



Week/Sermon # 6

Title: How Does Joyful Generosity Transform Me and the World?

Key Texts: Philippians 2:6-8, Matthew 6:2, and Luke 19

Overview: Jesus gave all He had and all He was for us. With divine generosity, He left glory, came to earth, took our sins, and died in our place. Now He calls His disciples to walk in His footsteps. As we give with generous and joy-filled hearts, the world can see a picture of God's love. Joyful generosity captures the attention of a world possessed by possessions and shows them there is something (or someone) infinitely more valuable.

Sermon Outline:

Introduction- Tell a story of a person in your life who has been a beautiful example and model of a joyfully generous life. Share how you have seen Jesus alive and revealing His heart through the life of this person. How have you been inspired and moved to deeper levels of generosity because of this person's life? How does their life stand as a witness to the presence and goodness of Jesus?

Movement 1- Learning from Jesus...The Most Joyfully Generous **Being** in the **Universe**



- **Image:** If you are going to use the seven icons for the seven markers of spiritual growth, show the image for "Joyful Generosity" and let people know that this picture will show up in sermons, on your website, in youth and children's materials, and other times when you are focusing on the marker of Joyful Generosity. Consider having the icon on the sermon title if you project notes or on the cover of your bulletin if you have one. You might want to have the icon in one of the corners of every slide you project in this sermon. ([Here is the link to Joyful Generosity badge](#))
- A mystery we will never solve! Read: Philippians 2:6-8

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,

*being made in human likeness.
8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross (NIV)!*

- o Teach about the divine nature of Jesus revealed in this passage and throughout the Scriptures.
- o Take time to do some exposition of the word Kenosis- “emptied, made nothing.” Acknowledge that there is mystery here that we can’t fully understand what this means. But, we can embrace the truth that Jesus willingly and lovingly emptied Himself and came as one of us so that He could take our sin, pay our price, and win our salvation. What glorious truth!
- o Unpack the divinity and humanity of Jesus. There is nothing more He could have given and remained divine. He offered all He had and He remained God with us. This spirit of generosity and pouring out should inspire His followers.
- o You might want to look at some of the ways Jesus gave in the process of His incarnation. Such sacrifice and willing generosity stands as the greatest act of giving in history...until the cross!
- Jesus gave and gave and gave...It was His nature! Do a survey study of the life of Jesus and unpack some of the many ways Jesus lived with a joyfully generous heart and actions when He walked on this earth. He went beyond the incarnation to daily acts of self-sacrifice. There are examples of this in the *Organic Disciples* book that you might want to review as you prepare this section of the message. The key is to paint an accurate picture of Jesus living as an example of generosity.
 - o He gave like His Father...divine attribute.
 - o He knew human needs and met them joyfully (He still does).
 - o He was lavish!
 - o He gave time and so should we.
 - o He called us to lives of generosity!

Note- *If you project this list, you might want to have them come in one at a time.*

Movement 2- The Journey of Organic Discipleship...Stepping into a Joyfully Generous Life

- Jesus was a model of infinite generosity, and then He called His followers to generous lives!

- o Matthew 6:2- *So when you give to the needy...* Teach about the sense of Jesus' expectation that His people notice needs and gladly share what they have.
- God delights in joyful generosity

- o Luke 19:1-9 (Share the story of Zacchaeus):

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (NIV).

- o The presence of Jesus in the life of Zacchaeus was transformational. When we allow the Spirit of God to soften our hearts so that we become generous and loosen our grip on the stuff of this world, heaven rejoices and God delights. He sees His kids growing up in faith and learning to share like their heavenly Father.
- o **Illustration-** Tell a story about someone who went through a conversion of their heart when it comes to giving of their resources. They moved from clinging to things and learned to share with freedom and joy. It would be best if this was a real person in your church or someone you know. If it was you, share your story with a humble and honest heart. It is great for people to hear about how God changes hearts and then actions follow.
- Jesus warned us about the dangers of loving stuff! Do a brief exposition of one or two passages where believers are warned to be careful about the power and danger of loving stuff and being possessed by possessions. Some possible passages are:
 - o Beware of hoarding (Luke 12:13-21)
 - o Who is your master? (Matt. 6:24)

- o Where is your heart? (1 Tim. 6:10)
- o Beware of debt...it can stand in the way of a generous life (Rom. 13:8; Prov. 22:7)
- Baby Steps...Teach on some steps Christians can take as we learn to be generous and do it with a heart that honors Jesus. Some possible encouragement and challenges could be:
 - o Give to God first (If we give to God first, there will always be enough to be generous. If we take care of everything else and give God what we have left over, we will often have nothing to give).
 - o Pay attention...whispers (When we see a need and feel the Holy Spirit nudging us to be generous, try responding. You'll be amazed what God does through actions of generosity).
 - o Think eternally (As you invest your money, time, and abilities, be sure a portion of your investment is always in heavenly treasures and things that last forever).
 - o Heart check (Ask yourself, what do I really love? Where do I invest my time and material resources? Make sure you are not falling in love with things).
 - o Enjoy good gifts (God delights when we enjoy His good gifts. Make a point of really delighting in the gifts your heavenly Father gives you. Recognize the source of every blessing you receive).
 - o Nurture contentment (Work on saying things like, "I have enough!" "I am satisfied." And, "God has given me everything I really need!").
 - o Share (Look for reasons to share with others. Be an intentional, enthusiastic, and frequent sharer).
 - o **Note**- There are some biblical passages and other practical ideas to help you develop this section in the book, *Organic Disciples*.

Movement 3- How Joyful Generosity Reveals the Heart of God...World Changing Generosity

- o **Note**- As you close your message, ask some or all of the seven questions below. Or, add your own questions to this list. Invite people to reflect on each question and then, paint a picture of how the way a person answers each question could actually help propel them into the world with a powerful witness to Jesus.

- Question 1- How can my joyful generosity help our local church serve more powerfully and be a greater witness to Jesus' love and grace?
 - Share examples of ministries in your church that impact your community and the world with the Gospel and describe how the consistent giving of God's people make these ministries possible.
 - Thank the members of your congregation for how they give toward local and global outreach.
 - You might want a person who leads your local or global outreach to share a story about a life that has been changed or someone who has come to faith in Jesus through one of the outreach ministries that receive financial support from your church.
- Question 2- What if everyone in the church gave like I do?
 - This is a sobering question. You will need to ask it with a gentle and humble spirit, but let people think about what would happen to your church if everyone in the church gave just like they do. Would this be good for the church, or the end of the church?
- Question 3- How can sharing resources give me a voice in the world?
 - Share about some of the ways people in your church can give that opens the door for Christian witness. It could be a child sponsorship program where you are able to write letters to a child you support and share your faith and spiritual encouragement. It could be giving toward a shelter, food program, or service opportunity where your church members build relationships with the people you are supporting and can have conversations about life and faith.
- Question 4- How does joyful generosity reveal the love and presence of Jesus?
 - Talk about how people can see Jesus and His heart when His children are generous like our Savior.
- Question 5- What message does a "selfish Christian" send?
 - Be honest and reflect on how non-believers might view Jesus if His representatives (us) are always rich toward ourselves and stingy toward the needs and people in our community.
- Question 6- Who rules my life...and the universe?
 - Jesus was clear that we can have only one master. It can't be both God and material goods. Invite people to reflect on who (or what) has the greatest grip on their heart and life.

- Question 7- What is my next step into a joyful and generous life?
 - Close by giving a quiet moment for people to reflect on their next step in growing more mature in the area of joyful generosity. You might want to give some simple prompts:
 - Maybe your step is to begin giving some kind of financial gift toward the work of Jesus through His church.
 - It could be giving away something that really has control of your life.
 - Perhaps the Lord is stirring your heart to begin sponsoring a child who is in need or supporting a local Christian non-profit.
 - Might the Spirit be stirring your heart to increase your giving and stretch your faith and trust in His provision?
 - Maybe you are giving but your attitude is not joyful. Ask God to increase your excitement to give and delight in sharing in God's work through generosity.
 - Other things you might encourage people to reflect on...

The Great Reversal...How Does Organic Outreach Move Us toward Generosity?

- Joyful generosity leads us into the world with the Gospel and opens the door for our witness to lost people. But, a life of evangelistic engagement also moves us to be generous. It works both ways! As we share our faith and see people follow Jesus, our attachment to stuff decreases as we see eternity changed when people leave sin and embrace Jesus. Our whole world-view is transformed. The more we see the fruit of organic outreach (evangelism), the more we want to invest our resources in the work of Jesus.
- **Closing Prayer:** Close your message thanking God for His unthinkable generosity to us! Pray for a heart that is ready to give often, freely, and with authentic celebration for the privilege of sharing in the work of Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to use the generosity of each person in your church to reach people with the gospel right in your community and to the ends of the earth.