November 27th, 2022
Series: Thanks & Giving
Sermon: A Grateful Heart is a Generous Heart
Text: Luke 16, Exodus 35:4-9, Exodus 36:1-7

<u>Welcome & Intro:</u>

- Review the Kingdom of God series / Darkness living Vs. Light living

1 John 1:5-7 (NASB95)
5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and [yet] walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Colossians 1:13 (NASB95)
13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

Study on Light and darkness: Matt 4:16, 1 Thess 5:5, Eph 5:11, John 3:19-20

Study on the Kingdom of God: John 18:36, Acts 28:31, Matt 12:28, 1 Cor 6:9, John 3:3

1) **We are called to live according to the <u>Kingdom of God</u> principles.**

Luke 16:1-13 (NASB95)
1 Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and this [manager] was reported to him as squandering his possessions. 2 "And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' 3 "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management

people will welcome me into their homes.' 5 "And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he [began] saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7 "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' 8 "And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. 9 "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings. 10 "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. 11 "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the [use of] unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true [riches] to you? 12 "And if you have not been faithful in [the use of] that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? 13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

2) **As a follower of Christ, we are called to be <u>good</u> <u>stewards</u> of Kingdom resources.**

Question: What are your convictions about your resources?

- Our convictions we hold about our resources will determine how we use them
- Our core convictions will drive our behavior
- Are your convictions founded in scripture or in the world's economy?
- Are you looking more like Jesus or more like the world?

3) **We are to use our <u>time, talent, & treasure</u> for God's Kingdom**

- What is true of resources? They all are limited.
- A wise investment strategy is part of managing our kingdom resources

Time:
Ephesians 5:15-17 (NASB95)

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Talent:
1 Peter (4:10 NASB95)
10 As each one has received a [special] gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Treasure:
2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NASB95)
6 Now this [I say,] he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one [must do] just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

A warning:
- Churches can tend to over emphasize the treasure
- We need to communicate that in God's economy Time and Talent are valid ways to give as well
- Depending on the season of life we can be actively giving in any of the three areas of our lives
- Start small / The 10% doesn't matter as much a people claim.
- Israel gave on average 23.3 % of their income to the temple
- Spiritual abuse is prominent around finances, guilt drives the manipulation
- Prosperity Gospel false teaching
- We want to free you from the guilt

The principle of reciprocity:
- Things will reproduce after their own kind (humans produce humans, cats / cats)
- What we invest our resources in is what we produce
- Darkness produces darkness, light produces light

4) **We are to give our Kingdom resources from a <u>willing</u> heart.**

Exodus 35:4-9 (NASB95)
4 Moses spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying, 5 'Take from among you a contribution to the LORD; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as the LORD'S contribution: gold, silver, and bronze, 6 and blue, purple and scarlet [material,] fine linen, goats' [hair,] 7 and rams' skins dyed red, and porpoise skins, and acacia wood, 8 and oil for lighting, and spices for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense, 9 and onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breastpiece.

Exodus 36:1-7 (NASB95)
1 "Now Bezalel (bets-al-ale') and Oholiab, and every skillful person in whom the LORD has put skill and understanding to know how to perform all the work in the construction of the sanctuary, shall perform in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded." 2 Then Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every skillful person in whom the LORD had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him, to come to the work to perform it. 3 They received from Moses all the contributions which the sons of Israel had brought to perform the work in the construction of the sanctuary. And they still [continued] bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. 4 And all the skillful men who were performing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work which he was performing, 5 and they said to Moses, "The people are bringing much more than enough for the construction work which the LORD commanded [us] to perform." 6 So Moses issued a command, and a proclamation was circulated throughout the camp, saying, "Let no man or woman any longer perform work for the contributions of the sanctuary." Thus the people were restrained from bringing [any more.] 7 For the material they had was sufficient and more than enough for all the work, to perform it.

5) **The root of <u>generosity</u> is <u>gratitude</u>.**

- Israel's willingness to give was the overflow of a thankful heart. Israel had witnessed God in powerful ways: God had delivered them from bondage from Egypt and enabled them to cross the Red Sea (Exodus 14). God had provided manna from heaven (Exodus 16) and water from a rock (Exodus 17). God had promised his presence to go with Israel on their journey (Exodus 33:14). At many points in the story, we see this traumatized people acting fearful, complaining, or

worrying—and rightly so! Who of us would acclimate any better to leaving everything we know behind to wander a lifetime in the desert? Yet at some point, they learn to trust God's provision with gratitude—and from this they found themselves free to give. As we cultivate thankful hearts for God's goodness, provision, and presence, the natural overflow of our lives should also be generosity. Generosity is gratitude in action.

1 John 3:16-18 NASB95

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Application:

1. Recently, scientific research has found a neurological link between gratitude and generosity. This whole article is worth reading and quoting in parts, but here is a good summary of the findings: "In a sense, gratitude seems to prepare the brain for generosity. Counting blessings is quite different than counting your cash, because gratitude, just as philosophers and psychologists predict, points us toward moral behaviors, reciprocity, and pay-it-forward motivations. Apparently, our brain literally makes us feel richer when others do well. Perhaps this is why researchers have observed that grateful people give more. Gratitude might be good for us—but it is good for others as well" (Christina Karns, "Why a Grateful Brain Is a Giving One," *Greater Good Magazine*, December 19, 2017. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_a_grateful_brain_is_a_giving_one).

2. Just as it's often true that "hurt people hurt people," so the reverse is also often true: grateful people give to others. In December 2020, in the midst of a global pandemic filled with enough social crises to shake anyone's faith in goodness, the BBC reported on a "pay it forward" cause-and-effect at a Brainerd, Minnesota, Dairy Queen drive-through. When one customer asked to pay for the car behind him in addition to his own meal, he started a chain reaction that lasted through nine hundred customers, $10,000 in sales, and two-and-a-half days. When the store shut down for the night, on both nights the last customer paid in advance to start off the next day. The goodness impacted more than the nine hundred customers: employees at the restaurant, and bystanders on social media, and everyone in the community were lifted by witnessing such a small yet significant demonstration of gratitude leading toward generosity. ("More than 900

Cars ‘Pay-It Forward’ in Random Act of Drive-Through Kindness,” *BBC News*, December 9, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-55254082).

3. No matter what we are facing today as individuals and as a church, we can take our eyes off our pain and put them on Jesus with the help of the Spirit and a practice of gratitude. And—both the Bible and science tell us—we may have our eyes opened to the needs around us and find joy not only in our own experiences but also by caring for others. What a magnificent way to obey Jesus’s command to love God and love our neighbor. What a gift: God has wired us such that when we obey his command to be grateful, we improve our own lives and the lives of everyone around us. May our church community be such a place.