

2 April 2017

EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY

Beautiful Outlaw



The theme 'Extravagant Generosity' brought to my mind; Scrooge Mc Duck. That cartoon character hoarding his wealth, sitting on a pile of gold coins. Not with a smile on his face, but a face that said; 'this is mine and you're not getting any'.

I was thinking; why is it important that Jesus is generous, that extravagant generosity is part of his character?

Scrooge Mc Duck reminded me why I celebrate Jesus' extravagant generosity. Being greedy sucks the life out of people, it destroys our humanity. Greed breathes money, wealth, possessions for ME. I need more,

I always need more, for me! I see Scrooge Mc Duck hugging his money, swimming in his money, kissing his money, but what a lifeless image. What a cold, lifeless image.

How crippling greed can be. I'm sure many of you have experienced collecting money for some charity. I remember it was a common thing to do for youth groups. We would go door to door collecting for various charities and more often than not I was amazed by the generosity of those who were poor themselves, compared to those who hung on tightly to their wealth.

At times I see that in my own life; when I had little I was

generous, the more I got the more I was tempted to hold onto it. You never know, I might need it. After all I worked for it.

Thank God, he's extravagantly generous.

God doesn't hang onto his love, but goes to amazing lengths to share it. To give himself away, that we benefit, according to our needs, at his expense. Jesus by nature is extravagantly generous; God going to the amazing length of being born our brother, the brother who not only shared his life with us, but freely gave his life for us, that we might have life. Life lived abundantly; to the full.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

In the reading from Romans for today we have a similar thought expressed. “Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle but never get around to exercising it in real life. Those who trust God’s action in them find that God’s Spirit is in them—living and breathing God! Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life.” (Romans 8:5,6 Message Paraphrase)

Why is it great that Jesus by nature is extravagantly generous; and by extension that character trait is now one of ours in Christ? It is important because being the opposite; being self-focused, leads to a dead end.

We just have to look around us to see what happens when greed gets the better of people; we produce fear, envy, resentment, grabbing for what I want. We don’t end up with a particularly nice world.

God doesn’t hang onto his love

Just imagine a village with only one well, and everyone in that village wanting that well for themselves.

‘Stay away, this is my well.’ ‘No it’s my well and I’ll punch you in the nose if you get in my road.’ ‘I think you’re very much mistaken. It’s my well and I’ll charge you a dollar a bottle. Aren’t I generous.’ ‘If I can’t have the well, nobody can, I’ll poison it.

Watch them squirm then.’ And so the whole village died of thirst.

Just imagine a village with only one well, and everyone in the village decided to share because they were grateful that God had given them more than enough for everyone.

‘Would you like me to help you draw out some more water.’ And so the village thrived, not only the village but all the people thrived as a united community.

We too live in a village with limited resources that we can fight over as ours, or share that we all live life to the full.

Which of those two attitudes do you think most reflects Jesus?

I’m glad Jesus is generous,

extravagantly generous.

If God wanted to be selfish, who’d stop him; nobody. Where would that leave us? Fighting God to get what we feel we need; and losing cause God always wins.

I’m eternally grateful that Jesus has shown us that God is generous, extravagantly generous. So he doesn’t love us just a bit, he’s all in. He doesn’t hold himself back.

How do I know that Jesus is all in? You’re not half born, it’s all or nothing. You don’t half die. Jesus didn’t hold himself back, but died so that you and I might live. Live life to the full. Live life abundantly. At least that’s Jesus’ promise in John 10:10.

“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy (not very generous). My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life (now that’s extravagantly generous).” (John 10:10 NLT)

Did you notice that Jesus never says

Jesus never says; ‘You deserve it’

anything about us deserving his generosity? Jesus didn’t say; ‘You deserve it’.

If that were the case it wouldn’t be generosity, let alone extravagant. It would be what we deserve, so he should give it to us, it’s ours. I always thank God that he doesn’t give me what I deserve; but that he extravagantly gives me what I need and stand no chance in

hell of ever getting on my own.

Jesus has given me himself. Jesus has extravagantly won for me an intimate place in Father’s heart. What a precious relationship I now get to live and enjoy. I get to know Father for who he is. I get to experience Father’s extravagant generosity in Jesus as I’m embraced in his forgiveness, in his love, in his life.

Let us pray. Jesus we praise you for being extravagantly generous; especially in the way you forgive, in the way you love. We invite you to grow this personality trait in us as we live and grow as your disciples. Amen.