

The Generosity of God

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald explores the profound generosity of God in both nature and the spiritual realm, emphasizing His gifts and grace towards humanity.

Duration: 30:43

Scripture: Psalm 68:19, Psalm 139:18, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 1 Timothy 6:17, James 1:5, James 1:17

Topics: "Generosity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the generosity of God in both nature and the spiritual realm. He emphasizes that God is often unappreciated despite his abundant blessings. The speaker highlights the beauty and diversity of the world, with its numerous plants and natural wonders, as evidence of God's generosity in nature. He then shifts to the spiritual realm, emphasizing that God generously provides for all our needs through Christ Jesus. The sermon concludes with a call to thank God for his love and generosity, particularly for the gift of his Son, Jesus.

Transcript

I'd like to speak to you this morning on the generosity of God. Maybe you'd turn in your Bible to 1st Timothy, chapter 6. I'll read verse 17, but it's only the last few words of the verse that I'll be emphasizing. 1st Timothy, chapter 6, verse 17.

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy. The living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy. We're familiar with many of the attributes of God.

He's all-powerful. He's all-knowing. He's in all places at one and the same time.

He's holy, righteous, just, and good. But you seldom hear about the generosity of God. In fact, God is the most unappreciated person in the universe.

He's the most maligned person in the universe, the most blamed. Man sins and reaps the terrible consequences of his sin, and turns around and blames God. But God is really the most unappreciated person in the universe, this living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

I'd like to think with you this morning about the generosity of God in nature, and then in the spiritual realm. First of all is generosity in nature. Think of the marvelous world in which he has placed us.

I suppose it could have been like the moon. Wouldn't that have been dull if we had been placed in a sphere like the moon? But instead of that, he's placed us in a world that has about 250,000 different kinds of plants, seed-bearing plants. Just think of that, 250,000 seed-bearing plants, and of these 50,000 are trees.

How would you like to sit down and try to design 250,000 different kinds of plants? You'd run out of ideas very soon. Architects run out of ideas. I suppose they're architects, I'd better be careful.

But you see these row houses, they all look alike. But God designed 250,000 different kinds of seed-bearing plants, and of those 50,000 are trees. Do you enjoy plants? I know a lot of you do, and I do too, and trees as well.

The marvel of it all. There are 8,600 different kinds of flowers, different kinds of flowers. The orchid alone, there are 2,000 different orchids.

That's not even, they only count one in that 8,600, but there are 2,000 different kinds of orchids. Just think of the beauty of any kind of orchid, or think of a rose. You get up in the morning, and you look at the rose, and there's a little crystal drop of water on the petal of a rose.

And you look at it, and you marvel. It's so beautiful, isn't it? How much we owe to God for the beauty of such a creation. Think of the fruit trees and berry bushes that God has made.

Think of the delight that mankind has taken in the apple alone. Or have you ever gone out into an orchard, where those Bartlett pears were just becoming ripe? And you pick a pear, you bite into it, and the juice runs down your chin, and that's part of the joy of it. Really, the flavor of a Bartlett pear is incomparable.

There's no other flavor like it. Or have you ever been on a farm at harvest time, when the men are out all day long working in the fields, and the housewife is home baking pies. And they come in, and she has this blueberry pie, and she cuts into it, and the juice is flowing there at the bottom of the pie plate.

And there's nothing like it, really. But that's only one type of berry that God has made. Think of the birds.

There are 10,000 species of birds in the world in which God has placed us. Do you enjoy them? I think of the hummingbird. I never cease to get over the wonder of a hummingbird.

That little body. Did you know that a hummingbird can fly across the Gulf of Mexico without stopping to refuel? It's marvelous, isn't it? Sometimes we take these things for granted. That's what I say.

God is so unappreciated. He placed all these wonders right within our sight. People care little about it.

You go into a restaurant, do you see many people bow their heads to give thanks for the food? I mean, it's a rarity. Did I ever tell you the story about Evelyn Varder's father? I don't know whether it happened to him, but he told the story. A servant of the Lord was out on itinerant evangelism, and he had no money.

But he felt that God wanted him to eat, and so he went into a restaurant, and he ordered a meal on faith, and he ate the meal, and then he prepared his little speech to give to the man at the cash register. He went up to the man at the cash register, and before he could open his mouth, the man said, no sir, dad, when I opened this restaurant, I said that the first one who bowed his head and gave thanks for the food would get his meal free, and you're the first one. This is in a book called Memorials of a Quiet Life by Evelyn Varder's father.

Very few people bow their heads and give thanks for the food. The beauty of God's creation. I was thinking of a canary.

Do you think you could ever become so attached to a canary that when it died you'd cry? Well, I've known people who did that. I think of the seagulls which we see in profusion down here at the bay and at the Pacific, and I never look at a seagull without thinking of the marvel of God's creation. I've crossed the Atlantic on an ocean liner, and you get out in the middle of the Atlantic, and there are seagulls there.

What do they drink? They drink salt water. No creature can live drinking salt water. Salt water will kill you.

How did God get around that little difficulty? Well, I'll tell you how. The seagull takes the salt water up, and it goes through a filter membrane. Fresh water goes down into the gullet of the seagull, and the salt comes out as a teardrop in its eye.

The wonder of God's creation. And I think of the little sparrow scratching around in your yard, and how God could, how the Lord Jesus could look at that sparrow and see a spiritual lesson in it for us. I think of the fish.

There are 20,000 bony fish that God has made. 20,000. The total number of fish is 45,000.

Mike, he could have done less, couldn't he? That's why it says he's given us richly all things to enjoy. He's lavish in his kindness toward his people. How many animals do you think he designed? 1,250,000.

It's an estimate. There could be a lot more. 1,250,000.

Do you like animals? Do you like a dog? I was thinking this morning of the dog. I think of that seeing-eye dog guiding around our blind friend. It's wonderful, isn't it? I think of a watchdog in a home.

They seem to know what their job is. I think of the sheepdog, and how the shepherd can just use them. They just know what they're supposed to do.

You don't have to reward them. Their reward is doing the work of herding the sheep. That's all they have, just to do the work.

And then I think of those Irish setters whom God just put in the world to teach us how to worship. That's all. They sure know how to love a person.

Mentally, they probably should see a psychologist, but they really know how to love. Think of the many different strains of dogs alone in the world, and of horses. A million, two hundred and fifty thousand animals in the world.

Maybe I shouldn't talk about insects. There are two to five million different types of insects. But they play an important part, don't they? A very important part in the balance of nature.

Stars. I hope we're not too spiritual to look up at night and enjoy God's creation in the firmament. There are billions of stars that you and I will never see.

Isn't that amazing? Billions of stars that you and I will never see. I think of God's kindness to us in inventing flavors. Did you know it was God who invented chocolate? It was.

To say nothing of all the wonderful flavors. He could have made everything taste like soda. He didn't.

And the fragrances that the Lord has given to mankind. Think of the beauty of a sunset. The majesty of the mountains.

Or the great expanse of the seas. The generosity of God. But if you really want to know something about the generosity of God, you've got to move over into the spiritual realm.

The natural is only a picture of the spiritual. Psalm 139 verse 18. I'd like you to look at that for just a minute.

Psalm 139 and verse 18. Well, I should begin with verse 17. How precious also are your thoughts to me, O God.

How great is the sum of them. Listen, if I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand when I awake. I am still with you.

Now, we read that and we don't appreciate what it's saying. God's thoughts of love and kindness and generosity to us are more numerous than all the grains of sand of all the seashores of the world. Marvelous, isn't it? You just go down to Alameda, to the beach there.

You couldn't take a handful of sand and count the grains, could you? I wouldn't want to. I'd get too tired. But that's what this verse says.

Psalm 139 verse 18. His thoughts toward his people are more numerous than the sand of the sea. James chapter 1 verse 5 says that he gives to all men liberally what wisdom.

He gives wisdom liberally to all who ask for it. He never scolds us for asking. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who give it to all men liberally and upbraideth none.

It's good in reading your bible to come across those words, adverbs like liberally, abundantly, exceedingly, because you find the Spirit of God ranging over the world of adjectives and adverbs to give some impression of the great generosity of God. Psalm 68 verse 19 says he daily loads us with benefits. He daily loads us with benefits.

We take them for granted. We take for granted things like memory, appetite, sight, hearing, smell, all of these things. But they are blessings with which he daily loads us to say nothing of the blessings of a sound body and a sound mind.

But you know, the greatest display of generosity that the world has ever known occurred 2,000 years ago when God gave his only begotten son. When God emptied heaven of its very best for earth's worst, there never was generosity like that. When God gave Jesus, he couldn't give anything more, and he couldn't give anything better, and he didn't have to do it.

You wouldn't do it. If you had an only son, it wouldn't give him to die for a person who was morally dissolute, a drunkard. God did it.

His generosity was fully told out at Calvary's cross, and linked with that was the generosity of the Lord Jesus. When he saw a world of lost mankind, he was willing to give himself. That's why Paul says, in 2 Corinthians, we know the grace, and incidentally, grace in that verse really is a synonym for generosity.

I think you get the real meaning of the verse if you put the word generosity in it. We know the generosity of our Lord Jesus Christ, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. There never was generosity like that, and yet the only thanks the Lord Jesus ever gets for it comes from redeemed lips, and there aren't many of those in the world.

The generosity of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we're born again, we read that he pours out his spirit on us abundantly. Schaeffer, I think he counts about 35 things that happen to a person when he's born again, and one of them is the gift of the Spirit, the gift of the Holy Spirit.

When you think of the numerous ministries of the Holy Spirit which become ours the moment we're saved, we're indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We receive the seal of the Spirit, marking us out as belonging to God. We receive the earnest of the Spirit, the pledge of our future redemption.

Many, many ministries of the Spirit, and then the Lord Jesus gives us life more abundantly. He said, he himself said, the thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

And you never really do know the abundant life until you come to know the Lord Jesus. God is generous in his grace, his kindness to people who are not only unworthy, but who deserve the very opposite. Paul says where sin abounded, grace super abounded.

You think of sin abounding in the world, it's incredible, isn't it? It's incredible the sin that's in the world today. God's grace is greater. God's grace is like an ocean without shores, and we're like little children with a thimble scooping out the water of the ocean.

We'll never drain it dry. Throughout all eternity, the generous grace of God. Paul describes his grace in 1 Timothy 1.14 as exceedingly abundant.

It's wonderful how he ransacks vocabulary for superlatives in describing the grace of God. And God's mercy is abundant, too. 1 Peter 1. Verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Notice the expression, according to his abundant mercy. There's no shortage of mercy with God. God's grace is giving us what we don't deserve.

God's mercy is not giving us what we do deserve. God's grace gives us forgiveness of sin and everlasting life. God's mercy spares us from hell, the punishment we do deserve.

And all through the Christian life, God is pouring out his grace upon us, his consolation. You say, well, brother, we have rough places in life. We have sorrows in life.

We have trials and tribulations in life. And yet, Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 1 that even when we do have tribulations, God's comfort and consolation superabounds over the trials. 2 Corinthians 1. And verse 15.

And Paul could speak about this with great confidence because he had been through the fire. And even in this chapter, he's telling about what he has suffered for Christ. 2 Corinthians 1. Well, let me read verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

who comforts us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Notice, for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. What that really is saying is that suffering and affliction and trials never come alone. They're always accompanied by a corresponding consolation from God.

Have you experienced that? Have you gone through some dark valley in life? If you had anticipated it ahead of time, you say, I never could have taken it. If you go through it, you find you're not alone in it. The Lord is there.

He's more present, more near than you ever thought possible. He pours in the comfort and he pours in the consolation. And after it's all over, you say, well, I never would have chosen it, but I wouldn't give up the experience for anything.

We get to know the Lord in a way in which we never knew him before. So he's generous with the consolations that he gives to us. Paul tells us in Philippians chapter four, God supplies all our needs, listen, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

That's wonderful, isn't it? Is he rich in glory? I should say that's the way he supplies our needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. And then in second Corinthians chapter nine and verse eight, Paul tells us that the Lord provides us with everything that we would ever need in order that we might do good works, all sufficiency in all things so that we may have an abundance for every good work. That's typical of the New Testament, all sufficiency in all things that we may have an abundance of good works.

And I think Paul hits a mountain peak in Ephesians chapter three, verse 20, when he says that God is able to do yet exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us. Just think of that. God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us.

And finally, at the end of the journey, Peter tells us that God is able to supply an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. What a wonderful thing. An abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The generosity of God. Years ago, there's a woman in jail in Detroit. Her name was Dorothy Grimes.

She wrote this little poem. She called it God's Extravagance. More sky than man can see.

More sea than he can sail. More sun than he can bear to watch. More stars than he can scale.

More breath than he can breathe. More yield than he can sew. More grace than he can comprehend.

More love than he can know. God's Extravagance. Shall we thank him? Father, we do thank you this morning for your wonderful generosity to the sons and daughters of men.

Forgive us, O Lord, for taking these things for granted, and we would thank you, especially this morning, for the gift of your love, the Lord Jesus. Gift of all gifts. All are the gifts in one.

You gave your only begotten son, and we will be endlessly thankful, endlessly grateful to you for pouring out such love, for lavishing such affection in us, who deserve the very opposite. We give our thanks to the

Savior's name. Amen.

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