

Mission Shaped Generosity - The Fruit

Over this last term we have looked at the call to be radically generous - with all sorts of areas of our lives that God has entrusted to us.

Below are my sermon where I reflect back on the series, and offer some final thoughts.

We began the series by looking at **Acts 4:29-33** - you might want to re-read that and look again at the relationship between prayer, mission and generosity.

- ***What do you notice?***
- ***How does it challenge us?***

Then - for the rest of the series we asked the question: '*What's in my hands?*' - those things in our lives that God has given us. These things are not '*owned by us*' - but rather '*entrusted to us*', we are stewards of what God gives.

We looked at three broad areas where we can be generous:

- Generous with how God has shaped us (our time, and God given purpose)
- Generous with our finances
- Generous with the good news - the Gospel.

Take some time to look at these three areas - and the bible readings below. I asked the question - what happens when we DON'T act in generosity in these areas and what happens when we DO.

- ***Where do you feel encouraged?***
- ***Where do you feel challenged?***
- ***What might God be saying to you?***

Finish with prayer

SERMON NOTES:

Introduction:

At the beginning of this series we looked at: **Acts 4:29-33**

A biblical sandwich:

Bread part 1

“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Acts 4:29-31 NIV

Bread part 2

“With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all”

Acts 4:33 NIV

The filling:

“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.”

Acts 4:32 NIV

ILLUSTRATION - 3 elements of the filling:

Generosity in giving: 1. Ourselves, 2. Finances, 3. the Good News

1. Ourselves - Time & SHAPE (*gifts, heart, abilities, personality, experience*)

‘For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph 2:10

Don’t - we are settling for second best. We are created for a purpose - that we don't actually live out. It affects us... but it also affects our brothers and sisters.

This puts pressure on the rest of the body, ministry that could happen - either doesn't or others end up doing what they aren't shaped to do! We are not being used in the way that God intends.

Do - But when we do we find life and life in all its fullness **and** the whole body of Christ gets built up.

‘Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.’ 1 Cor 12:27

‘From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.’ Eph 4:16

2. Give our finances - Malachi

'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,' says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it' - Mal 3:10

Don't - When we don't, the Bible actually uses this strong phrase that we are living under a curse. We don't experience the full freedom that God brings... we actually live with a sense of lack.

"You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?... Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house.' Haggai 1:9

There's not enough food in the house - as a church family we CANNOT respond to the mission locally or around the world that God is calling us to.

Do - But when we do, **there is** enough food in the house and the floodgates of heaven open and God pours his blessings in our lives. Abundance in the house... Abundance in my life.... Freedom!

What does this blessing look like... a few examples:

- *We are drawn closer to God. (Matt 6:21)*
- *We become more like Jesus. (Mark 10:45)*
- *Our happiness is increased. (Acts 20:35)*
- *My resources are multiplied. (2 Cor 9:11)*
- *I will be rewarded in eternity (Luke 16:9)*

3. Give the gospel

"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.' Matt 5:14-16

Don't - those around us won't know the hope we profess. Our world gets darker, our world gets smaller.

Do - But when we do we hold out the word of life, we shine like stars in the darkness, we declare the truth that - Jesus has come to bring life, and life in all its fullness. (John 10:10)

Funeral example (Romans 8)

Alpha example (Jason)

When we do - those around us are gently invited to find out what it means to be a follower of Jesus LIVES ARE CHANGED. [Shane's video?]

FINAL CHALLENGE:

As individuals and church - lets have the best sandwich.

Desperation in prayer.... Radical generosity.... Overflow of Mission. - LIVES CHANGED.