



## **Message Two: A GENEROUS COMMUNITY** *Pastor Mike Chapman*

N. T. Wright, in his book, **Jesus and the Victory of God**, wrote of a key characteristic that Jesus expected from his followers. He called it "astonishing generosity." It was in reference to Matthew 5:38-42. Jesus was saying in effect that even when people use or take advantage of you, they must be met with "astonishing generosity."

As followers of Jesus, we are a community of apprentices, seeking to learn how to be less like the world and more like Jesus. Therefore, we ask Jesus to teach us how to be a generous community.

### **IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT MONEY**

It's about a **bigger story**.

Jesus calls us to a real revolution, which comes about through our reflecting the generous love of God to the world.

The church must be that **visible, tangible** place where people can come and see the new thing that God is creating.

Our generosity is to remind people of God's generosity.

*John 3:16, God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...*

*James 1:17, Every good action and every perfect gift is from God. These good gifts come down from the Creator. (NCV)*

*2 Corinthians 8:9, Christ was rich, but for you he became poor so that by his becoming poor you might become rich. (NCV)*

The central activity of the followers of Christ is to reveal God to the world.

## IT'S ABOUT OUR HEART

John the Baptist called for people to repent and prepare their hearts for the arrival of God's Kingdom. In response the people said, "What should we do?" (Luke 3:10)

If you want to prepare for the Kingdom of God: **You must loosen your grip on the things of this world.**

Generosity is not **natural** to us.

We are naturally selfish, insecure, and clinging to whatever we can hold on to.

Money flows **effortlessly** to its **god**.

*Matthew 6:21, Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. (NLT)*

**Generosity** breaks the power of money in our lives.

*Luke 16:13, No servant can serve two masters...You cannot serve both God and worldly riches. (NCV)*

## MAKING IT PRACTICAL

Jesus did not just give us hard concepts and challenging statements. He made it very practical.

Three places to begin...

1. Pray for the **attitude** of Jesus.

*Philippians 2:5-7, Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Although he was in the form of God and equal with God, he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant. (GW)*

2. Learn to create **margins** in your life.

*Hebrews 13:5, Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have.*

3. Move in the direction of **consistent tithing**.

*Malachi 3:10-12, Bring one-tenth of your income into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house. Test me in this way," "See if I won't open the windows of heaven for you and flood you with blessings. Then, for your sake, I will stop insects from eating your crops. The vines in your fields will not lose their unripened grapes.*