

Our Need and God's Generosity

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[0 : 00] Let's take our Bibles and turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 3. God's Word in 1 Corinthians chapter 3.!

Are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? For when one says, I follow Paul, and another, I follow Apollos, are you not mere men?

What after all is Apollos, and what is Paul? Only servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord has assigned to each his task.

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants, nor he who waters is anything, but only God who makes things grow.

The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers, you are God's field, God's building.

[1 : 21] By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds.

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation, using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the day will bring it to light.

It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.

If it is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple, and that God's spirit lives in you?

If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him, for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

[2 : 35] Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a fool, so they may become wise.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written, he catches the wise in their craftiness. And again, the Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.

So then, no more boasting about men. All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death or the present or the future.

All are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God. Pastor Jason, come and preach. Pastor Jason, come and preach.

Walking down to a gas station in order to get water. That was the problem. That was the question facing some certain county authorities in Winodote County, Missouri.

[4 : 10] Some neighbors called authorities concerning this woman, concerned about her. And when they investigated the situation, they came into her house.

They found over a quarter of a million dollars in cash in her house. Everyone knew something had to be done.

And they took the situation to a judge. And the judge ruled her incompetent to handle her own affairs. And he said in his ruling that in America, no one should live like that.

And so made her a ward of the state. They took her to a nursing home where they could take care of her. No one in America should live like that.

Whether you like it or not, whether you have money, and she did, being an American has certain privileges.

[5 : 11] Our Congress, people, we've decided that as a country, we as a society have said that through Medicaid or housing or Medicare or food assistance, that no one should live like that.

No one has to live like that. So this poor, deluded, sick woman was living way below her privileges.

She was living way below her privileges. Even below her own resources. We've been going over on Sunday morning the Christian's identity.

And we're finding out that much of the Christian life is learning to live according to that new identity that is ours in Jesus Christ. We've talked about that.

And that's not natural to us. We grow into it. We need to learn what it looks like and be a child, a servant, whatever that identity is. Getting used to who we are in Jesus.

[6 : 20] Another part of the Christian life, though, is getting used to our privileges. And growing in the sense of those and the confidence in those privileges. Getting used to what is ours in Jesus.

Now, we still all have needs. We still all have troubles. We still all have problems. But, unfortunately or sadly, instead of confidently, thankfully, living on our privileges, we doubt God.

We worry. We fret. We look at God with a suspicious eye. We wonder about it. And so, we're still learning. We're still learning to trust Him.

We're still learning our privileges and learning to really live upon them. We aren't altogether used to them. We're still learning to trust Him in our hearts.

I just read this article about people who suddenly become very wealthy.

[7 : 26] Not really people who have won the lottery, but people, for example, who are working for a company, and then that company gets offered, you know, it goes public, and suddenly their ownership in the company, which was nothing before or was worth nothing before, now suddenly they're worth \$50, \$75 million.

And they interview these people that suddenly go through this drastic change in their life, and all of these people talked about how deeply uncomfortable it was to suddenly, like, this is now my life.

It wasn't, of course, there was joy there, there was happiness, but it was a deeply uncomfortable thing that they had to get used to. And the same thing happens in the Christian life. We have to get used to these privileges that are ours.

So we have all of God for us. We've been talking about that, all of these attributes. We have all of his wisdom available, all of his power, his wrath, his justice, his mercy.

Every attribute of God is now for us. And is working for us. The whole Trinity, this is where we started this series so long ago. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[8 : 42] Completely for us. There's a song we sing from time to time where we sing these words. Think what spirit dwells within thee. What a father's smile is thine.

What a savior died to win thee. Child of heaven, shouldst thou repine? We live below what we ought to live and how we ought to live.

Now, we have all of this, and yet we wonder. We wonder in our hearts. We wonder about his willingness to meet those needs.

We have needs. And yet, for every need or for every trouble, for every problem that we face, there is this possibility, this opportunity, I suppose, I want to say, where we have to ask the choices there put before us of, will he be willing?

Will he be willing to help me this time? He's done it in the past. Will he do it this time? I know he's able, but sometimes we wonder about God's generosity, his giving spirit, his open-heartedness.

[9 : 58] So just how generous is our God? What is his heart towards us? And I think perhaps this is the most important question of all, and this is really where he wins our hearts, when we know that it was love.

We sang it. It was love that sent him. All of his other attributes are good, but they're only good and useful, and I can only trust them if he's willing to share them with me, if he's willing to help me in this trouble, if he's willing to give me all the help I need.

So is God generous with his help? Is God a generous person that he enjoys giving? Well, the first answer we hear is no.

It's not the right answer. I'll give you a clue, but the first answer we do hear is no. And so we're asking this question, is God generous? And someone raises their hand, and his name is unbelief, and unbelief says, no, God isn't generous.

He's not generous. He could very well be powerful and wise and all the rest, but you just can't expect him to help you in your need in this moment.

[11 : 21] Unbelief says no. Well, what is God like then? And unbelief says, well, I can tell you what he's like. I can, it's like Proverbs 23. Do not eat the food of a stingy man.

Do not crave his delicacies, for he's the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost. Eat and drink, he says. He says to you, but his heart is not with you.

Oh, I'll bless you. But he's thinking about the cost. That's God. That's what unbelief says. He's always thinking about the cost.

He might tell you to eat, but he really wishes you wouldn't. You can ask him, and he might give you something, but he won't give it to you willingly.

His heart isn't with you. And the fact that you're asking at his door is just a bother. Well, that's what unbelief says about God.

[12 : 26] There are generous people, and there's stingy people. People who love to give, and people who are reluctant givers. And God is a reluctant giver.

He's stingy. That's what unbelief says. You can eat his food, but in the end, you'll regret it. And unbelief says, I have him figured out.

I know what he's like. We saw this just a couple of weeks ago. There was this man who, remember the ten talents, five talents, one talent? This man who received one talent said, Master, I knew that you, this is what this servant is saying, I know what kind of man you are.

I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So is God generous? Unbelief says, no. I know what he's like.

I have him pegged. He's a hard man. He's all about the demand. He enjoys the demand, not in the giving. Unbelief thinks it sees right to the heart of God, and it sees this gripping old miser.

[13 : 33] Well, that's the first answer that we hear. That's the answer that we used to believe. That's the answer that we used to live in, in our lostness.

That is man's opinion of what God is like. That's man's opinion and evaluation of God's heart. You know, philosophers, theologians, all these other unbelieving people can definitely say, God is powerful.

God is omnipotent, and all-knowing, and all the rest, but he hasn't won their heart because they don't trust his generosity, his goodness.

I knew you were a hard man, and so I was scared. Well, is that you? If that's you, living still in slavery to fear, not sure about God's heart towards you, I want to challenge that unbelief this evening.

I want to challenge your unbelief because there is another voice, and it's a different voice. It's the voice of faith. Unbelief says God is stingy, he's a hard man, but faith, it's almost like the very definition of faith that we hear in Hebrews 11, verse 6, is he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

[14 : 56] That's who he is. I believe he exists, and what is this God who exists? What is he like? Well, first on the category is he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

He's a rewarding God. Faith says, let's go to God because he's giving out treasure. I have needs, and he'll give me what I need, and probably a lot more beside. That's what he's like.

That's my God. That's the very heart of faith, to see a God who gives, who enjoys to give to his servants, who delights in the well-being of his servants, who isn't stingy and demanding and hard, but who is a God who is happy giving, who says, eat, and he loves to see you eating and enjoying.

So your happiness is his happiness. To bless you is a blessing to him. And that is the very gospel message.

God is saying, I am now saving my enemies. Come and buy. And we say, well, what's the cost? Without money, come and buy.

[16 : 08] Without money, I'll just, if you're thirsty, I'll give you living water. Just come. Remember Jesus sitting at the well of Sychar.

If you knew who it was who was talking to you, you would ask him for water, eternal life, and he'd give you living water.

Now, what is Jesus doing there with that woman? He's basically doing anything and everything except for asking for her. He's saying, he's poking and prodding her. He's saying, ask me for salvation and I'll give it to you.

You don't realize what a deal you're, how close you are here. Ask me and I'll give you living water and you'll never be thirsty again. I'll take away your thirst forevermore.

That's the heart of Jesus. That's the heart of God. And I pray that the spirit would open your eyes to see that. That's faith.

[17 : 09] Faith is realizing that that's who he is and believing him for it.

It's trusting his willingness. It's taking him at his word when he says, you can come without any money and you can buy. It's just that good. It's trusting his heart, saying, I need saved.

He wants to save me. So Jesus, I come. Jesus, I come. Out of my sorrow and night, Jesus, I come to thee. Out of my want and into thy wealth, Jesus, I come.

So faith is laying a hold of the generosity of God in Jesus Christ and saying, I'll take it. This is mine. Bold, I approach the throne.

I'm living on this. I'm trading my empty bank account for all of his riches and this is not bank robbery. God has opened up the vault and said, take it. It's all yours. All of it?

[18 : 10] All of it. All of it. Take. So just how generous is God? How willing is he for us? We have that picture of the man who's the stingy man and it's, oh, you can eat, but his heart is not with you.

Well, just how much is God's heart with you? Well, you have 1 Corinthians 3 open there and the church in Corinth is fighting and quarreling about what, about which teacher they belong to.

So they're thinking, I belong to Peter. I belong to Paul. I belong to Apollos. And Paul is saying, he's saying a lot of things, but as he comes down to the end of chapter 3, he's sort of putting the nail on the coffin and he's saying, you guys are living way below your privileges.

You're living way, you're not thinking about this at all in the right way. He says a lot more than that, but that's where he ends. He's, what are you guys talking about?

I belong to Paul. I belong to Apollos. I belong to Cephas. That's living in poverty when you're rich. And look at verse 21.

[19 : 24] He says, so then, no more boasting about men. All things are yours. All things are yours.

So how generous is God, brothers and sisters, to you? All things are yours. Whether Paul, Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or the present, or the future, and he repeats it, all are yours.

So what has God given you? What has God given you? Everything. Romans 8, 28.

All things work together for good and we often say, all means all. That's, remember, Lucent says that when he's talking, all means all. What has God given you?

All things. Paul. You see, verse 4, so then men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.

[20 : 41] We saw this this morning. Paul, his identity was, I'm your servant. And now here, he's saying to the church in Corinth, I'm yours.

It's not so much that you belong to me as I belong to you. So, Paul is yours.

So Corinthians, your father in the faith, the one who was caught up into paradise, he's going to tell them, he's going to tell them, the one who was caught up into paradise, the writer of 13 books of the Bible, you're not his, he's yours.

Every minute of his life, now, forevermore, is yours. Everything that he does, I think it's in Philippians, he says, I'm your servant for your joy.

I'm yours. Apollos, he wasn't an apostle, but he was this great orator, mighty in scripture. And he was a different kind of fellow. He wasn't an apostle, but he was a courageous, bold, he wasn't afraid to go out on his own.

[21 : 53] And that's what he did. He's yours. You're not his. Cephas, that's Peter, the one who walked with Jesus, the one who made the great testimony that, no, you're the son of God.

And Jesus said, that, that's the rock. You're the rock. That testimony, that apostolic witness, that's the rock that the whole church is going to be built on. Paul is saying, you're not Peter's.

He's yours. He belongs to you. And so quit living like you're so poor. Quit living so desperately to get these guys' attention. to you.

The world is yours. The world. In the book of Corinthians, the world generally has a negative connotation.

It's the sinful world. And he's saying, that whole sinful world, that created world, that fallen world, that, that painful, broken, horrible, but yet still hopeful world, it, it's yours.

[23 : 04] You don't belong to it. It belongs to you. God gave it to you. So, that's what God has given us. That's his generosity. Do you see the extent of it?

The whole world. That without qualifications. What our memory verse today, he will exalt you to inherit the land.

What land? All the land. And the sea. And the sky. The cosmos. God has given you that.

Then he says, life is yours. Every breath. Every day. Every night. Every text.

Every email. Every conversation. Every problem. Every success. Every dream come true. Every disappointment. Every face you see.

[24 : 01] Every Sunday. Every Monday. Every Tuesday. Every Wednesday. It's yours. God is saying, I'm giving them all to you.

They'll be for your good. They'll serve you. All of this will serve you. So, we can follow sort of.

And then he says, well, death is yours too. God puts death under your feet. God makes death your servant. Later, he'll say, death, where is your sting?

Oh, the stinger is, is it, is in the cross. There's no sting there. Death, where your victory? Death has to say, I don't have victory.

I have no victory. The war was fought, and I lost everything. When that tomb was emptied. I have no victory.

[25 : 09] So death, what are you? Well, just like Paul is their servant, and Cephas, and Apollos, and death, what are you?

Death has to say, I'm your servant too. I will serve you in this life, to make you serious. I will serve you on the day of your death, to bring you to Jesus.

I will take you from this veil of tears, to life evermore. So what are you? I'm your servant. I'll serve you now.

I'll serve you then. And I will serve you forever, even when I am tipped into the lake of fire. And you see what he saved you from. I will still go on serving you.

Death is yours. The present is yours. This day, this hour that you live in, whatever hour that is, whatever hour this verse comes to your mind, whatever hour this truth comes to you, God gave you this hour as a gift, part of his generous love to you.

[26 : 15] The future is yours. You can look right back at chapter two, verse nine. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.

The future is ours. And Paul is saying, and we have no idea how good it's going to be.

Ephesians 2, 7. What's our future? In the coming ages, he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness for us in Christ Jesus.

What is our future? It's riches of grace and kindness, kindness, overwhelming, abundant kindness to us. So, heaven won't be just enough to make this life worth it.

Heaven won't balance the scales where we put all of the sorrow and the difficulty and the heartache in this life and we put heaven here and they just balance each other out and we say, well, I guess that's good.

[27 : 31] No. What does Paul say? He says, these trials are not even worth comparing to the weight of glory that will be ours. They're dust on the scale compared to what God is going to give us in the future, the glory that we will experience.

And so, what we sing, we will say, it was a well-spent journey those seven deaths lay between. If I had to live and die seven times over to get here, that was worth it to say the least.

That's God's heart. We're not going to be getting to heaven and saying, well, I guess that was okay and this is good.

We're going to be stunned just by how kind he is to us. Jesus said to his disciples when they were afraid, do not fear, little flock, it's your father's pleasure to give you the kingdom.

He's saying, the reason you don't have to be afraid is because your father in heaven, this is what he wants to do, this is what he likes to do, this is what pleases him, this is what makes him happy to give you the kingdom.

[28 : 46] Well, what's the kingdom? We could say a lot of things, but it's heaven on earth, it's heaven, earth, one, it's living in the kingdom of God with God as the king and filled with glory and we filled with glory and he, and Jesus says he doesn't give it to us with any sort of reluctance.

He gives it to us with great pleasure. This is his heart, he wants us to have it. And so, he doesn't allow us to be happy in heaven, he says, now come, enter the joy of your master.

It's a command. You get in here and start living in how happy I am. That's what his heart is like. Well, we have to keep going and this is going to get a bit messy because, like, I have to just dump all of this on you because this is, the scriptures are just so full of the extent, the generosity, the, James 1, he gives wisdom generously.

He gives generously wisdom to all without finding fault. He gives it generously, he gives it generously to all, and he gives it generously without nitpicking about what you need it for.

He's, take it, you need wisdom, you ask for it, here it is. He gives comfort generously. Just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, and they do, we experience something of what it's like to be Jesus, we experience the sufferings of serving him, we experience the sufferings of he has called me to this and so now I have to live that.

[30 : 25] Those things overflow into our lives. And he says, just as those overflow into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

Abundant comfort comes in. Abounding comfort. He gives grace abundantly. Where sin abounded, grace super abounded.

He gives food and marriage and sex generously. 1 Timothy 4, these false teachers, they forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth for everything God created is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.

Paul is saying, these people have the wrong idea about who God is and what he's like and what he's asking. God is good. He makes good things and he doesn't want you to reject them.

Instead, he wants you to take them, enjoy them, and say thank you for them. He gives, we say thank you. And so does that sound like a stingy man? Don't reject these gifts.

[31 : 39] God, this is in the first place where God has a problem with people who don't take what he wants to give them. God always seems to have a problem with people not taking more than they should.

So Elijah takes one of the kings of Israel out, Jehoshaphat, and he shoots an arrow out the window. They're in this battle or they're going to be in this battle. And Elijah says, shoot this arrow out the window and Elijah says, this is what that means.

This is the Lord's arrow of victory. God is going to give you victory. Now take the arrows and strike the ground with them and Jehoshaphat struck it three times and this strange response, the man of God was angry with him and said, you should have struck the ground five or six times.

There was more victory to be had. God was more willing to give you victory than you were to ask for it. And the man of God, Elijah, in his holy heart is angry.

How generous is God? God gave us his very own son. He did not spare him. He didn't hold him back.

[32 : 47] He gave him. And then how will he not along with him give us all things? There's that all things again.

He gives us the spirit. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Not a dribble or a drop, but again, he poured him out. That opens up a whole other batch of scriptures that talks about God pouring out the spirit, pouring him out.

And the idea is it's dumping him out. There's no limit to this, to his gift of the spirit. So he gives the son.

He gives the Holy Spirit. And then 2 Peter, his divine power has given us everything everything we need for life and godliness. Not some things for life and godliness.

[33 : 50] Everything we need for life and godliness. And so he, God looks down upon his people and says, well, what do these people need? Well, he finds out their needs and then he gives them everything they need.

And then in the same passage, he has given us these very great precious promises. What kind of promises? Very great.

Common ones? Precious promises. It was like the best promises he had. He gave them to us. So everything for this life, everything for living in godliness, all his promises are signed over to us.

So the vault is empty. God's bank account is yours. Every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus is how Paul puts it in Ephesians chapter 1. He's given us every spiritual blessing.

There's not one out there that in due time or right now we don't have. Philippians, he says, my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

[35 : 01] No need will go unmet. That's how generous he is. How generous is God? how open-hearted is he? You can think about it like this.

When Rebecca came to marry Isaac, her father sent one servant with Rebecca. When Leah married Jacob, Laban, her father gave her Zilpah, one servant.

With Rachel, he gave Bilhah, one servant. So, does God just give us one servant? One servant to go into our marriage with Jesus with?

Hebrews 1, are not all angels ministering spirits to serve those who inherit salvation. Not one servant.

We get all the angels. So, it's not just Paul and Apollos and Cephas. It's Michael and Gabriel and every other angel that has a name. He didn't hold anything back.

[36 : 08] So, how generous is God? No good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. No good thing. If there is something good, he gives it.

I don't have time to turn there, but it's a present tense. Right now, there is nothing that is for your good that God hasn't given you. The moment that something becomes good for you to have, he gives it to you.

No good thing does he withhold. Not for a minute. When the time is right, he gives it to you. So, he didn't spare his son.

So, why in the world would he spare anything less? The cross is the generosity of God on display. It's the sign and seal and signature.

It's the assurance. How will he not give us all things in heaven above and in earth below if he gave us his son?

[37 : 17] So, nothing held back. Nothing spared. God emptied heaven of its glory and its joy.

God emptied heaven of the center of praise. The angels looked in awe as the son took off his crown and said, I will become poor to make them rich. And then he came as a man and he doesn't have a place to lay his head.

and he doesn't have honor and respect. Even in his own hometown, he's despised and forsaken. We sang it. He was poor and yet he was making many rich until he's stripped of everything.

Jesus doesn't have anything now. Naked and scorned and the wrath came down and the question is why? And it's because God is so intent on blessing us.

He's going to open up the blessings of God through the cross. And we don't want to slip up here. It was not that Jesus won God's begrudging generosity on the cross.

[38 : 37] no, Jesus died because here at the end, when nothing else would do, when there was no other sacrifice, no other offering, nothing else would do, the Father loved us so much, the Father said, here's my lamb, take him.

You don't have an offering that will cover your sin. You don't have an offering that will save you from the wrath to come. The angel of death is coming and he's going to come to your house. He's going to come in judgment and you don't have anything.

Here's my lamb. Take him. Take him and live. And so, God left heaven's cupboard completely bare for you.

Unbelief says he's stingy. He's a hard man with only demand, demand, demand. Are you still listening to that voice? If you are, I'd beg you to look at the cross and see his heart.

Here's his willingness to help. Because when it cost him the most, he willingly gave what cost him the most.

[39 : 57] And so, yeah, we have troubles and doubts and fears and problems, all we need is in God. But will he give it? Will he help? And at the cross, it's like this broken yet resolute heart.

God, the Father, gives his son and he goes all in. Like a poker player. Goes all in. He puts it all in the table.

So nothing is left in front of him. Nothing is left in his hand. God's generosity left him empty handed. And so now it's your turn.

If you're lost and you're an unbeliever, now it's your turn. That's the message. And so now it's your turn. It's your turn to believe.

To turn away from the unbelief that says, I don't know about him. And I know what kind of guy he is. I know what kind of God he is. So it's your turn to turn away from your unbelief.

[41 : 04] And with faith, with eyes wide open, to say, I'll take that. I'll buy that. I'll take him.

If you're going to give him for my salvation, I'll take him for my salvation. He's mine. Thank you. Thank you.

God. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we have not even begun to scratch the surface of your kindness, and that's why forever and ever in eternity future, you will be showing us the kindness of your heart, the generosity, and it will be the ages and ages and ages to come that will echo again and again of your goodness.

it all started on the cross. It all started in your heart with a heart of love, willing to send your very son for us. Please help us to turn away from unbelief and fear and suspicion and doubt.

With gratitude and with open hands and an open heart and with a thank you in our mouths, help us to live upon your generosity.

[42 : 33] Say thank you for all that you've done for us. Pray for those who are lost with such a dark, sad way of looking at you. Holy Spirit, shine the light of the truth in their hearts.

Make the love of God and his generosity to them beautiful. Pray this for Jesus' sake.
Amen.