

HILARIOUS COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

ABUNDANT GENEROSITY IS A CRITICAL HALLMARK OF AN AUTHENTIC SUPERNATURAL COMMUNITY

- A) Jesus expresses Heaven on Earth and his life is marked by abundance at every point.
- B) The same abundance is reflected in the early church.

⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ 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, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

(Acts 2:43-47)

There is a supernatural abundance that is inspired by the Holy Spirit and releases a culture that hosts the manifest presence of the Spirit (this operates at a corporate and a personal level).

1. GENEROSITY IS CONTESTED ON THE EARTH

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." ¹⁴ Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" ¹⁵ Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." ¹⁶ And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. ¹⁷ He thought to himself,

*'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'*¹⁸ *"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain.'*¹⁹ *And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."*²⁰ *"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'"* ***This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.***
(Luke 12:13-21)

- I cannot be rich/generous to God without being rich/generous to man.
- The challenge is to live in abundant generosity in a culture that hoards out of the spirit of greed, fear and entitlements.

2. INSIGHTS FROM PAUL'S TEACHING

*And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.*² *In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy (**abundance of joy**) and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity (**abundant generosity**).*³ *For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,*⁴ *they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.*⁵ *And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.*⁶ *So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.*⁷ *But since you excel (**abound**) in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you^[a]—see that you also excel (**abound**) in this grace of giving.*
(2 Cor 8:1-7)

There are 2 keys to a life of generosity

- Personal revelation of the generosity of Jesus

I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.
(2 Cor 8:8-9)

- Generosity is an act of faith in the generous God who will abundantly provide for us at every point

⁷ 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.⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.
(2 Cor 9:7-8)

3. TALKING MONEY

How each of us handles is a critical factor in determining the spirit of life and power at work within our community and also our personal lives.

Which of these attitudes most closely reflects your own position?

- I have sought the Lord and I am giving what he has asked me to give this year.
- I assume last year's giving level was still okay.
- I reduced my giving because of the financial downturn, but I haven't asked God.
- I haven't reviewed my giving levels for quite a while.
- I wait for an appeal before I consider giving.
- I give when I have money left over to give.
- I give little thought to my giving, I don't want to face the issue.
- I see little reason to give to CCF, everything seems fine so I don't see that my contribution is needed.
- I am in debt so I don't give at all.