

**THE BIG IDEA:** Giving is natural when the resources aren't.

### The Take-Off

This morning is one of my 2 favorite Sundays of the year, because this morning is The Big Give.

I love THE BIG GIVE!!!! I love giving our church the opportunity to be generous, and I love watching generosity spread.

I cannot overstate this enough: generosity is contagious, and as we'll learn this morning in Part 3 of our "Like a Child"

Christmas series, the most generous people on the planet are children.

More on that in a minute, but for now, let me just ask you this one question: how many of us have been impacted at one time or another by someone's generosity?

We could probably tell story after story, couldn't we?

I've told this before, but it's worth repeating. (The night I found an envelope with 70 \$100 bills in it)

Your story may not be the same as mine, but you've probably got one.

A bill got paid, someone took your shift at work so you could be off, you came home and found your yard mowed.

And when those things happened, you didn't feel stingy! You wanted to pass it on, because being generous leads to others being generous!

That's huge. The contagious nature of giving is what makes me so excited about today, because at the end of the service you and I are going to have the opportunity to throw some generosity fuel on this city.

Literally, we can change our city by giving big this morning!

But first, let's take a look at how children give.

Remember the truth of Jesus' words in Matthew 18? "unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

We probably need to ask the question, "what would it look like to give like a child?"

I'm glad you asked...

### 1. Children give genuinely

- a. There's a passage of Scripture in Titus 1 that is interesting
- b. in verse 15, Paul writes that "to the pure, all things are pure"
- c. When I think of children, I think they may be the purest crop on the planet
- d. I'm not saying that they aren't sinful and in need of Jesus as their Savior, but what I am saying is that they give genuinely - purely - from the heart.
- e. There is such an innocence in how children give - no agenda, no strings attached
- f. I've seen this genuine - pure - giving often in my own children
- g. They can't wait to watch OTHERS open the gifts that THEY purchased for them
- h. Don't get me wrong - they love to open gifts! But they get such joy out of giving and watching those gifts get opened is one of their favorite things about the holiday.
- i. One time Sydney was really excited about the gift that she had gotten me...
  - she couldn't have been much older than the 2nd grade
  - she "shopped" at her school store by herself and got me "the perfect gift"
  - she smiled with anticipation as I opened it and when I pulled the tissue paper back, I found a book entitled "How to be a Good Dad"
  - While the adults in the room chuckled, Sydney was confused.
  - She saw the book title and thought, "My dad's a good dad, so this must be for him!"
  - Adults saw it and got the irony of a daughter giving a father a book on how to be better.
- j. When was the last time you gave your heavenly Father a gift ... even if it seemed odd ... just because?
- k. No strings attached, no requirements.
- l. Just purely, from a heart filled with love for Him.
- m. When we give like that, the gift becomes irrelevant, because it's the giver who moves His heart.

### 2. Children give graciously

- a. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 8 and let's see one of the most beautiful passages about giving in all of the Bible.
- b. Notice that no one was making the Macedonians give - actually, the Macedonians begged to be able to give!
- c. But notice that 3 times in 7 verses Paul uses the word "grace"
- d. Giving is not an act of finances, but of grace, and children understand this so well

- e. When giving is fueled by grace, there is no room for selfishness
- f. When giving is fueled by grace, there is no room for stinginess
- g. When giving is fueled by grace, giving isn't held captive by grudges
- h. Ephesians 2:8 - God gave graciously
- i. 1 Peter 4:10 - the gifts He gave us by grace are used to pass the grace along
- j. One last passage on giving graciously - Deuteronomy 15:7-11
  - this comes right in the middle of instructions on tithing and handling what people owe us
  - God is clear in verse 7 that HE GAVE TO THEM and that should impact how they give to others
  - verse 10 is the key - not just giving, but giving without a grudge
- k. If we're going to give like a child, we've got to be able to give graciously
- l. If you're not able to, you need to remember the grace that God has shown you, and then allow that grace to spill out from you onto those around you.

### 3. Children give generously

- a. When I was young, I never thought twice about giving it all away, or going all in.
- b. As I've gotten older, I've convinced myself that I was so generous as a child because I was naive about how money and finances.
- c. I found myself saying phrases that seem very "adult"-ish.
- d. Things like "money doesn't grow on trees!"
- e. But children don't give generously because they aren't as smart as adults about all things financial!
- f. They give so generously for one very simple reason: they believe that there's always more where that came from!
- g. You and I became less generous as we grew up because we became convinced that that belief isn't true.
- h. We got to the end of the money before the end of the month.
- i. We saw the hole that state and federal withholding left in our gross and got tight about the leftover net.
- j. And I'm going to concede that you and I are right ... if we only see giving in the natural.
- k. In the natural, the pie is only so big, and so we have to cut thin pieces if we have any hope of making it last.
- l. But in the SUPERNatural, things are quite a bit different!
  - Psalm 50:9-15 ... hard to read this and think that God's resources are going to run out!
  - Matthew 14:17-21 ... a little given to Jesus became more than enough (everyone was satisfied AND there were leftovers)
- m. Today's Big Idea sums it up nicely: **giving is natural when the resources aren't.**
- n. We'll never give generously based on what WE have. But we'll always give generously based on what HE has.
- o. God's resources are LIMITLESS, and you can't waste what never runs out.
- p. That's why heaven uses gold for asphalt! It isn't precious there because it isn't rare there!!
- q. Children give it all away and expect their parents to replenish them.
- r. When we give like a child, we will, too.

### The Landing

This morning, we'll apply the message by, well, giving.

Today we are taking part in The Big Give, when we all give \$25 each and then our church takes that money and gives it to non-profits. 100% of this offering will be fuel on the fires of their passion!

2 things to keep in mind:

- 1) God doesn't tell us to give because He needs what we're giving. He tells us to give because the world needs givers.
- 2) This kind of generosity is what the Bible refers to as an offering. It isn't a tithe and it doesn't take the place of what you or I would normally give to God. We'll still drop that in the offering as we head out. Sometimes we are tempted to take a tithe check and just drop it in an offering like this, but that just proves that we're looking at the resources as being natural. They aren't, and today, God may use The Big Give to stretch your faith to believe that He can multiply your gift the same way He did the fish and the loaves.

I don't mean to make you feel like giving shouldn't be a struggle, because it will be as you're learning to trust God with your resources.

Just remember that giving becomes much more natural when we understand that the resources aren't natural. Let's give, and see what God can do through us to bless those around us!