

SERMON SERIES: THANKS/GIVING

SPEAKER: Scott Beckenhauer

DATE: December 1, 2024

Sermon Title

“Giving”

Introduction

This week we wrapped a short series for the Thanksgiving season: THANKS/GIVING. For these two weeks, we are going to be diving into the two words that make up Thanksgiving, and see what God has to say about each of them when it comes to our walk with Him. This week, we learned how our posture towards generosity is a reflection of our relationship with Christ, and impacts our lives and the lives of the people around us. To get started, answer this icebreaker question with your group:

- If you could pick two words that were spoken over/about you at your funeral, what would you want them to be and why?

Seek the Word

- Read Acts 2:43-47 aloud, then discuss.
 - What stands out to you about the early church’s approach to community and generosity? Why do you think God blessed them because of it?
- Read Acts 4:32-37 aloud, then discuss.
 - What is the connection between generosity and unity, as demonstrated by the early church? What can we learn from their example?
- Read John 13:34-35 aloud, then discuss.
 - How does Jesus’ command to love one another relate to the concept of transformational generosity? How would you explain this relationship to someone who is wondering about why they should be generous?

Go Deeper

At some point in all of our lives, we have experienced both transformational grace and transformational generosity, and it is important to remember those times, reflect on them, and be thankful for them as they influence our actions. Share a time when you experienced transformational grace, and how that influenced your attitude towards gratitude and generosity.

Talk About It

- We are called to be generous with plenty of things, including our time, talents, and treasures. Which of these areas is the hardest for you to be generous with? What would need to change in you or your life in order to move towards transformational generosity with those things?
- How has your view of generosity been impacted by your relationship with Jesus? What aspects of that call are still challenging for you?
- What steps can your group take to cultivate a culture of generosity that can benefit your community or Calvary? Consider making a plan in order to implement those steps in this Christmas season.

Wrap Up

Reminder: Transactional grace treats Jesus like a vending machine, where we only approach Him when we need something. Transformational grace, instead, leads to a lifestyle of gratitude and generosity, recognizing the profound impact of Jesus' sacrifice and allowing that understanding to change how we live and interact with others. This grace encourages us to be generous with our time, talents, and treasures, reflecting the love and generosity that Jesus has shown us. Because of who Jesus is and who He calls us to be, our lives must reflect the mission He placed before us— to live as the thankful, generous, and gracious body of Christ in our communities and culture.

Challenge: Scott introduced a “pathway” of generosity that is in-line with the growth of generosity that we as believers are called to have.

(Giving) Nothing→Something→Significant→Sacrificial

Identify where you are on this line. Then, try to identify what is holding you back from moving towards that next step. Ask God to work on your heart and in your life to help you progress in your generosity, and then try to implement that during this Christmas season.

Prayer: Close your time as a group by praying for a heart of generosity and unity within your group and within Calvary. Ask God to help you see opportunities to be generous and to empower you to act on those opportunities. Pray for the church to be a beacon of love and generosity in the community, reflecting the love of Jesus.