



Fully Human A Biblical Pursuit of Virtue Session III: Generosity

Opening Prayer Psalm 136

To Be Generous

It's often noticed in the world when someone rich or a philanthropic foundation makes a large donation to a worthy cause. Those acts are often pointed to as being generous, and understandably so. However, generosity is a virtue wonderfully seen in more modest expressions as well, and it is certainly not limited to monetary giving.

How would you define the virtue of generosity?

Share a story of someone you believe to be generous and why you believe they demonstrate generosity.

Luther on Generosity

Martin Luther was reputed to be wildly generous. His response to the Gospel was, in part, expressed in his joyful willingness to give to the needs of others and to graciously support the work of the Church in proclaiming the Gospel. He was certainly also generous in using his own God-given gifts in proclaiming that same Gospel. Read how Luther writes of this virtue:

“God is pleased when I worship and honor Him with all my heart. Abel’s offering (Genesis 4:4) was pleasing and acceptable because he offered it in the fear of God and in faith and because he strove to show his grateful heart by his gift. For when the heart is offered, this is a gift that is very gratifying indeed to God.” (What Luther Says, CPH #1612)

- How does Luther link the virtue of generosity with our faith in God in this passage?



- How does having a mindset of gratitude affect one's exercise of generosity?

The Wisdom of Generosity

Read Proverbs 11:24-25; Proverbs 22:9

- How does the first passage describe the virtue of generosity? What is the blessing for the one who is generous with what God has entrusted them?
- What does it mean to have a “bountiful eye” (ESV) or to be “a generous man” (in other translations)? According to this second reading from Proverbs, why is the one who has such an eye blessed?
- How do these passages encourage our own practice of generosity?

The Generosity of Others

Read Mark 12:41-44; II Corinthians 8:1-8

- What point of comparison does Jesus make note of in the Mark 12 passage?
- How was the widow's gift a superlative example of generosity, as Jesus points out to His disciples?
- Why do you believe the widow gave “all she had to live on?” How does she inspire our generosity?
- What was the attitude of the churches of Macedonia which moved them to respond with a “wealth of generosity?”
- What insight does II Corinthians 8:5 give us in regard to generosity?
- How does Paul use the generosity of the Macedonians as an encouragement to the Corinthian Christians? To us as well?



The Generosity of the Lord

Read Psalm 145:15-16; Matthew 5:45b, 6:31-33; Deuteronomy 10:18; Genesis 9:3

- How do these verses describe the generosity of the Lord?
- Read and discuss Martin Luther's closing statement on the First Article of the Apostle's Creed in his Small Catechism:
"All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true."
 - What is our Lord's motivation for His generous heart towards us?
 - How does Luther describe our response?

Read II Corinthians 5:21 and II Corinthians 8:9

- How does Paul describe Jesus' generosity towards us in these passages?
- According to these passages, what does His generosity give to us?

Being Generous Today

- In what circumstances do you find it most difficult to practice generosity?
- How can those things about which you are passionate or your compassion for others encourage your practice of this virtue?
- What greater blessings flow from our generosity towards God's work through His Church?
- How does our Lord's assurance of eternal life encourage us to be generous?

Closing Prayer