The Matchless Gift — Delivery Transcript

2 Corinthians 9:11–15 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, November 16, 2025 · *Close the Gap*

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Family, if you have a Bible, we're going to be in the book of 2 Corinthians. And so, you can go and turn there. 2 Corinthians chapter 9. And if you're visiting with us today, I've made this disclaimer over the last couple of weeks. We are actually this is the last time I'm going to do so because this is the last week of a unique kind of sermon series in our church. The name of the sermon series is Close the Gap, Jesus for every Generation. And the sermon series is in tandem with a campaign or a resource initiative that we're doing in our church.

And what I mean by resource initiative is we're trying to raise money or trying to raise resources to do an initiative. That initiative is to build or renovate the very original sanctuary of Broadview, which isn't what we're sitting in right now, but it's what's behind me. It's the oldest building in our church. It's called our main building today. And we were trying or we are trying to raise $ 1.5 million to renovate that space to add balconies into this sanctuary and do some other things around our church to Close the Gap specifically to close some facility gaps that we have because we're running into we're running out of room.

Even in this room on a day like today, it won't be long before there's no many no more there's no more seats on the floor. So we're trying to create some up top and the same goes for our student ministry environment and other environments along the way. And so that's the idea behind the campaign. And I understand people don't like when preachers talk about money. So it's not been, you know, my favorite sermon series ever. But the reason that we're looking at 2 Corinthians 8 and9 is because the New Testament addresses this issue very clearly, very plainly.

And this is not something that Christians have just done when we got to America. And you know, things cost a lot of money to do ministry. It's something that Christians have been doing from the very, very beginning. And in looking at what the Bible teaches about generosity, it applies to so much more than just your money and my money. It applies to every arena of life. Generosity in every respect and it's been such a life-giving spirit a life-giving series for me and I think has created a life-giving spirit in our church as we've examined it.

And so today's the last sermon. We're looking at that very last section in 2 Corinthians chapter 9. We believe in this thing called expository preaching in our church. So my goal as your preacher this morning is to make the main point of my sermon the main point of the text that we're about to read. So, I don't have any agenda of trying to raise money for a giving campaign. That's separate from my goal today, which is to help us understand what Paul says in this passage of scripture. This is one of

many passages in the Bible that talks about this issue, talks about money.

The truth is God cares a lot about what we do with our money. And it's not because God necessarily wants our money or needs our money. You can imagine if such a God does exist, and I believe he does, he would be above the creation. He would be the creator of everything that is and as creator could create whatever he wanted in order to have whatever he needed. And so God doesn't talk about money because he needs our money. God talks about money because we need his truth. We need to align ourselves with his wisdom and truth on the issue of money because money of all the other things in the world has a greater potential of turning us bad than many of the other things that we battle.

We all we have all kinds of battles in our life. We have battles with gossip. We have battles with fear. We have battles with anxiety. Maybe you have battle with lust. The battle with greed and the battle as the Bible calls it the love of money is one of the most dangerous and universal battles of the human condition. Jesus talked about it in his sermon on the mount and he said that that you can serve God or you can serve money but you can't serve them both. And that money is going to compete for the affections of your heart more than any other thing in your life because money can buy you freedom.

Money can buy you independence. Money can buy you nice clothes. It can buy you a nice car. It can buy you status in society. And human beings love those things, right? I do. I love freedom. I love independence. I love not feeling anxious. I love feeling like I'm an important person. Who wouldn't? But when you begin to look for those things in money as opposed to finding those things in the Lord, that's what the Bible calls idolatry. And idolatry or the root of idolatry is greed. When the New Testament talks about greed, it talks about it in terms of its power to produce idol idols in our heart and idolatry in our life.

And that's why God talks about this issue more than any other issue because of its potential to bring so much harm. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, Paul says. And so God cares about our money because of those reasons. But God also cares about our money for a different reason. And that's what we're going to see in our text today. If you're new to Bible study or if you're new to the book of 2 Corinthians, let me kind of situate it with you or for you.

I'm going to show you a map up on the screen. Paul is writing this letter from a place in northern Greece called Macedonia. Macedonia was a poor region of Greece. It'd be like hanging out with people I grew up with in Roi, Texas. Okay? Country folks up here in Philippi, Thessalonica. You probably recognize those terms if you're a student of the Bible because of letters written to those churches in the New Testament. He's writing to a church down here in lower Greece or Aaya called Corenth. He also planted a church in that region called the church at Corinth.

I don't know what it was called. First Baptist Corinth probably not. But he planted this church and this church and all of these churches as he did a missionary journey from over here in abalene. I'm just kidding. He was down here in Jerusalem and he comes up and he plants all these churches all along the way. This is actually his second missionary journey. He's doing this. This is his third missionary journey and he's doing this same trek twice that he did the last time on his second missionary journey.

And as he's writing to these Christians down here in Corenth from up here in Macedonia, he's writing for a group of starving Christians down here in Judea or Jerusalem.

In 47 AD, a famine just wre havoc in that area and everyone was hungry. But if you were a Jew who had converted to Christianity, then you were starving to death because you had lost your network of support. If you were a Jew that converted to Christianity, they would have seen you as a heretic. You were persona nongrada and in pleasant society. You would have lost the kind of economic advantages that you previously enjoyed. And so they were literally starving to death. And so Paul on these missionary journeys is trying to raise money to meet that need.

And he goes from church to church to church. And when he gets up to these Greek churches, they didn't have the same famine. Some of them were financially welloff, for example, in Corinth. Some of them were not, for example, in Macedonia. It doesn't matter. Paul still encourages them to give generously as an evidence of the gospel that they believed for these Christians down in Judea. These are people they did not know. These are people previously that they would not have liked. There was racial prejudice between Jews and Greeks. And these were people who would never be able to pay them back.

And yet Paul nevertheless says, "Would you be generous? Would you be generous and take from what you have and supply and meet their need? Now, we looked last week of what that looks like. What does generosity look like? Why does God bless it? This week, we're going to look at what happens when we give. So, pick it up with me in chapter 9 10. Now the one talking about God, the one who provides seed for the sewer and bread for food will also provide and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

This is a metaphor in case you don't understand. Paul is using agricultural imagery to talk about giving and generosity. And he's saying God provides you with the money you need for generosity, but he also provides you with what you need to eat, bread for food. He provides both. And he multiplies your seed and increases the harvest of righteousness. He says in verse 11, "You will be enriched in every way for all generosity, which produces thanksgiving to God through us. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints aka down there in Jerusalem who are starving to death, but it is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God because of the proof provided by this ministry.

In other words, your generosity, the proof that is given through your generosity, they, these Christians down in Judea who are starving to death, they will glorify God for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ and for your generosity and sharing with them and with everyone. And as they pray on your behalf, they will have deep affection for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift. Now, if you were reading this whole thing, chapter 8 and chapter nine together, you would pick up immediately that Paul is ending the way he began when he says the surpassing grace of God in you.

He's ending on this theme of grace. Because from Paul's vantage point, the whole question of money and generosity from a Christian perspective is an act of grace. Giving in the Christian mind is different than giving in the Greek traditional Greek mind. The Greek idea of grace. They had a word for it called caris. They understood grace as kind of doing a favor for someone. And if you gave someone a favor, if you helped meet their need, the clear implication is that they would return the favor back to you someday. And this would sometimes be money.

Yeah, you get my lunch. Next week I got your lunch. Or sometimes it was not financial because you didn't have the money, but you had something else that they valued like reputation or glory or respect. So they meet your need and you give them glory, you give them love, you give them respect. But the basic idea for a Greek when it comes to grace is that grace begins and ends in the person. Grace begins and ends in the individual who gives the favor. Paul is blowing up that paradigm for these Greek this Greek audience for whom he's writing.

He's saying no grace doesn't actually begin and end with you. Grace just like love and just like all the other great virtues begins and ends in God. So you have this sign here of the trinity. God actually bestows grace first to us. We receive grace from God. He provides bread. He provides seed for sewing. And then we take God's grace that he's given to us. And then we forwarded on to other people. And when we bless other people with the grace that God has given us, the grace didn't start with us.

It started with God, but it flowed through us to them. And so now when they give glory or they give praise or they give value back, they don't give it back to us. They give it back to God. In other words, in a Greek view, grace begins and ends with the person. And in a Christian view, grace begins and ends with God. And that's why God cares about what we do with our money. Because money through giving mediates the grace of God to people. God's grace comes in many forms. Ultimately, it comes through his son, Jesus Christ, who entered into this world, took on human flesh, died on the cross for sin.

Three days later, God raised him from the dead so that you and I can be forgiven of sin and have eternal life. But God not only saves us, he fills us with his spirit and endows us with his grace. And as he puts his grace in our hearts in life, it flows through us to other people. And that act of mediating grace really matters to God because you in effect are representing what Jesus was for that first century group of Christians and who Jesus is for people today. We are the hands and feet of Jesus through our generosity.

And that's why he really cares that we do it the right way that we do it with the right spirit. And that when we do it in that way with that spirit God blesses it. And not only does he bless it, God gets glory and praise as a result. So I want to show you that and then we're going to apply it to what we're looking at. Let's first look at how God meets the need. Again, look at verse 10. The one who provides seed for the sewer and bread for food will provide and multiply your seed.

This I think is brilliant because Paul is emphasizing two truths when it comes to God's provision. He actually uses an interesting word when he says the one who provides. That's one Greek word translated he who provides. The root of that Greek word is where we get our English word for chorus. Have you guys ever heard of chorus abalene? Maybe not. Okay. Well, you guys have heard of a festival. What's the famous rock festival? Woodstock. You guys heard of Woodstock? In Greek culture, they had a similar kind of deal. They had these festivals or these huge parties to Greek gods like Dionius.

And everybody loved these parties because it was an open bar. And who doesn't like to go to a wedding with an open bar? Besides me, of course, I would never do something like that. But you know, normal people who are not preachers go to a wedding that has an open bar because then you can enjoy having fun and it doesn't cost you a thing. How many of you like that? Kids. It's like going to a birthday party where someone else's mom paid for the entry fee. That's fun. That's great. And in order for that to happen, you need a benefactor.

You need someone who's wealthy enough that they can write the check large enough so that everybody else can enjoy themselves without having to come out of their pocket. And in Greek culture, that was called this Greek word. The root of this word is where we get our English word chorus. At that culture that was the patreon that paid for everything to make the good thing possible. And what Paul is doing is he's saying God is that patron. God is the one who supplies everything we need to enjoy the life he's called us to live.

And he provides it at two levels. Paul says he provides it at the level of bread and he provides it at the level of seed. For every person in this room, God has given you both of those things. He has given you bread and he's given you seed. He gives us bread for what? For food, right? He gives you bread so that you can eat it. And he gives you seed for what? For sewing. Now, if you take an inventory of your life and you were to ask the question, what are the things in my life God has given me to consume?

I think we could come up with a pretty good list, right? In our budget, it's the things that are above the fold. Mortgage, rent, mortgage, groceries, utility bills. Guess what happens with those things? They get consumed. Doesn't matter how frugal you are next month, you still got to pay the water bill. Next month, you still got to pay the utility bill. The mortgage comes through or the rent comes through. Every single month you're consuming it. Boom. Boom, boom, boom, boom. Well, that's bread. Okay, that's bread. He gave you what you need so you can have bread, aka food on your table, provision for your family so you can get by like you need to get by.

God is gracious and supplying our needs on that front. But he also gives seed. What is seed? Well, in our budget, seed is what's below the fold. So we have a category in our budget called blow money, splurge money. We used to call it blow money because it just blows away. It doesn't have any purpose. It just disappears. And if you're going to have money just disappear in your bank account, you want it to disappear on purpose. All right? So, you give that money a name. Blow money. It blows away.

But we also have certain projects that we're saving for. Certain things that we hope to do someday. Maybe a certain vacation that needs to be funded or a certain big project that is not nec it's not mandatory, but it would be nice. I would put seed in the category of savings in our budget. Savings is above the fold. But if we didn't have any income, we wouldn't still be consuming the savings account because we only create the savings account if there's income. And so that's seed for sewing. Our tithe and offerings that we give to the church, that's seed for sewing.

If there was no income, then there's no tithe going out. But that's something we're stacking aside. So every one of us have those two categories. I would determine it this way. Bread is for you. Seed is for other people. Bread is for here and now. Seed is for later. Bread is bread is something that you bread is something that you consume for yourself. Seed is something that you would do for later on. So one is now, one is later, one is for you, one is for others. And if you look at the categories in your life, everything that God has blessed you with.

Ask yourself the question, am I stewarding my bread like I should steward the bread? Am I and am I stewarding the seed like I should steward the seed? Because God has given you both for each of those purposes. In other words, it's not great if you begin to eat the seed. God has given you seed for sewing and you begin to eat that seed and consume it, then that would be a bad stewardship of what God has given you. Or if you begin to take your bread that God has given you to consume and you begin to give that away so that you don't provide and don't meet your needs, then that would be a bad stewardship of the bread God has given you.

God meets your needs through bread and through seed. But what he says later is he doesn't just meet your need with bread and seed. He also multiplies the seed portion so that he can increase the harvest of your righteousness. And so when you give to the Lord, I've heard many people say this, I don't think I can give because I don't have enough. I think what Paul would say here is you have enough. It's just you're not distinguishing between seed and bread. Well, someone might reply, well, maybe I have some seed to give, but my seed is so small that it wouldn't matter.

And I think what Paul would say to that is even if you think your seed is small, God says here he will multiply your seed such that even your small amount can be exponentially increased so that God does something tremendous. The question is will you sew the seed that God has given you? Even if you think it's not very much seed, will you sew the seed that he's given you so that he can bless it and multiply it and increase it the harvest of your righteousness? Because when you do that, God does something great.

God begins to enrich you in every way. Look at verse 11. You will be enriched in every way so that you can I'll go to the next slide. You will be enriched in every way for all generosity which produces thanksgiving to God through us. So God multiplies our giving. Why does he multiply our giving? So that he can produce thanksgiving and praise in other people. This is a really difficult principle I think to embrace. I remember when I was a young preacher. I was riding with Pastor David in his truck after doing a funeral.

And I don't remember what we were talking about, but the question of giving came up and I was a young college student. I didn't have a lot of money and I didn't really want to hear what he was about to tell me. But he was talking about I think we were getting paid for the funeral and we're talking about what were we going to do with the money that you got paid for the funeral and I had some kind of selfish thing like Chick-fil-A or you know something something like that and he challenged me on when God gives you extra it's not for your standard of living it's actually for your standard of giving.

I said come again. He said when God gives you an increase, say you get a raise, you get a windfall of cash, it's not it's not bad to use it for bread because God gives bread and seed. But sometimes God raises your standard of living not so that you can raise your standard of living, but so that you can increase your standard of giving. And I remember thinking to myself, that's easy for you to say with somebody that's got a lot of bread. I don't have a lot of bread. But that didn't matter.

I had some extra bread and I had no category for giving some of that for the kingdom of God. And it challenged me and I did eventually enter into this mindset that as God enriches us as a family, it is not for it's not just for the standard of living. He said something to the effect, you need to figure out what your standard of living is going to be. And you need to learn contentment with what that is. And once you get to that place and you are content and able to do what you need to do to provide for your family and meet your needs, you need to filter any excess, any increase that God gives you primarily through the lens of increasing your standard of giving.

And as we've attempted to do that, it has been incredible to watch this principle come to realization that God multiplies the seed portion. He increases the bread portion too, but he multiplies the seed portion and he begins to enrich you in every way. Remember this is not just about finances. He's enriched in knowledge, enriched in wisdom, you enriched in contentment. And what happens as he multiplies the seed is he begins to give you things that money cannot buy. Money can buy a lot of things. It can buy independence. It can buy freedom.

What it cannot buy is gratitude. Does anybody know some super rich people that ain't got no gratitude? And have you ever let God use you to pro provide for someone to meet the need of someone else? And the gratitude that they demonstrate, not even to you, but to God. Does it not give you something? Does it not create a blessing in your life that literally nothing in this world can buy? It's better than any Six Flags ride. It's better than any beachside vacation. It's even better than a four-wheeler up the mountains, which is my favorite.

It's even better than that. When we went out yesterday and gave out free hot dogs and grocery bags to people, you would be surprised that for some of the people that we knocked on their door, those groceries were literally a miracle. They were a godsend. And the fact that someone would just randomly show up at just the time when they didn't know how they were going to meet their next meal, that communicated to them, God sees you, God loves you are not alone. And I am going to provide for you.

And when they get that message from God and you see them get that message from God and say thank thank you God. Praise the Lord. It produces something in your soul money cannot buy. And that's why God increases. That's why he multiplies your giving so that you can receive that blessing of enriched love and he can receive greater and greater glory. So God meets our need. He multiplies our giving. He multiplies the giving to motivate gratitude. Now, one more thing and then we're going to wrap it up. Notice in verse 12, he says, "The ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but it is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

What's interesting about this phrase is this phrase here, overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. This is a word that Paul used over and over again earlier in this chapter. He used it in verse 8. He said, "God is able to make every grace overflow to you so that you may overflow in every good work. It's translated excel, but it's the same Greek word translated overflow. So essentially God is or Paul is saying your giving is a ministry that God has given you to serve people and to bless people.

But just like a music minister uses his music skills to serve. It's not just to serve, it's to serve so that the people who get the service glorify the Lord. Think about our music team this morning. They are extremely talented. Amen. Very gifted and we love to listen to it and we love to sing and it just kind of wraps us up. It's such a blessing. But we would all recognize they weren't doing that for us. They were doing that for the Lord. That their primary goal was not just to serve but to serve for the higher purpose of God getting the glory.

And what Paul is saying is God gives people who are going to commit to ministry in that way. He gives them abundant abundant grace. He gives them everything that they need to serve in that capacity so that they can do a lot of good. God gives a lot of grace so that they can do a lot of good. But as they do a lot of good, it creates a lot of gratitude. But not gratitude for the person who did the good, but gratitude to the God who motivated in the first place.

They get a lot of gratitude so that God gets a lot of glory. And that's exactly what he's saying here. And he even makes the point with the words he chooses up here. The ministry of this service, this word translated ministry is where we get our English word deacon. You think about a deacon ministry, you think about a children's ministry. All of those ministries it is service but it's service for the sake of worship which is what this word is service is where we get the English word liturgy which is a form of a worship service having a certain order of service that's called the liturgy of the worship service.

So Paul is saying your giving is a ministry like that your giving is just like what a children's minister would be doing in the preschool wing. Yes, they're taking care of children but for the sake of children knowing God. Yet yes, your Sunday school teacher is teaching you Sunday school so that you'll know facts about the Bible, but not just so that you'll know facts about the Bible, but so in knowing the God of the Bible, you'll worship and glorify him even more. It's for worship. Giving is a ministry and it's at two levels.

Number one, it's to magnify God's glory. Look at verse 13. Because of the proof provided by this ministry, they will glorify God. And so giving is an attempt to demonstrate to people my God is great. And when you give to people who can't pay you back. And when you give with a spirit that is joyful and sacrificial, when you give in that way, people look at your giving and they go, "He's either really crazy or his God is really awesome. Maybe I should look into this God that motivates this kind of generosity.

So your giving magnifies God's glory. Jesus talked about this in the sermon on the mount. He said, let your light shine before others so that they'll see your good works, aka so that they'll see your generosity and not praise you, but praise your father who's in heaven because they'll see that your giving or that your living is a response to the greatness of God in your life. But it's also for something else. He says the it's going to have them glorify God. But if you go to the next slide, it's also a ministry to model gospel faith.

Why do they glorify God? They glorify God for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ and for your generosity and sharing with them and with everyone. In other words, when you give in that way, it demonstrates that you really believe what you're preaching. You're preaching a gospel that says, "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son. You're preaching a gospel that says, "God is generous and his generosity is made manifest through his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, it's really hard for me to believe that you believe that gospel when your life is void of any generosity.

If your life is void of any obedience, any sacrifice, any courage to do the hard thing, the right thing, the generous thing, when I don't see that, you may talk a big game and you may convince people with your talk, but the if there is no walk, then there is no proof that you really believe what you say you believe. But when you become generous, when you become generous like God is generous, then it demonstrates to people you really believe it. We say in our church mission statement, we want to motivate genuine faith that expresses itself through Christlike love.

May it never be true of Broadview Baptist church that people know that we are Christians by our theology. It should we should have good theology. Jesus didn't say they'll know you're my disciples by your by your rich theology. He said they'll know you're my disciples by what? By the way you love people. I don't know who said it, but you can you can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving. This is why giving matters to God. Giving mediates the grace of God. And when we become generous, as God is generous, it demonstrates to people, not only is God real, not only is he glorious, these people know him.

These people understand him. And they demonstrate that through their generosity. And that's what happens when you give. That's what happens when we give together. It's a ministry to magnify God's glory and to model out what we say we believe. The last thing it does is it matures the measure of our love. I open this sermon with this graphic of the gospel giving circle we'll call it. It's different from the Greek circle because the person who gives the grace isn't the individual. Grace begins and ends in God. But it'd be tempting to think, well, God gives me grace so that I can give it to people and people give God glory, but what do I get?

That may be a temptation to ask that question. And that's why Paul closes this letter with a reminder. You're not getting nothing. No. As these people who you bless in generosity, as they have their needs met, guess what they do? They begin to pray for you. They begin to pray on your behalf. And as they pray for you, they will have deep affection for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. In other words, as they see God's abundant grace in your life because it is flowing through you to them, they begin to pray for you and they deepen in their love for you because they see this connection.

So yes, God gets the glory, God gets the praise, but you don't get nothing. You get the thing really you need and want more than anything else. I've never seen someone on their deathbed say, "Man, I wish I would have got my name on more buildings. I've never seen anyone on their deathbed filled with regret because they didn't work extra hours or make an extra buck. I've seen a lot of people on their deathbed who regret relationships that didn't get fixed and love that didn't get communicated and love that wasn't reciprocated.

What we were made for is to be known and loved anyway. And we were made to receive that kind of love in God. But when God gives us that kind of grace and we give that grace to other people, then people give that love back to us. And it's not the same thing as cash. It can't buy, you know, land and houses and properties. But it can buy what money can't buy. It can secure what money cannot buy. And that's agape love that comes from God. And so as we think about generosity, I want us to think about those things.

All of this, of course, is modeled perfectly in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you think about this circle, God gave us the Lord Jesus. And Jesus perfectly embodies what it looks like to receive grace from God, but multiply God's grace through his life. God met his needs. He son of man had nowhere to lay his head but God met his needs by giving him provision in every respect. And then God took the seed that God had given him to sew and he swed it generously. He took a sinless life of love and obedience and he laid it down by being crucified on a Roman cross so that as his body was whipped and tortured and crushed, he was standing in our place for our sin.

Not just that his physical body was brought to a point of death which was necessary for the demands of the law to be satisfied but that his perfect life absorbed the penalty of our imperfection. He who knew no sin became sin so that we might become the righteousness of God. That is incredible generosity and grace given from Jesus to us. And guess what happened? God multiplied that seed so that not just a hundred people's sins or these people but not those people that the sins of every person could be atoned for.

That atonement has been made for anyone who would repent of their sins and put their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. And when we receive that salvation, it brings our glory to God. We glorify God the Father for such a incredible gift, the matchless gift of Jesus. But in giving glory back to God, we deepen in our love for Jesus and we deepen in our love for the people that Jesus has put us around. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says a few verses earlier, though he was rich for your sake, he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift. He's talking about Jesus. Jesus is the mediator of God's matchless gift. And the question is before we take the Lord's supper, has the grace of God been mediated to your life? Have you received the grace of God that makes atonement for your sin? What do you do with your guilt? What do you do with your sin that you know has separated you from your creator? None of us can ever do enough or live good enough to erase or outweigh the bad things that we've done.

God knows that. And that's why in his great generosity for in his great generosity and because of his great love for you, he sent Jesus to do what you could not do for yourself. And if you've never entered into a relationship with him by faith, by repenting of your sins and trusting that he has paid the price so that I can draw near to God's throne of grace without fear, instead with great confidence because Jesus has done for me what I could not do for myself. If you've never received that gift of salvation, then you will never be able to be generous as God is generous.

Because God's generosity towards us in Christ is what makes us generous towards other people. And so as the ushers come up and we're going to pass out these elements. If you've never made that decision to trust in Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, I want to challenge you to use the connect card on the chair in the seat in front of you and just fill that out. You put your name, some kind of contact info, whether it's an email or a phone number and then say, I want to start following Jesus today.

I want to enter into a relationship with Jesus. You may have another kind of decision that the Lord puts on your heart. You may have a prayer request or some other kind of next step like baptism or church membership. If that's the case, then you can indicate that. But you do that now as we pass out these elements as a way of responding to what God is leading you to do this morning. And then if you're a member of our church, you can use this time to think through your generosity [music] towards an offering like Close the Gap or any other need that God has put in front of you so that you might demonstrate his generosity towards others by meeting the needs that he's put before you.

So heavenly father, we thank you for this time and as we enter into this act of worship through communion, we pray it would come as a response to your great generosity towards us. Thank you Jesus. Thank you Jesus for the life that you lived. Thank you Jesus for the death that you died. You died our death so that we might have your life. And so wherever that new life is not enjoyed or where it has not yet been received, would you holy spirit be that still small voice that makes a irresistible invitation such that they respond in repentance and faith.

And would you give them the courage now to let another person know through that connect card? And for all of us as we worship you through this act of communion, would it be representative of hearts that are genuinely thankful, genuinely filled with gratitude for your great generosity towards those? And we pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.