

# Loved Up Generosity

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Preacher: Rev. Clive Jennings

[ 0 : 00 ] Hi everyone. If you've tuned in after Steve Wright's Love Songs on Radio 2, welcome. You must be really well loved up and in the mood to think and consider generosity this morning.

I hope you managed to watch the clip right at the beginning. I hope you enjoyed that. I think sometimes it's good to laugh at the ridiculous nature of our humanity sometimes, of how we can get hooked on material things and love them. Like the guy in the clip, if you felt the need this morning to buy a large bunch of red roses for your car and go out and embrace it lovingly, then like the man in there, I really hope you're accessing the help you need.

You see, we can get so hooked up, can't we, on material things. You know, I love this. I love that. You know, we do it with celebrity as well, don't we? You know, sort of, I love this celebrity and follow them on Twitter or whatever we do.

Also as well, we can get hung up and misguided sometimes about love of things in church. Maybe procedures, preferences, material things in church that we, that drive us away from the actual core of that love of God to embrace a church which is Christ-centred and Jesus-shaped.

In the last few weeks, I hope that along with me, you have really drawn deep on our teaching about God's generosity and love for us.

[ 1 : 54 ] We love, why do we love? Well, we love because he first loved us. It's in 1 John 4 verse 19.

That sense of God's love for us, the gracious love of God that flows out into every corner of our lives and therefore into our community. We are called to be carriers of that love and generosity that reaches into the heart of our community, into the everyday, the place in which we work, the place in which we live.

Like me, you've probably been watching TV and the stories that have really encouraged me of where families have been presented on their doorstep with a laptop or an iPad.

You know, children who haven't been able to homeschool because they haven't had access to the technology that they needed to do that.

And the love and generosity that has been shown, but the way that was received, I just brought tears to my eyes, some of those stories.

[ 3 : 04 ] And again, there's stories locally here, I'm sure, of not only that giving and sharing in our community from our schools and from other settings, but also from our own Make Lunch team.

The, you know, food parcels that have been going to families and their children in order that they can just make it through the week. Real love and generosity.

Today, there'll be packs going to our residential homes from Christchurch. Just again, a small token of our love and generosity as we make deeper connections with that community.

It's about generosity and love. You can't separate it. It wasn't separated on the cross. It didn't come cheaply. Generosity and love comes often at a cost.

In the many, many funerals that as a team we have taken over the last few weeks, that real deep sense of love and generosity that has been expressed by loved ones who have shared what that person has done in their lives.

[ 4 : 18 ] families, colleagues, friends, that foundational sense of care and love that has impacted their lives.

That's why we felt the need to share this sermon series. I pray that it's been really helpful and I pray that it's been life changing for you.

I recently watched one of my favourite films. It's called Shadowlands. And it tells the story of the life of the theologian and writer C.S. Lewis.

It focuses on meeting a lady in later life. Her name was Joy. And as they fell in love and they married, but that marriage was only going to last a short time because Joy had cancer and died. C.S. Lewis wrote a really graphic book following that. It talked honestly about his grief. It was called A Grief Observed. And one of the quotes from there, he talked about how his faith was strengthened but challenged.

[ 5 : 40 ] A great quote from the book. It says, It is easy to say you believe a rope to be strong and sound as long as you are merely using it to tie up a box. But suppose you had to hang by that rope over a precipice.

Wouldn't you then first discover how much you really trusted it? The generosity and love of God. Do we trust in that generosity and love?

Has that been tested in your life? It certainly has in mine at times. Do we comprehend all that he has done for us? And is doing and will do for us in the days and the weeks to come?

There's a great hymn. O love that will not let me go. I rest my weary soul in thee. I give thee back the life I owe.

That in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be. What a great expression of the generosity and love of God.

[ 6 : 51 ] A reading from James this morning comes after some really, really tough teaching about temptations and trials that can so easily divert us away from that love and generosity that is freely given in so many ways.

I know it's been a tough year.

Often through people that came alongside you. That came alongside us. That phone call, that parcel, that note.

Just knowing that people are praying with us and for us. And like in our reading, I pray that we don't walk away from that mirror that James talks about in his reading this morning and forget what Jesus has done for us and is doing and continues to do in our lives.

And in the depth of that love and generosity that we will be doers of all that he would like us to do. That we would be doers of that word.

[ 8 : 21 ] Witnesses to the kindness, encouragement and that reflects in us and through us. Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves.

Do what it says. Do what it says. What powerful words. Love and generosity. Go and do what it says.

And as we transition from this series of all that's been stirred up in us and through us to share more, to give more, to love more, to listen more, to listen more.

And to, you know, just the list goes on. We have the opportunity as one to build on this teaching, to do what it says, to show that generosity and love that has impacted our lives as we seamlessly enter into our new teaching and Lent series called A Passion for Christ.

And in that we'll explore some of the same themes about sharing, seeking, shining, showing and serving that has got to be foundational at the heart of our Christian life and witness and our mission.

[ 9 : 36 ] A wise person in the pew once said, there is a fine line between a long drawn out sermon and a hostage situation. A wise person in the pew once said, there is a fine line between a long drawn out of our Christian life and a hostage situation.

A wise person in the pew once said, there is a fine line between a frame between the lancipies and trees and those twoologians as well as a presenteian inside of our Christian life and Earth. And the hope that that bracelet in the pew'd are offensively is one that has opportunities for us or are different thirty-one Martha and filme him. Do the glue to it. In the pew, which is the skill, Mona requires some really good investor for us to truly exist when we see we can Use mouth to open, open your fears to be in the straight. And of the law. To use the court regarding ourisson Lisa, when we see a false court,umble in our case in the open weeks of service between others as well as the skill and we see this, show it says we can be the truth of the pain in the das, the truth of Jesus in the world.

Let's pray. help us Lord to acknowledge embrace your never ending love and your generosity for each and every one of us make us open to your Holy Spirit flowing into our lives through us and from us into the lives of those around us may we be doers of your word not just merely listeners or observers we pray and let your generosity be a blessing and a challenge in every aspect of our lives and may others see in us the joy of giving and in our sharing and the blessing of God Father,

Son and Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you and all those whom you love in this world and the world to come today, this week and as we journey together and walk closely with Jesus in Lent  
Amen Amen

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