**MY STORY**

Looking back on your notes from this week’s message, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

Although we have connected generosity with time and talents, this week we are primarily talking about a lifestyle of being generous with your treasures.

On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being horrible and 10 being excellent) how would you rate yourself on your generosity? Using the same scale, how would you rate yourself on how you handle your finances overall?

This may turn into a humorous question, simply as a self-defense mechanism. Let that happen. Getting the conversation started is more important here than complete transparency on how they handle their money.

**QUICK REVIEW**

**READ 2 Corinthians 8:12**

What is it about a gift to the Lord that makes it acceptable?

The key word in this verse is “willingness”. There is an unstated reference here to 2 Corinthians 9:7 where Paul talks about being a “cheerful giver”. If we are willing to give of what we have, it frees us from having to compare our gifts against people who have more than we do. That type of competitive giving doesn’t please the Lord.

**DIGGING DEEPER**

**READ Proverbs 11:24-26**

When do you tend to be generous and when do you tend to be stingy? Why is it hard, at times, to be generous?

People tend to be more generous out of their excess, and “less generous” when times are lean. The problem is, God doesn’t make that distinction when He calls us to generosity. The promise here is for those who are generous, not for the cautious. This kind of generosity is hard because it requires faith.

**READ 2 Corinthians 9:10-11**

What are some things that God provides for His people? According to this passage, why does God provide these things?

The easy answer here is “He provides everything”, but let’s make a list. Let’s be specific, because specificity makes it personal. Too often we fail to realize all that God has provided for us. The WHY of this question is very specific: So that we might be generous with what we have been given. Don’t miss the last phrase. “… your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.” That is two-fold. Thanksgiving from the one receiving and thanksgiving from the giver, because of God’s provision to be able to give.

**READ Mark 12:41-44**

How does God evaluate a person’s giving? Why do you think Jesus purposely sat near the temple treasury? What place does a person’s motivation and attitude have in their giving to the Lord, according to Jesus’ teaching in this passage?

God evaluates our gifts based on our faith and obedience, not the amount given. There could be speculation on why Jesus sat where he did, but he obviously wanted to teach his disciples something. Don’t gloss over the amount of boldness that it took for this woman to give what she gave in front of Jesus after all of those other large gifts were given. This last part leads directly into the Take It Home question, “Are we giving out of our wealth or out of our sacrifice?”

**TAKING IT HOME**

How can you insure that your attitude and motivation is right when you give to the Lord this week? What steps can you take to move from giving out of your wealth into giving out of sacrifice?

The answers to this will be individual and varied.