

The Generosity Of God

by Carter Conlon

This sermon emphasizes the profound truth of Christ living within believers, providing the strength and guidance needed to fulfill their calling. It encourages a shift from self-reliance to reliance on Christ, highlighting the importance of faith, obedience, and willingness to step into the purposes God has for each individual. The message challenges listeners to consider the cost of following Christ and to embrace a life of generosity and sacrificial love for others, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of God's power and a potential for revival in this generation.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:14, James 1:5, Ephesians 4:8, James 4:3, Proverbs 3:5, Matthew 17:20, Romans 1:20, John 14:1, Isaiah 6:8

Topics: "Christ Within Us", "Faith and Obedience"

Description

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Transcript

It's Christ in me. Christ is living in me. I don't have to try to strive in my own strength to be like Christ or to do what Christ wants me to do.

I just have to believe him and believe that he actually lives inside of me and is willing to give me the strength to be everything that I'm called to be and to take me where I need to go. And I don't know about anybody else but I used to sing those choruses with all of my heart because this was this was like a brand new truth to me. I'd never heard anything like that before.

Everyone all my life had been more or less telling me what the limitations in my life were and would be and because of it there were deep-seated fears that had gotten a hold of me at a young age. But suddenly I came to him. I began to read the Word of God and began to realize just reading the Word of God, that's why you need to be in your Bible, that Christ was alive inside.

Not only redeemed me but he lived inside of me and therefore whatever he had destined me to be is what I was going to become if I would believe him and walk with him. I'm not going to suggest to you that it was easy. Some of the doors were very hard.

When he first asked me to start speaking and sharing my story of how I had come to him and what my life where my life was going it was very difficult for me. But I walked through those doors by faith, believing that there was a purpose beyond my understanding that God had for my life. You know, I remember the first time I ever spoke was in front of 21 people and I've often told people that while I was while they were introducing me I was dry heaving and in the back room I was so nervous about speaking in front of these people not realizing that one day I would stand before a half million people in Africa.

One day I would stand and be speaking to a president and an entire government and a foreign nation. One day God would take me places I never dreamed that he could. And it all started by going through that first door and just believing that there was a purpose that was bigger than what I understood my life to be.

And that's what I want to talk to you about tonight. And this message tonight normally when I speak on Tuesday night the messages I do speak go out on radio at a later date. But tonight this message is just for you and for me.

This is just a reminder of who we are in Christ. What God has called us to be. And what prayer is really all about.

I've given this a title it's called a voice in a heart. That's all you really need. Some people think that you know to pray that we need this this this great big vocabulary.

We need to get our phrases right. We need to be in a certain posture. We need to we need to groan in agony or do stuff like that.

When God's not asking for any of that. I'm not I'm not against some of those things if that's the way the Lord moves you to pray. But realistically just wants to hear your voice.

And he wants a heart coming from you and I that is willing to believe him. Not even if it's a feeble heart. You know that's why Jesus said it's it's only a mustard seed of faith that's required to go to a place where there's there's a growth that comes into your life of Christ that can only be produced by him.

You know we think we have to have this mountain of faith. But that's not what he said. Said I want you to come to me with a little bit of faith that you have.

And you put it in my hand and you watch what I will do with it. Now tonight we're going to go to the communion table together. So I'm going to ask you as we have done to get some juice, some crackers, some bread, any kind of juice and any kind of bread.

And we're going to partake in communion together at the end of this service tonight. And what I'm about to share is going to lead us to that moment. And so Father in Jesus name.

I thank you God for this prayer meeting tonight. I thank you Lord that it's come to this place in the earth that you can have just a cell phone and still speak to people in 208 countries. It's truly an amazing moment in history.

Thank you Lord that you have made a way that this gospel is going to be preached in all the world. I thank you for the street kids that are with us tonight in Africa who have nothing more than a cell phone. Nowhere to even live, but they have a cell phone.

Thank you for these young people. Speak to their hearts. I thank you for the single mom at home who's afraid for her future.

I thank you for the man tonight on his cell phone listening who has fallen for the lie that his life is never going to amount to anything. I thank you God for the mom and dad who are praying for their children to come home. I thank you Lord Jesus Christ for all that you're about to do.

As much as you healed Tony's feet, and we heard that testimony tonight, and you did it in a supernatural way by speaking to a surgeon in his sleep about something he'd never done before. God we know that was you. We know it was your hand.

So we're asking again tonight that you speak to us about somewhere that you want to take us and something you want to do in us that's never been done in us before. Something we've never considered that our lives could be. For oh God, it is time for you to work.

For this generation has made void your laws, the scripture says. It's time for you to pull out your right hand of power one more time and be glorified through your people. Lord here we are.

We're not much of an army, but you've never had much of an army throughout history. You've always taken the weak, and the insignificant, and the nobodies, and the nothings, and the barren people to produce life. This is who you are.

It's what you do. Oh God would you help us to believe it again in our generation. Lord thank you.

Thank you that you've stripped away all of our trust in everything else, and you brought us down to a cell phone, and speaking to one another, and talking to you. Lord that's the way it needs to be now, and we give you praise and glory for it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now in 2nd Corinthians, if you have your Bible or a device, in chapter 3, beginning at verse 14, I want to read to you a scripture. Now what I'm about to speak is really based on Pastor Tim Delina's message on Sunday morning. It so stirred my heart when he talked about this lavish generosity of God, this exceeding generosity of God.

You know he said it this way, God could have made one star and that would have been sufficient to declare his glory, but instead he made billions of stars, and he made galaxies because he's lavish in his creativity. He's lavish in his generosity. He talked about the insects in nature, and the birds, and the different types of everything that God made.

That's why in the book of Romans the scripture says that the heavens and the earth so declare the glory of God, that one day when all humankind stands before God, every person will be without excuse, because the evidence of God was everywhere, and if they would have asked who he was, he would have shown them who he was. See that's why if people ever ask you, well what about the people who've never heard? You see they have heard, they're just not willing to listen. The evidence of God is everywhere in the in the way the cosmos works, in the way the universe works, in the divine creation that's all around us.

I remember walking into a church as an unsaved man, as a police officer, and I prayed a simple prayer. I said, God if you're real, I wouldn't mind knowing who you are. I simply, see I asked him, and it wasn't long after that he brought somebody into my life, and told me who he was.

You see if we would ask, he would show us. Now in 2nd Corinthians chapter 3, he's talking about his people, the people of Israel in the Old Testament, who are kind of quagmired in religion, and we can get so stuck in religion, and religious practice, that we can actually lose sight of God. Our religion becomes our God, as opposed to God becoming the source or the center of all that we do, and all the worship that's in our lives.

And it's speaking about the people of God in chapter 3 verse 14. He says, their minds were blinded. In other words, they couldn't see who God was.

They'd lost sight of God. Until this day, the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. In other words, when Christ becomes the center of our focus, anything that hinders us from seeing Him, and understanding Him, is taken away.

He goes on to say, even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless, verse 16, when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. This separation between us and God, when we turn to Christ, is taken away.

And when the veil is taken away, the darkness of our heart lifts, and we begin to understand things that we didn't understand before, if we are willing to hear what God wants to speak, if we're willing to look at what He has done for us, if we're willing to ask Him to give this revelation even into our hearts, as as mediocre as we might feel, or as weak as we might be, if we're willing to say, God, if you have a divine plan for my life, if you have a strength that I've not yet understood, if you've got giftings that I've not yet reached out for, to receive, then God, take the veil off of my heart, and help me to stop looking at myself. Help me to stop trying to be, in my own strength, what I could never hope to be. And Lord, take the veil away, and let me see who you are, and what you have done, and what you want to do for me.

Now, Paul goes on in verse 17. He says, now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Now, the actual better translation of the word liberty, you can look it up yourself, is generosity.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there's not only freedom, there's generosity. There's this generousness of God, this willingness of God, this lavish generosity, as Pastor Tim spoke about, to do things in us, and for us, and through us, that we never even dreamed were possible. The thoughts that he thinks about us, they're more than can be counted.

He's thinking actually about you right now. He's thinking about, not just your situation, maybe you're just, your thinking is so narrowed down now that all you can see is your situation, and you hope to get out of it. But did you know that God has something so much bigger for your life than what you are thinking about right now? He's got a plan that you haven't even conceived.

He's got something he wants to do through you that only God can do. Paul goes on and says, but we all, with an unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. So, as we behold this generosity of God, through his Son, Jesus Christ, we are being transformed into that which God has destined us to be,

through his Son, Jesus Christ.

You see, my brother, my sister, this Christian life is supposed to be a supernatural life. It shouldn't be a natural life. It should be a life where we wake up every morning wondering what God is going to do today.

We should be always very, very, very aware of the presence of God in our lives. As a matter of fact, he lives inside of us, through his Holy Spirit. That's why we can pray without ceasing.

That's why Proverbs 3, 5 tells us, in all our ways, we need to acknowledge him, and he promises them to direct our paths. That's what Paul meant when he said pray without ceasing. It's this friend that is closer than a brother that you can talk to any time throughout the day.

It doesn't have to be just a formalized ritual. It's a relationship with this interior dwelling of the Spirit of all mighty God. Now, he's willing to be generous.

For example, in James chapter 1 and verse 5, he said, if any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who will give it liberally to him without holding back. Actually, let me read it to you. If any of you lacks wisdom, James 1, 5, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally and without reproach, and it will be given him.

Now, the NIV says it the best. Let him ask of God, who gives liberally and without looking for fault in the one who's asking, excuse me, the one who's asking for wisdom. You know, we often pray and say, you know, God must see some fault, either visible or secret fault, and because of this fault, he's not going to answer my prayer.

But if you lack wisdom, ask. When's the last time you did that? When's the last time you approached this very generous God, who's willing to give you free and generously without looking for fault in you, without looking, without searching for some reason not to give it to you? Remember, the writer of the scripture says, he who gave us his Son, how shall he not with him or through him freely give us all things? Ephesians 4, 8 says, when Christ rose from the dead, he took captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. In other words, there are certain spiritual giftings that God has for you, supernatural abilities that are not your own, to do things that you've not thought yet that you were capable of doing.

And so the question is, if we know these things, why are we not asking? That's a phenomenal question. You know, we spend most of our lives just asking for bread and asking for clothes and asking to get out of this situation, asking to get into a better job. You know, our asking is so limited.

My wife said it one time, a lot of times we deal in the lowest currency of heaven. We're asking for nickels and dimes, and those things might be important, I suppose, from time to time, but there's so much more that God has for each of our lives, and we're not asking. Now, one of the reasons why people ask and don't receive, the Apostle James wrote it in James chapter 4 and verse 3. He said, you ask and you do not receive, because you ask amiss that you may spend it on your pleasures.

You ask for the wrong reason. A lot of times, and especially, I guess, American Christianity, maybe for a generation, has been very, let's say, complicit in this, of asking for ourselves. We've failed to understand something, that the giftings of God, the calling of God, the purpose of God, the pathway of God is all about others, always has been.

God sent his Son into this world to die a painful, horrible death for us. It was for us. That was the reason why even going back three times in the Garden of Gethsemane, that he ended up obeying his Father's will and going to the cross, because there was no hope for us if he was not willing to pay the price for our redemption.

And then he says to you and to me, he says, as the Father has sent me, now I'm sending you, as the Father has sent me. I'm sending you now to be, as it says in one of the New Testament epistles, that we're to be living sacrifices for the purpose of God, which is our reasonable service. In other words, we're to be yielded for the purpose of God, which is ultimately the redemption of other people who don't yet know that they have a God who loves them, who desires a relationship with them, and who died on a cross to save them and to bring them home again.

That's our purpose on the earth. And in moving towards that purpose, that's where we find faith, that's where we find the giftings of God, that's where we find the power of God, that's where we become a supernatural people all over again. You know, Pastor Tim's told a story, which it seems humorous on Sunday, but it's actually quite profound, and it was about this certain restaurant, a drive-thru restaurant that sold coffee and sandwiches and doughnuts and such like, and one person went through and decided to pay the price for the person coming after them.

And so it became a continuous thing. There were 55 cars that went through, and each person who got their order found out the person before them had paid the price for what was now in their hand. And now they were given the choice to either pay the price for the person coming after them, or to simply drive away.

55 people, 55 cars with people in it, decided not just to receive freely what had been given to them, but to pay the price for the person coming after them. And then the 56th person came along, and somebody had paid the price for them to have either that sandwich or doughnut or whatever it was, that coffee in their hand, but they decided they were unwilling to pay the price for the person coming after them. And he talked about that number 56.

That's the one kind of a person in the kingdom of God that you don't want to be. You think about the people of Israel now coming into the place of incredible promise. They've been brought out of captivity.

They had been sovereign. They'd seen the miracles of God. They've been sovereignly sustained by God.

Then they came to the shores under Moses of the Old Testament, placed the land of promise. And of course our land of promise is Christ. We know that today.

Theirs was a physical land, which was a type of what God was going to lead his people to through his church and in his church through his Son. But these people came to the shores of promise. They looked in at the obstacles that were before them.

They knew that it could cause some deprivation or suffering or even loss for some of them, and they decided that the people coming after them— that would be the women and the children and the old and those who couldn't fight— were just not worth fighting for. It was not worth paying the price for those who were coming after them. And I want to ask you a question.

Are we willing to pay the price for those coming after us? Are we willing to fight for those that don't have a voice to speak for themselves? Are we willing to fight for our sons and daughters in our generation and

families and marriages and children and teenagers and people that are confused and those that are yelling and screaming in our streets? Are we willing to be given for their sakes, even if they never thanked us for it? Or are we going to be number 56 in the chain, who's willing to take what was given to us? Somebody paid a price to give us what we have today. The early disciples all paid with their lives, and you go up through—you go—you look down through history. People paid an incredible price, even in America.

Over 51 people died just coming to the shores of America in Plymouth so that we could have a land where you could worship God freely according to conscience. That was the promise they had. They gave their lives so that we could be in the nation that, up at least to this point, has been a place of freedom, of worship, and conscience.

They paid a price. So now the question arises. Do we just drive away? Do we become number 56, or do we pay for the people that are coming after us? You see, I also—Pastor Tim, he quoted something from Martin Luther.

I don't remember the whole quote, but this is the way I remembered it as I wrote it down today. Something like this—a relationship with God that costs us nothing. Is it really worth anything? It costs the Son of God his life.

It costs the Father the agony, in the sense of having to turn his face away from his own Son. We don't fully understand that. We won't until we get to heaven, and until God chooses to reveal to us the great cost that was involved in the cross.

It cost a lot of people along the way. It cost the early disciples their lives. It costs a lot of Christians their time in the arena.

It's costing people throughout the world today their freedom, in some cases their lives as well, in other countries where there is religious repression. And here in America, if we're seeking a relationship with God that costs us nothing, I guess the question is, is it really worth anything? And are we willing to just drive away from a message like this, or are we willing to say, no, I'm gonna pay the price for somebody coming after me. I don't know what you are thinking tonight, but I'm willing to pay the price.

Oh yeah, I could live in concrete, I suppose, the rest of my days. And I do feel, honestly, that the pathway before me is not going to be an easy one, but I'm willing. I'm willing to pay the price for somebody coming after me, even if they never say thank you.

It doesn't matter to me, because it's what God's called me to do. And in pursuing and choosing that path, there's a way to the heart of God's generosity that has been open wide to me, and it will be open wide to you as well. There's things and giftings of God I haven't fully touched yet.

There are places that God wants to take me that I don't, I haven't fully comprehended, but I'm willing to follow wherever he leads me. And I guess in the middle of it all, I'm just getting a joy back that I knew when I was a young believer, because I feel like I'm there all over again. I'm going somewhere I don't fully understand, but I know that God's in it.

And I thank God for it with all of my heart. And by the way, I really thank God for Pastor Tim DeLena. God has given you a good pastor, Times Square Church, and I really hope you appreciate that.

He's a man of God who seeks God, and he's going to lead many people who are willing to follow into this new life, of not talking about what you're not, but talking about what you will be and what you could be in Christ. And so we're going to go to the communion table tonight, and the communion table is just really about this one thought. Lord, you paid the price for me.

You shed your blood that I could be forgiven. You allowed your body to be abused so that I could have promise for my future. So I'm not going to drive away.

I'm not going to come to the foot of the cross like the soldiers did and just gamble for your garments when there's a calling on my life. No, I'm going to pay for the person coming after me. And I want to tell you something, my brother and my sister.

Listen to me carefully tonight. This is the entranceway to the power of God being realized again in this last generation. This is the entranceway to a great end-time revival that has the potential to touch nations.

It's something way beyond us. If you and I will just stand up and say, yeah, I've got problems. I got struggles.

I got trials. We all do. Yours might be bigger than mine.

Mine might be bigger than yours. But it's not about me anymore. My name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, as the scripture says, and heaven is my eternal home.

And Christ is my strength till I get there. But there's people coming after me. There's teenagers that are confused.

There's children that don't know that God loves them. There's moms and dads that don't know how they're going to get through tomorrow. There's people in prisons that don't know they can still be free, even if they get never get out from behind bars, they can still be free.

And somehow, somehow, I'm asking God to use my life to reach as many of them as he can reach through me. It's not about me reaching them. It's about Christ in me reaching them through me.

That's the beauty of it all. And in order to do that, there's this generosity of God, these giftings of God, this ability of God that only God can give. This has been a message tonight just for you.

It's something stirring my heart so deep, so powerful, so profound right now, that I feel like I'm a brand new believer all over again. It's just absolutely amazing what God's doing in my life. The old songs are coming back.

The old faith is stirring again. The desire to—I feel like Caleb who said, I'm just as strong as when I was a young man. Give me the mountain with the giants.

Give me give me the one with those sons of Anak that caused the people to turn back in the previous generation and die in the wilderness. Give me that mountain. I've been waiting 40 years to take this thing.

That's the way I'm feeling in my heart now. I'm looking forward to the journey, not suggesting it's going to be easy, but I'm not going to be number 56 in this journey. No, sir.

I'm going to pay for the people coming after me by the grace of Almighty God. If you'll take your juice and your crackers right now, we're going to go to the Word of God. We're going to go to the communion table.

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