really trying to do this right as a leader you've got attention because the truth is you don't want to talk about this a lot because if you talk about it a lot it becomes kind of this bullying this rhetorical manipulation and so forth but the problem is this fifth idea and that is that generosity is not usually spontaneous in both of our passages and not just these passages lots of other ones the giving is initiated by the leader who asks for them to give Moses has to go to the people and say now is the time to give and Paul has to go to the people and say now is the time to give and Paul had to go a couple times just to make sure that they were going to follow through and so that just introduces just a tension that you can appreciate as you sit under preaching about finances is it shouldn't be this kind of hammer where it's just constant and it shouldn't be this kind of guilt manipulation thing either it should be unapologetic and it should be something like hey I want to initiate this but then

I want to let it go again and I want to see what God does with his does need to be initiated in some way another point number six generosity is usually contagious we see that explicitly in the second corinthians passage paul says that the corinthians zeal to give stirred up the zeal of other churches to give as well this is another way that God causes generosity to take place he brings faith to some who in their zeal step out and give and make some kind of difficult contribution and then others see that and they follow suit and so on and so forth it it's not explicit that that's the case in the exodus!

story but it sure feels like some momentum had caught in terms of that people following one another out doing one another and showing honor and piling up all of these materials that were needed to build the tabernacle number generosity should be stewarded with transparency and integrity people who are being generous have every right to have some clear sense of where their money is going and how it's being handled now one of the interesting things about our exodus passage is think of how transparent that was it really doesn't get much more transparent because you bring your acacia wood and the next day it's a table like it's all the workers are here the product is here and it's just all super transparent and observable there's really no mystery about where the stuff is going and I think that also encouraged in many respects the craftsmen to say quite clearly hey we we have enough in a way

I think they were saying we don't want to be responsible for any more of this pile we don't really know what we're going the less defensive he has about being suspected to be a low integrity leader it's the weirdest thing ever the more integrity they have the less defensive they are about accusations of having low integrity and Paul actually goes out of his way in this particular instance in 2nd Corinthians to let them know that he is going to be careful!

[31 : 37] and transparent and accountable with the finances that they contribute because now it's not stuff that's a simpler system now it's money and that gets more complicated so what does he say look at chapter 8 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 verse 16 but thanks be to God who put it into the heart of Titus the same earnest care I have for you for he not only accepted our appeal but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his accord with him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel and not only that but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will we take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man this makes sense right if the people are acting in faith the leaders should respond in good faith they should go out of their way to show that what they're doing is above board there should be a transparency a non defensiveness about kind of divided interests and origins who will keep each other accountable remember how we got the deacons emerged in

Acts it was the same kind of deal people were concerned that the finances that were being distributed were not being correctly distributed did the apostles get all defensive about that and say well how dare you not trust us I'm so tired of that language how dare you not trust us by the way if you're raising teenagers be ready for that one it's pretty funny anyway they didn't do any of that they're just like okay so there's some murkiness here about how this is all going no problem you guys appoint some deacons some servants and they'll manage all this and make sure that it's all above board so that's something we see in our passage we don't give foolishly or blindly without any expectation that our finances will be taken care of we identify people who have systems and clarity about these things and we trust our money with them but only in the sense of we trust them to be accountable and trust them to have integrity and so on and so forth and finally man leadership is everything when it comes to this leadership is everything when it comes to this this

God into being generous as I've showed you there's plenty of tensions there but one of the things we can see in both of these passages is that boy these men were the perfect men to lead these incredible acts of generosity both of them were simply above reproach when it came to the accusation of greed they were above reproach when it came to the accusation of greed we see in what's the idea there well no one in Israel of right mind no one of the exodus generation in right mind would be able to say Moses you're only in this for the money why as he had left much better riches when he chose to walk with these people it was clear to the people that this was not a guy motivated by greed we're walking through the elder qualifications in 1st

Timothy 3 right now one of those is not a lover of money people need to know that the leaders who are managing their finances their contributions are above board and not motivated by this and it is really clear to the people of all the things they might accuse Moses of one of them wasn't you're in this for the money he had better TV at home he had a better setup at home likewise Paul just exceptionally above board in this particular area he was just known as a guy who even when he could receive finances from the saints to support his needs wouldn't just to make sure that their in Acts 20 he's talking to the Ephesian elders and he says in verse 33 I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel you yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me in all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the

Lord Jesus how he himself said it is more blessed to give than to receive so those are eight points we see when we compare an act of generosity that happened in the desert of Sinai 1500 years before this second event which was a group of Corinthians former pagans converted and now giving to care for the needs of the Jews in Jerusalem we see that generosity is just a part of God's advancing his mission we see that it's not like this kind of kung fu black belt thing where it's like okay when I get super mature then I'll give no it's really more like kind of one of the first things that a Christian does when they realize they're been blessed and saved and so forth we've seen all of these things and we can drive home to this simple idea that we already mentioned the grace we might become rich this table is set before you this morning as again

[37 : 44] Christianity 101 I don't have to have a theology degree to understand what's presented to you here this is about someone who didn't need to empty himself emptying himself this is about someone who didn't just give some but gave all and gave all for the redemption of each one of you well I tell you I wouldn't want to use this idea like you know generosity is just kind of like a basic thing a Christian does I wouldn't want to use that to beat anyone on their heads I wouldn't want to use that to cause anyone to unnecessarily doubt their salvation but I and then in turn following his example and caring for those around you that are in need let me pray father god we thank you for your holy word we pray that your word would do a work in our hearts so that we could follow you and the good works you set for us in advance or we are so glad that you own the cattle on a thousand hills we are never you father sometimes just our flesh the world the devil even creeps in and gives us an alternate story on how we should handle our finances and that alternate story is based so much on fear lord through your holy spirit would you do the opposite your word says that perfect love casts out all fear that we have not received a spirit of slavery which leads to fear but a spirit of adoption lord i don't have the words to do it would you through your spirit use the word of god to penetrate hearts and make joyful givers lord let it begin by us walking up to this table and tasting and seeing that the lord is good that on the night when he was betrayed jesus took bread and offered it and he poured!

a cup and offered it and he said this is me i'm giving you myself lord may we participate in this table with faith and that faith lord fuel as your word says good deeds in jesus name we pray amen come now