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Title: #beCHURCH: be GENEROUS

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Text: [2 Corinthians 9:10-15](#)

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[Watch the service.](#)



Today we are concluding our worship series called #beChurch. We have been looking at the four pillars of our mission and vision, exploring being Worshipful, being Connected, being Helpful or Serving, and today we will explore the idea of being generous. It is my hope that even though the series is ending today, this is just the beginning of us

being Church together. This has not been a series about church attendance, rather it is a series about church engagement, about being engaged with the life and movement of God.

It is a call to action, not to come to church, but to #beChurch.

Take a moment and think about the people in your life who have inspired you. Think about those who have inspired and shaped your own faith. What words would you use to describe them?

I suspect, one of the words we would use to describe the people who inspired us would be generous. They had a spirit of generosity, not just with their finances, but with their living. It's rare that someone describes one who shapes them as "stingy." I've officiated a good number of funerals in my ministry and I've never heard someone remembered fondly as stingy. In fact, what we learn about most people at a funeral, is that they were generous beyond measure.

Lyn Twist has written a book called *The Myth of Scarcity*, I recommend it to you, it changed the way I see faith, money, and the world. In the book, she asks us to think about our first waking thought on any given day. What is the first thing we think about when we wake up? For many people, our first thought is "I didn't get enough sleep". Our second thought is, "There just won't be enough time in this day.

We begin the day with a mindset and a heart rooted in scarcity. We approach everything in a given day when the idea that "There is just not

enough, I'm not enough." We see life through the lens of scarcity rather than abundance. Through a lens of everything is impossible, rather than all things are possible in this day.

We underestimate ourselves.

We underestimate the people around us.

We underestimate what God can do through us.

Paul once underestimated a group of people. He underestimated the Macedonian church on the occasion of taking up an offering. Paul was taking up a collection from churches he had planted in order to support the church in Jerusalem. He did not expect much from the church in Macedonia. They were not materially wealthy, so he didn't expect much. However, this group of Christians continue to inspire us today because they approached their lives and the world not from a place of scarcity, rather from a place of abundance.

"We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means." (2 Corinthians 8:1-3 NRSV)

Did you hear it? Even in the midst of material struggle and life hardship, these people were generous. They were generous beyond measure and their generosity inspired others beyond measure.

On the other hand, there is the church at Corinth. As I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, the city of Corinth was well off materially, it was a major shipping center, and it was a very cosmopolitan city. If one were to collect a financial offering based off of demographics, they would spend a lot of time, effort, and energy in Corinth. His experience did not match his expectations

"Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking." (2 Corinthians 8:7 NRSV)

He points out the problem and then issues a challenge to them, a challenge that stands before followers of Jesus still today

"I'm not trying to order you around against your will. But by bringing in the Macedonians' enthusiasm as a stimulus to your love, I am hoping to bring the best out of you. You are familiar with the generosity of our Master, Jesus

Christ; Rich as he was, he gave it all away for us-in one stroke he became poor and we became rich.” (2 Corinthians 8:8-9 MSG)

We are reminded of the generosity of Jesus, who gave away all, even his very life, so that we might live today and so that all may know the fullness of life.

I admit I laugh a little when I read this text because this is really the ultimate zinger from Paul, “I’m not trying to order you around, but...Jesus gave his very life for you. So, what might you be able to do?”

How followers of Jesus Christ use our resources, our time, our talents, and our money is a reflection of what we believe about God and God’s actions in the world.

The way we use our resources communicates to others what we believe. It is a reflection of the Gospel that we believe. Do you believe in the Gospel of scarcity or the Gospel of abundance? Do you believe in the Gospel of impossibility or possibility?

I love what Robert Fulghum reminds us; he reminds us that when we are five years old, we believe we can do anything. You ask a five-year-olds, Can you color? Yes. Can you dance? Yes. You ask a room full of five-year-olds, can you dance? Yes. Ask a 25-year-old, a 35-year-old, a 45-year-old, ask them if they can do any of those things. No. I haven’t colored in a long time. I can’t dance. I surely can’t sing. In many ways he says, we live in a world of myths that we have given power to so that they become reality.

*“We live in a world of myths that we have given the power to be reality.”--
Robert Fulghum*

The two myths we give way too much power to in our lives are “There is not enough.” and “We can’t do this.”

We know these are myths because the Gospel of God tells us differently. You are familiar with the generosity of Jesus Christ.

In terms of being Church, we know there are things moving forward that will be different. If we think bigger, there are things about our lives in general that will be different moving forward. Some say that we are in a whitewater of change, like we are moving down a river full of rapids, where change is happening in every rapid. Sometimes it feels like we are being tossed around.

With anything though, this is also a season that is ripe with opportunity. Sometime in the next several days, members of Geist Christian Church will be receiving our stewardship packets for 2022, which include our commitment card. You are a generous congregation and your generosity inspires others beyond measure. As we think about our commitment to God's church, both with our resources and our lives, I challenge us to remember this:

As faithful followers of Jesus, we cannot give power to myths so that they become reality.

Two of the greatest myths of our day are: "There is not enough." "We can't do this."

We serve a God of abundance.

We serve a God of possibility.

We know this because of the generosity of the one whom we follow.

The one who gave all, so that you know the fullness of life.

Let Us Pray: