

# OVERFLOW:

A LIFE REFRESHED BY GENEROSITY

## Sermon Outline 2

 GENEROUSCHURCH™

**Title: “God’s Plan for Generosity: Not what He wants from us, but what He wants for us.”**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Welcome

1. Greetings, I’m [Name] – special welcome to our guests – glad you’re here.
2. Last week, we handed out ‘Generosity Bags’.
  - a. They are a gift that you get to give to someone else. Take the bag, fill it and give to someone with a need.
  - b. There are pre-arranged opportunities for you if you need some help or you can do your own thing.
  - c. We already have people using them!
    1. (Give any stories or examples that were done in the last week.)

***Slide: Any accompanying pictures with the stories***

#### B. This is part of our series: “Overflow: A Life Refreshed by Generosity”

1. We’re looking at the stories of people who are roles models of God’s generous extravagant love – people from the Bible (ancient times) and from today (even here in this church).

2. We started by looking at Jesus – the greatest model of God’s love in the Bible and (I would argue) all human civilization.
  - a. Jesus lived His whole life in relationship with God, received everything from God with gratitude and gave all He had back to God to bless others.
  - b. Jesus loved helping the vulnerable – people who could not meet their own needs. We saw that last week with the dying child and the sick woman
  - c. Jesus knew what it was like to be vulnerable. As an infant, He was almost killed by a despot – the Magi’s generosity subsidized His family’s escape to safety.
  - d. Imagine that, Jesus was a refugee who was helped by the generosity of strangers. God used their gifts to save His Son so that Jesus Christ could save us from death and sin – generosity can change the world.
3. That’s what I would like to talk about today – how generosity to the vulnerable can change someone’s world – maybe yours.

*Transition: PRAY*

## 2. GENEROSITY TO THE VULNERABLE IS WORLD CHANGING

A. I’d like to Tell the Story of Ruth.

1. There a small book near the beginning of the Bible called “Ruth”. It’s a remarkable story of how God can use our generosity to the vulnerable in remarkable ways.
2. It starts with Naomi, a woman married to a man with a strange name (Elimelek), who gave birth to sons who also had strange names (Mahlon and Kilion). It was a thing back then.

- a. There was a famine in the land, so they moved to a foreign country where their sons married local women.
- b. Over the course of ten years, Naomi loses all the men in her life. They die – she is vulnerable. There was no one to care for her – no government programs to help or nonprofits to assist – on her own without any resources.
- c. Naomi decides to go back to her homeland and cuts the daughters-in-law loose to remarry so they can find security. As widows, they are vulnerable too.
- d. Thing is, one of the girls, Ruth, loves Naomi and refuses to go. It was a very touching scene with a lot of crying, hugging, clinging.

***Slide***

But Ruth said, *“Don’t force me to leave you; don’t make me go home. Where you go, I go; and where you live, I’ll live. Your people are my people, your God is my god; where you die, I’ll die, and that’s where I’ll be buried, so help me GOD—not even death itself is going to come between us!”* (Ruth 1:16–17 The Message)

- e. So now you have a vulnerable widow looking out for her vulnerable elderly widowed mother-in-law. Ruth’s only resources are her love and devotion, so they leave.
3. They get back to Naomi’s hometown to figure things out.
    - a. Ruth decides to go and see if she can get some food. There’s this idea at the time called ‘gleaning’ – farmers would let vulnerable people (poor, widows, orphans, refugees) take whatever grain was left on the ground once the harvesters had passed through – again, generosity to the vulnerable.

- b. Ruth finds a field and starts picking up the leftover grain. Well, the landowner, Boaz (another strange name) notices her – she’s attractive – but he’s impressed with her story – amazed that she would stick it out with Naomi. Her character is what he finds most attractive
- c. So, generosity inspires generosity. Boaz decides to take care of her – feeds her, makes sure she is safe and has access to plenty of grain, even has the workers give her some extra food.
- d. As you can imagine, Ruth has a lot to talk about with Naomi that night!
- e. Ruth stays with Boaz’s farm, works hard to collect grain to feed her and Naomi. Naomi decides to give a little direction to Ruth – they get mani-pedi, work on the hair, buy a new outfit – makes herself ‘noticeable’ to Boaz.
- f. Boaz does notice her. She’s devoted, compassionate, hard-working, lots of common sense and he finds her attractive. He’s hit the lottery!
- g. Boaz works through a few steps important in his culture and marries her – a great story with a happy ending:
  - 1. An elderly widow Naomi finds security.
  - 2. Two wonderful people (Ruth and Boaz) get married.
  - 3. They have a son! They name him Obed (another strange name) who in turn has a son Jesse (normal name) who in turn has a son named David.
  - 4. There’s something interesting about David. He grows up to become KING David – the most famous king in the history of Israel – they impact the whole nation!

5. There's another famous descendant named Jesus.  
Ruth/Boaz are His ancestors – genealogy in Matthew.

## B. Implications of Compassion to the Vulnerable

1. God Uses Our Generosity to Do Great and Unexpected Things.
  - a. Ruth had no resources to give Naomi. We think generosity is all about money. For Ruth, generosity was her devotion, her time, her labor. All Ruth had to give was her commitment to help and her willingness to share.
  - b. Boaz had wealth to share. He put his faith into action through his resources –the harvest from his land, the wealth he had accumulated, the workers at his disposal. In short, his business as well as his willingness.
  - c. Two different people who generously shared what they had to help the vulnerable, and God did far more than they could have imagined possible.
  - d. Their simple decisions to care for someone more vulnerable led to the greatest King of Israel and the Savior of Humanity. You just don't know how God will impact the world through your compassion.
2. Simple Story (an example is provided below.)
  - a. I'm an orphan - My Jr year of college – second semester - \$500 short and a couple of days away from being sent home – studying for ministry, it would have been a set back from which I don't think I would have recovered.
  - b. Called one of my sisters – she had no money, I knew that – but she prayed & she called our pastor – small church without any resources – anonymous donor came in with a check for 'someone in need' – they passed it on.

- c. Simple but generous acts of kindness – willingness to listen, to get involved, to pray, to give to church for the benefit of others – kept me in college and led me along a path that led to this place – think of all the work we’ve done for the vulnerable in the past 10 years: people in this church, refugees in Lebanon, poor village in Malawi.
- d. No one knew where their deeds would lead but God did.

### 3. GENEROUS PEOPLE CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE

#### A. Generous People Care for the Vulnerable.

- 1. All throughout the Bible, we have examples of how God’s love moves people to generously invest their lives in helping others.
- 2. Some Examples (a sample story is provided below.)
  - a. A remarkable example from here at this church: Bill & Patsy – ‘retired’ medical professionals

***Slides: Pictures of Bill & Patsy***

- 1. 2016: they took two trips to Africa – one to a hospital in Kenya and another to a hospital in Cameroon – they’ve done this plenty of times
- 2. Bill is a Kidney specialist – here, he’s caring for a woman with a rare kidney condition that he has treated many times in the US
- 3. Patsy is a Physical Therapist –
  - i. She helped sort 63 wheelchairs at one Hospital – there was one pediatric chair in the pile
  - ii. Two days later Elsie showed up carrying her 7yr old son, Promise, who had cerebral palsy and couldn’t

walk –Patsy set him up with the wheelchair she found

- iii. Now mom doesn't have to carry him, he doesn't have to move along the ground, can feed himself from the tray and go to school
- 4. Bill and Patsy say they're retired but it doesn't look like it to me – last fall, when we were doing our six-word testimonies – this is what they submitted

***Slide: both six-word testimonies***

- i. Bill: "Thought I'm retired – Lord's now rehired"
- ii. Patsy: "Missions calling overseas – Refugees at home"
- 5. They are using their time, their expertise, their attention, their retirement to help the vulnerable.
- b. Who knows what God will do through all these lives who are being touched.
- 3. Going to Africa a little overwhelming? Watch this sample video about someone who is generous to the vulnerable through his work.

***Slide: Choose your own Sample Video***

- a. He's not giving them money.
- b. He's giving them time, attention, compassion, respect – through his job – faith through work generously meeting the needs of the vulnerable.
- c. Who do you meet in your job, in your neighborhood, school, commute to work? How can you be generous to people in need right around you?

## B. Generous People Make for a Generous Church.

1. We can live our whole life in relationship with God, receive everything with gratitude as a gift from God and then give it back to God to bless others.
2. It's like this:

***Slide: wind turbine***

- a. God's Spirit is like the wind – powerful and on the move – blowing through our world with a powerful force.
  - b. When we give, pray and serve, we can catch the wind and empower the church for remarkable acts of love.
    1. Share any examples here of generosity in your church.
  - c. When we give, pray and serve, God produces power in a church. When you stop, power diminishes, even stops. We are no longer a vibrant life-giving church.
3. Conclusion
    - a. We are committed to touching the lives of thousands of people disconnected from Christ and a life-giving church. That will only happen when you give, pray and serve.
      1. Touching the lives of the vulnerable
      2. Empowering the Church
    - b. God does remarkable things through people like that.

## ***Commission/End of Service***

*Prayer: Father, help us to be rich in good deeds. We pray that You would help us sense your guidance clearly so that we could be drawn to opportunities to be more generous. We ask that You help us have a "generosity radar" so that our eyes will*



*be open to the multiple ways we can show generosity everyday. Help us to live a life of radical generosity like Jesus did. Help us to be moved to give more and more of our lives over to You every day.*

**Pastor/Church Leader: Additional Overflow resources, including the six-week video study, are available at [www.GenerousChurch.com/Overflow](http://www.GenerousChurch.com/Overflow)**