SCRIPTURE: 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-5, 9

OPENING

Discuss the concept of generosity. What comes to mind when you hear the word? Where have you seen generosity take place in ways that deeply impacted you? What do you think a generous lifestyle should look like?

Read: And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us... For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 9)

Message Connection: The sermon mentioned two common misconceptions about generosity. 1) Generosity is about losing something, 2) Generosity is for the wealthy. Discuss these two ideas. Have you thought this before? Is this something you wrestle with now? How do the Macedonian Christians show that these are truly myths

Teaching Point 1: Generosity begins with God's grace.

Read: For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Summary: Paul wanted the Corinthians to first look at the life and suffering of Jesus as a motivation to give. He was rich, as many of them were compared to the Macedonians, yet he came to us in utter poverty and obscurity to suffer and die in our place on the cross. Now we are rich in Him!

Summary: The Macedonian Christians were marked by a radical gratitude and an eagerness to share in the blessing of giving. This no doubt stemmed from the gratitude they had for God and for his amazing love and grace toward them.

Teaching Point 2: Generosity continues with gratitude.

Read: And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their **overflowing joy** and their extreme poverty **welled up** in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even **beyond their ability**. Entirely on their own, they **urgently pleaded with us for the privilege** of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They **gave themselves** first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us...

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Discuss: Work through the bolded phrases and compare your own attitude toward generosity with theirs. Do you feel this way toward giving and sharing with others? What might need to change in your life to look more like this? Do you think it's possible to be this excited and eager to give?

Pray: Ask God to grow us in our generosity and to look more like Jesus in our giving. Pray that we can trust Him more fully with our possessions and resources. Ask Him to move our hearts toward more gratitude and freedom when it comes to our giving. Pray for God's blessing to be poured out on our church as we freely open our hands in this season.

ADDITIONAL NOTES