

What Lutherans Believe

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

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Stewardship and Generosity, Part 2

Who Owns Ya', Baby? The Least We Can Manage....

Proverbs 19:17

"Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed."

Psalm 41:1

"Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the Lord delivers him...."

Isaiah 58:10

"...If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday."

Whoever is generous to the poor: It clear from this verse and others that God sees and values acts of generosity, and we know that every good thing we have comes from Him in the first place. But who, exactly are the "poor" in a country as affluent as ours?

Does this verse prompt you to think of poverty in no-financial ways?

Lends to the Lord: Lending to God??? How is that possible? What does it mean to think of our generosity in this way? Our generosity is not merely an expression of charity; it can also be thought of as us acting *in partnership* with God.

He will repay him for his deed: Often when we think of God "repaying" mankind, it's not a happy thought, but this case is a remarkable promise. What does it mean to you to be "repaid" by God?

We see in the Psalm 41 and Isaiah 58 passages that God cares for the poor and those we might label these days as “marginalized”. These verses show us that generosity is a form of worship, of service to God, and in the reflexive sense, of God’s service to us.

Can you think of any examples from your own life where you have been blessed by being generous to those in need?

What obstacles do we face to be generous?

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

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 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.

Luke 6:38

“...Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

Acts 20:35

“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.’”

What does a Generous Life look like? What did Jesus say?

Matthew 25:35-40

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”

For I was hungry and you gave me food...: What’s interesting about this passage is the context, as it comes on the heels of Jesus’ teaching His disciples about the final judgment and the end of time! So this is how He desires us to live in the “last days” that began with His ascension into Heaven.

The specific needs that Jesus mentions here are at the bottom of Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs. He could have focused only on the Jews, or those under Roman occupation, or those suffering religious persecution. Instead, He presents a list of problems that are nearly universal across all time and cultures.

In doing that He tells us something about recognizing the dignity of every person, regardless of their situation, and even their faith or lack thereof.

This verse puts real meat on the bones of the Proverbs passage; serving those in need is “lending” to the Lord, is “partnership” with Him, because serving the needy is *literally serving Jesus Himself*.

Do any of the mentioned acts of generosity resonate with you? Why?

Connect this to James 2:14-17

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Do you have a “Generosity Plan”? If so, please share about it (if you are willing) – what form does it take? How would you describe it? Rigid? Flexible? Intentional? Chaotic, er, I mean “Spirit-Lead”? 😊

Additional passages regarding generosity

Luke 3:10-11

‘And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” ‘

Acts 2:44-45

And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

1 John 3:17-18

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.