

Aiming to glorify God by calling and equipping people to be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ

Refreshing Generosity

"A generous man will prosper; He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." Proverbs 11:25

Many of us will have had the experience of being refreshed by the generosity of others. A generous gift, a generous invitation, a generous act, a generous word – they can all be a source of great refreshment to us. Any act of generosity is a reflection of God's character. God not only gives; He gives generously and lavishly. Not a day goes by when we do not have reason to thank God for His generosity – physically, materially and spiritually.

It is in the context of encouraging lavish generosity that Paul writes:

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. That though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9)

The pattern for our generosity is always found in the Lord Jesus.

In a time of economic recession it is easy to become obsessed with holding onto as much as we can. That does not seem to be the biblical pattern. In 2 Corinthians 8 Paul uses the Macedonian churches as an example. He writes:

"Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity." (8:2)

This meant that:

"they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability." (8:3)

The secret?

"they gave themselves first to the Lord, and then to us in keeping with God's will." (8:5)

It is not the amount that matters, but the attitude with which we give. Re-

member the poor widow and her two very small copper coins (Mark 12:42).

The truth is that we can never out-give God. Every time we act with generosity, whether with our money, other resources, our God-given abilities, or our time, we are to act in faith. Faith in what Paul goes on to say in 2 Corinthians 9 from verse 6:

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that is all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.... You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

This has application to us as a church as well as individuals and families. One of the great encouragements of the Bush Hill Park church plant has been the way in which the Lord has

refreshed the BHP team as they have given themselves wholeheartedly to the opportunities that have arisen in BHP, and also how the Lord has refreshed us at Enfield Town, filling the gaps left by those who are now at BHP.

An opportunity has now arisen to investigate working in partnership with Causeway Free Church in Potters Bar. As this opportunity develops it is certain to involve cost in terms of money, personnel and other resources. To move forward as the way becomes clear will require renewed faith in the Lord's promise to give us all that we need to abound in every good work. Our desire must be to reflect our Lord's generosity to us in all that is involved, trusting His promise that:

"it is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

Our prayer should be that through any act of generosity we are able to perform, by God's grace, others will be refreshed and God will be thanked.

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