

The Heart of Generosity (Acts 2:42–47)

Series close: *How We Live*, the final pillar after daily Word, prayer and fellowship.

Giving isn't mainly about money. It's about a heart of generosity God has placed in us. Paying is what you do when you owe someone something; giving is what you do when you don't.

1. The Acts 2 picture. The early church was first transformed by the Spirit, and then it gave: food, time, prayer, hospitality, possessions. They were known for what they shared, not what they collected.

"All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:44–47)

2. Generosity is care in action. It says "I see you, your burden matters, you don't carry this alone." The test is whether a discipleship partner could ask you, "When last did you give something nobody asked you for?"

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)

3. Fear of provision. Everyone carries it, whether they are short at month-end or have had enough for years. Underneath is the same belief: there won't be enough, and nobody is coming to rescue us.

"Then Jesus said to his disciples: 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.'" (Luke 12:22)

4. Do not be afraid. The rich fool talks only to himself ("I... my... myself"), with no God and no neighbour in his thinking. His grain became a false master.

"What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops... This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, you have plenty of grain laid up for many years." (Luke 12:17–19)

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." (Matthew 6:24)

Jesus then turns to his disciples and speaks tenderly to the fear:

"Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!" (Luke 12:24)

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32)

Only then does he address giving:

"Sell your possessions and give to the poor." (Luke 12:33)

The order matters: first fear not, your Father knows and provides, and then give. Trust comes first.

5. Nobody can see God. When we give, people who can't see God get a look at him.

Generosity is a family resemblance, because God so loved the world that he gave.

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:13–16)

6. The widow's two coins. Jesus sat opposite the treasury and watched. The widow didn't keep one coin back; she gave both.

"Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live

on." (Mark 12:43–44)

He wasn't counting what went in. He was watching what it cost.

7. Practical: time and finances.

Time. Jesus stopped for Zacchaeus on his way to the cross. Money can be replaced; time can't.

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)

Finances. Paul gives a principle rather than a number. Giving should be regular, proportional and decided in advance, which protects people from pressure in the moment. Under the new covenant, everything belongs to God, and the real question is whether Jesus is King of this area of your life.

"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set something aside, in keeping with your income, saving it up." (1 Corinthians 16:2)

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

8. The same week. The widow gave all she had to live on, and days later, so did Jesus. The widow's gift and the cross are the same shape, and neither is a percentage.

"The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

He is still watching what it costs, and he is glad about us. Oakhill already has a giving culture; the call is to live it on purpose and regularly.

The commitment:

- **Book the time.** Set aside an evening a week or a Saturday a month to serve someone.
- **Settle the amount.** Give a proportion rather than a leftover, decided this week before God.

Listen to the Holy Spirit and do what he says.