



# Leftovers

## Week Three – Portions

### Check-in

How are you? Where have you seen Christ working in your life in the last week? And... let's begin the debate... the standard Thanksgiving side dish that is often cooked inside the turkey is called what? Are you in the “stuffing” camp? Do you deviate from the Midwest norm and call it “dressing”? And who's the real rebel and puts oysters in it? Be bold. Be you.

### Opening Prayer

God of All Blessing, help us to step out of our comfort zones, and view every aspect our lives from a place of generosity.

### Introduction

Regardless of what you call it, most of us will take a heaping helping of it come Thanksgiving. This series, though, we're taking a spoon and taking a heaping portion of the question, “Are you living your life

from a mindset of abundance or scarcity?” (Have we taken the metaphor too far? Surely not.) And each week we’ve looked a different aspect of this dichotomy, something the voice of abundance tells us to counter-act what the voice of scarcity whispers in our ear. Week 1, Scarcity said “there’s not enough,” while Abundance replied, “there’s always more, you just have to look for it.” Week 2, Scarcity tells us, “be afraid of losing what you have,” while Abundance reassured us, “be open to what Christ can do with what you have when you give it over to him.” Hopefully by now, you’re starting to see the difference and allow it to alter your approach to life, living in God’s abundance. Let’s start with a check-in.

**Midterm Check-in: We’re halfway through, so let’s assess. After two weeks of discussing this question, how are you doing viewing your life from a mindset of abundance? Or are you still listening to the voice of scarcity?**

## Scripture

The next aspect of this abundance vs. scarcity mindset comes from a teaching of Jesus during what we call “The Sermon on the Plain.” (It’s Luke’s version of Matthew’s more famous, “Sermon on the Mount.” Guess they couldn’t agree on where it took place. Who knows? Anyway...) The one verse we’re going to look at comes in a section where Jesus is teaching about this idea of abundance.

**Read Luke, chapter 6, verse 38.**

This verse is often overlooked because it comes in the middle of other revolutionary teachings of Jesus like, “love your enemies,” (v.27) “don’t judge... and forgive others,” (v.37) and “don’t be a hypocrite.” (v. 41 paraphrased.) But this verse speaks to the next aspect of a scarcity mindset, and is a powerful example of a primary behavior of our human condition... the tendency to be *stingy*. We’ll come back to that. But first...

**Question 1: Discuss this teaching of Jesus. (Feel free to browse the ones before and after for context.) What does it say to you at first glance? If you were sitting on the plain (or the mount) what would you have thought hearing this from Jesus? Would you have been challenged... convicted? Or would you have been stuck still trying to process the “judging others” stuff before it? Discuss!**

## Reflection

If you’ve noticed, each week of this series has built on the week before it. We began with the foundation of the issue, namely that Scarcity tells us, “there’s not enough.” And if we live thinking there’s not enough, the natural result is that we’ll be afraid of losing what we *do* have, which was week 2. Then this week, if we’re afraid of losing something, we have a tendency to cling to it, protect it, to be *stingy* with it. So, what’s the answer this time? Well, what Jesus is talking about in this teaching, in keeping with our Thanksgiving metaphor is...

~Portions

In the same fashion, each week, Jesus, as the voice of Abundance, has challenged us to go a step further every time, as well. “Okay, you’re appreciating what you have, viewing it as enough. Well done. And you’ve given that over to me so that I can multiply it, Great. Now, I’m asking you to go above and beyond... I’m asking you to be *generous*.” This gives us the next aspect of this *scarcity vs. abundance* mindset.

## ~ “be stingy” vs “be generous”

Scarcity tells us, “since there’s not enough and you might lose what you already have, if you’re going to give it over to God, only give a little.” But Jesus, in this scripture, flips that notion on its head and says, “no, it’s all about portions... be generous. The more you give away, the greater the blessing both for others and for you. So, give a lot and see what happens.”

**Question 2: Though this teaching has often been abused by pastors and televangelists to fleece people of their money, this verse isn’t about finances. It’s about a mindset of God’s abundance in *all* aspects of our lives. So, think beyond just your budget... in what areas of your life do you find yourself being the most *stingy*? With your time? With your vulnerability in relationships for fear of getting hurt or rejected? With your talent or expertise for fear of how you’ll be viewed? Or, maybe it *is* the checkbook? Where do you hold back the most in your life?**

This is often where people get stuck on their journey from a scarcity to abundance mindset, because it involves trusting God on a level we aren't comfortable with. And that voice of scarcity creeps back in and holds us back, saying, "Can I really trust God, that if I live more generously, will I be taken care of?" And that voice of scarcity tells us, "no... be stingy."

But Jesus asks us to be generous in all areas of our lives, because when we come at them from a mindset of scarcity, we lose the abundance we could have. When we say, "you know, I've only got 15 minutes to spend with you, I can only give you a little bit of my time," we miss the abundance that could be poured out in the hours we shorted that friend or loved one. When we say, "I'm only going to stay in the background and not share my talent or expertise," we miss the blessing that could be poured out on the world. When we say, "I'm only going to open up a little in this relationship because I'm afraid and I'm protecting myself," we might miss the abundance of the beauty of what could be when that person loves you, the whole you, for who you are. It ain't just money we're stingy with, is it? Scarcity tells us to be stingy... and when we live that way, we miss out on so much.

**Question 3: Given your answer to question 2, how could you begin to be generous in that area of your life? What would it look like to give a greater portion, knowing that God will bring the blessing back around to you? What doors could it open?**

# Closing

What happens when we're generous? Jesus explains it. "Your gift will return to you in full — pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap." (v.38 NLT) This is a reference to how markets worked in first century Israel. In Jesus's time, when a person bought grain, the buyer would give the vendor the money and then often hold out their outer garment. The vendor would often just pour the measure of grain right into that cloth. And if the vendor was generous, they would allow the buyer to shake it, press it down to make more room, and then keep pouring. And so, Jesus is saying, when we're generous in all areas of our lives, (our time, our abilities, our motivation, our energy, our relationships, our mindset on how we approach life,) when we offer up heaping portions of generosity out into the world, we find a fullness and a richness in those experiences. We find fulfillment and satisfaction. We see others get blessed and a blessing returned to us. We find abundance... so much so, that like our fridges on Black Friday, we are overwhelmed with leftovers. When we are generous with our entire lives, the measure that is returned is an abundance of richness in life that fills up our basket and overflows into our lap. This week, Jesus asks us to go the next mile... to go beyond just giving what we have, to giving until it's uncomfortable, in all aspects of our lives. Because when we live from a mindset of abundance, it frees us up to be generous. And the portion that is returned is pressed down, shaken together, running over and poured into our laps.

**Take some time to share prayer requests or celebrations.**

**Close in prayer.**