

DEEP SIX STUDY

October 24th, 2021

The Story Project – “A Generosity Unafraid of Scarcity”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS (You can view the full message on Facebook or at live.capecodchurch.com/live)

Opening: The Story Project has offered a fresh perspective on what God is doing in the world, and it comes down to one big idea: God wants to give us “life to the full” as a *gift*. We’ve been unpacking what that gift should look like in our lives; this week we take a look at generosity. And it’s not about money...

1. The Problem With Generosity is Scarcity (2 Corinthians 9:6)

- We all like to be around generous people, because they’re *safe*. That is, generous people give life to others, they don’t take it. They just seem to breathe life into us when they’re around.
- When we think of generosity, we typically think of money – but that’s only a small part of the idea, more like an *indicator*. The generosity we’re called to is so much more: a soft answer in a hard situation; kindness amid conflict; a patient conversation with a hurting friend.
- The enemy of generosity is scarcity. That’s what Paul seems to be getting at in 2 Corinthians 9; he’s saying, “Listen! Don’t be afraid of what you *don’t* have!” But we all naturally tend to fight scarcity with scarcity; we hold back, take care of ourselves first, and “get them before they get us.” When we’re faced with scarcity, our first response is to *withhold* generosity.
- Paul, however, tells us that the Gift of Life comes with the “fringe benefit” of generosity – a generosity that is unafraid of, and fights against, scarcity (the fear of what you don’t have). Taking it even further, sacrifice is “next-level generosity” – giving what I can’t afford to give.

2. The Truth About Abundance (Matthew 6:26; John 19:38-39)

- Jesus offers a third idea: if we will trust him, God will give us the gift of *abundance*. In response to our generosity, he will provide abundantly – in spite of what we see as scarcity. Receiving the Gift of Life means that our Heavenly Father gives us everything we need *so that* we can live generously and sacrificially toward others.
- Trusting in the truth that God promises to care for us abundantly, even when all we can see is scarcity, releases us to be generous to others, because we know that we “can’t out-give God.”
- In John 3, Nicodemus came to see Jesus at night, because he was afraid of scarcity – afraid he would lose power and prestige if he was seen with Jesus. Later, though (John 19), Nicodemus appears again; at the cross, after Jesus is dead. This time, he was unafraid of scarcity, displaying tremendous generosity as he provided enough burial spices to honor a King!
- Nicodemus came to understand who Jesus was, and the gift from God that Jesus brought to us. His natural response was generosity – incredible generosity to honor his Savior and King. When it comes to generosity, it turns out that it’s all about who you have, not what you have. When the reality of who Jesus is hits us, he chases away our sense of scarcity and allows us to live lives of generosity and sacrifice for others – for his glory.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. Verses from NLT unless otherwise noted.

Proverbs 11:24-25; Mark 12:41-44; Luke 6:38; Acts 2:43-45; 1 John 3:16-17

Video of the Week: [Generosity](#) by the Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In light of this week's message, how would you define the word *generosity*?
2. Who is the most generous person you've known? In what ways were they "generous"?
3. Do "generosity" and "sacrifice" mean the same thing, or are they different? Explain your answer.
4. Read Matthew 6:26 again. When Jesus tells us to "Look at the birds," is he saying that we shouldn't work and plan and prepare and save for the future? If not, what is he saying with this illustration?
5. What, in your view, is the difference between God's promise to give us the gift of *abundance* and the "prosperity gospel" that says that God wants you to be wealthy and prosperous?
6. This week's message was titled "A Generosity Unafraid of Scarcity," and that's what we're called to as those who have received the gift of full, abundant life. In your own words, what do you now believe that title phrase to mean?