Noble Generosity
The Evidence of Identity
Pastor Jimmy Witcher
Sunday, November 8, 2026

The Evidence of Identity

---

2 Corinthians 9:6–11 NLT
Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever." For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous.

Mark 10:17–25 NLT
As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
"Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked. "Only God is truly good. But to answer your question, you know the commandments: 'You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. You must not cheat anyone. Honor your father and mother.'"
"Teacher," the man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young."
Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. "There is still one thing you haven't done," he told him. "Go and sell all your possessions and give

the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."
At this the man's face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God!" This amazed them. But Jesus said again, "Dear children, it is very hard to enter the Kingdom of God. In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!"

Mark 10:26–31 NLT
The disciples were astounded. "Then who in the world can be saved?" they asked.
Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God."
Then Peter began to speak up. "We've given up everything to follow you," he said.
"Yes," Jesus replied, "and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life. But many who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then."

Acts 4:32–37 NLT
All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.
For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means "Son of Encouragement"). He was from the tribe of Levi and

came from the island of Cyprus. He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles.

John 12:1–8 NLT
Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him. Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance.
But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor." Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself.
Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

Mark 14:10–11 NLT
Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests to arrange to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted when they heard why he had come, and they promised to give him money. So he began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

Luke 19:1–10 NLT
[On his way to Jerusalem and the cross,] Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. “Zacchaeus!” he said. “Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today.” Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy.

But the people were displeased. “He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner,” they grumbled.

Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, “I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!”

Jesus responded, “Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.”

Small Group Guide: The Evidence of Identity

Opening Question

Think of a time when someone was unexpectedly generous toward you. What did it show you about that person?

Generosity Reveals Identity

Let's review how Pastor Jimmy showed us that our generosity reflects our identity. The word "generous" once described nobility of birth and character, with the responsibility to care for others. We often think, "Once I have enough, then I can be generous," but that is not how God's kingdom works. This is not a "give so you can get" formula. It is "invest so you can be ever more generous."

In Mark 10, a rich man asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus looked at him with genuine love and called him to sell his possessions and give to the poor. He was not being cruel. He was inviting the man to shift his identity from his "stuff" to the kingdom.

Barnabas shows us the opposite. When he accepted Jesus, his identity changed so much that Luke calls him "Son of Encouragement." He saw the needs of the early church and sold a field to provide for the kingdom's expansion.

In John 12, Mary poured out a year's wages of perfume on Jesus, a gift that was likely part of her dowry. She was giving her future because she knew who Jesus was to her personally. Judas saw only what could have been sold and saved, and his greed hardened his heart. When we use God to prop up our own identity, generosity looks like waste. When we recognize who God is to us, we cannot help but pour out generously.

In Luke 19, Jesus came to town in full pomp, and his first pick was Zacchaeus, a man hated by the people. After one dinner with Jesus, Zacchaeus said he would give half his wealth to the poor and, if he had cheated anyone, repay them four times as much. Zacchaeus stands in for

each of us. Jesus picked us at the cross, and when we recognize this, it changes us.
Our generosity is the clearest evidence of what we place our identity in. Are you like the rich man, holding onto your stuff for security, or like Barnabas, seeing your stuff as seed for investment? Does your love for Jesus pour out like Mary's, or does your heart lean toward Judas?

For Discussion
1. Pastor Jimmy shared that "generous" once described nobility of birth and character, not just giving money. How does that change the way you think about generosity?
2. We often think, "Once I have enough, then I can be generous." Where do you see that thinking in your own life?
3. Mark 10:21 says Jesus looked at the rich man and felt genuine love for him. Why does it matter that his words came from love?
4. Which person in the message do you relate to most right now: the rich man, Barnabas, Mary or Zacchaeus?
5. Mary gave because she knew who Jesus was to her. What is one way you can respond with generosity this week, at home or at work?

Closing Prayer
Heavenly Father, continue to show us where our identity is found – in You. Help us to enact generosity out of who we are. We want to see what we have as seed to sow into Your kingdom, giving back to you what is rightfully yours. Let our love for Jesus lead us to respond with generosity in every area of our lives. Help us to be hilariously generous as we trust in You. In Jesus' name, Amen.