

# OVERFLOW:

A LIFE REFRESHED BY GENEROSITY

## Sermon Outline 4

 GENEROUSCHURCH™

**Title: “A Freeing Faith: Overcoming the fear of living generously.”**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Welcome

1. Greetings, I’m [Name] – special welcome to our guests – glad you’re here.
2. We’re sharing God’s love one generosity bag at a time.
  - a. (Give any stories or examples that were done in the last week)

**Slide**

3. Generosity builds relationships and inspires the next generation.

#### B. This has been a great series – “Overflow: A Life Refreshed by Generosity”

1. We’re talking about how God’s love inspires us to remarkable acts of generosity. It’s as simple as helping 1,000 people, 1 bag at a time.
2. We started with Jesus who lived His life in relationship with God, received everything with gratitude as a gift from God and gave it back to God for the blessing of others.
3. We looked at how generous people care for the vulnerable.
4. We looked at how generous people invest in the future.
5. This week, we look at how generous people support ministry.

**Transition: First, let's pray**

## **2. GENEROSITY INVESTS IN GOD'S WORK**

### A. Elijah & Widow

1. Here's a story from the history of Israel where a great famine covers the land from a drought. It was a hard time, and it lasted for years.
2. There's a man of God, Elijah, who is in ministry – doing an important work. The problem is that Elijah can only serve God if he has food, kind of an essential element to successful ministry.
3. There's a National Geographic moment set in the wilderness by a stream and involving some ravens with a food delivery instinct.
4. A point comes when the stream dries up - no water and no more food, so God sends Elijah on a difficult mission.
5. God sends Elijah to a foreign country and tells him he'll find support there from a widow – a vulnerable person (Ruth).
6. Elijah goes and finds her.
  - a. He asks her for some water which she supplies.
  - b. Then he asks her for some food and here's what she says:

*"I swear, as surely as your God lives, I don't have so much as a biscuit. I have a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a bottle; you found me scratching together just enough firewood to make a last meal for my son and me. After we eat it, we'll die."* (1 Kings 17:12 MSG)

7. Elijah does something difficult – he asks for food from an underprivileged, vulnerable woman struggling to feed her family.

**Slide: only bold words**

Elijah said to her, *“Don’t worry about a thing. Go ahead and do what you’ve said. But first make a small biscuit for me and bring it back here. Then go ahead and make a meal from what’s left for you and your son. **This is the word of the God of Israel: ‘The jar of flour will not run out and the bottle of oil will not become empty before God sends rain on the land and ends this drought.’”*** (1 Kings 17:13–14 The Message)

- a. This isn’t easy for Elijah – it sounds selfish and I’m sure he thought something like, “Why would he do this?”
  - b. It’s not easy for the widow. She only has a little left and she has a son to feed. She asks, “Why would she do this?”
  - c. It’s an act of trust for both.
    1. Elijah has to trust that God will keep His promise to provide for both her family and him.
    2. She has to trust that God will meet her needs if she gives from her meager resources.
    3. God made a promise – will they trust Him and act?
8. She chooses to trust God and a miracle happens.

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*“The jar of flour and the jug of oil were never empty, just as the LORD, through Elijah, had promised.”* (1 Kings 17:16 NCV)

9. God responded to their faith by supplying for everyone’s needs.
  - a. Because Elijah asked, she responded and there was food for her, her son and for Elijah. It helped her.
  - b. Because she responded, there was food for everyone – which helped Elijah and God’s work through Elijah.
10. For the rest of the story.

- a. Bad leadership led the people to abandon Judaism and pursue a horrific worship system that included prostitution, self-mutilation and child sacrifice.
- b. Elijah became a critical leader in the religious reform to bring back Judaism and remove these vile practices.
- c. It was a vulnerable widow with little resource trusting God to supply her needs that kept Elijah alive and in ministry. She is a critical part of the story – she invested in God’s work and was a part of national work of God.
- d. There is a synergy here. He stepped out in faith to do a dangerous work for God. She stepped out in faith to support it – they served God together, each in their specific way.

B. Generous People Trust God to Meet Their Needs as They Support His Work.

- 1. I have seen this time and time again – people changed by God’s love, trust God to supply their needs as they give.
- 2. Here’s an example of someone you might know.
  - a. Francis Chan is a well-known pastor and public speaker. He’s probably known best for his book, *“Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God”* – watch this

**Francis Chan Video - <https://www.generouschurch.com/giving-pastor>**

- b. Here’s a guy who writes a book about the crazy relentless love of God and is inspired to crazy levels of generosity. God’s love motivates our generosity because we trust Him.
- c. Some people say, “yeah, but he has the ‘pastor card’”. My ‘pastor card’ is the same as your card, it’s called an ‘adoption certificate’ as a child of God.

- d. It's a challenge for him to be generous. He's not rich and he gave more than he made. It was tempting for him to keep money for himself – he changed his life and set up a trust.
  - e. Background: Chan gives away about 90 percent of his income, doesn't take a salary from his church, and has donated most of his books' royalties, which have totaled about \$2,000,000, to various charities. He also owns restaurants, a marina, and a hotel that he uses to finance his mission work and meet his needs.
3. (Optional) Share another example. Here's a sample story:
- a. I talked about a poor widow, a crazy pastor – how about this email from a friend who used to attend here until he moved.
    - 1. My wife pulled from her purse a little silver cross and a card folded up dated 9/12/93 with the number \$15,000 written on it. That was during a period of employment instability for me, between being laid off at work and starting my own consulting practice.
    - 2. We had uncertainty about meeting a three-year pledge to support a campaign at the church, but we felt led to make it, and nine months later, my company was established.
    - 3. God has prospered me to this day so that I am able to support my church, various nonprofits and Christian workers around the world.

***Transition: Generous people trust God to meet their needs as they invest in His work***

### **3. GENEROSITY EMPOWERS OUR CHURCH**

1. God will use our giving, praying and serving to empower the plan that He has given us to expand His impact in this community, region, and the world.
2. Generosity motivated by love, built on trust will empower this church to reach people disconnected from Christ/Church.

### ***Commission: Question, “Am I generously investing in Christ’s work?”***

*Prayer: Father, help us to trust you more this week. Help us to put our trust in You and not our money or any other worldly thing. As we trust in You more, help us to take more generosity risks, not only to cause us to draw nearer to You, but also for the good of Your Kingdom and the magnification of Your glory. Just as your Son, led by your Spirit, trusted in You in taking the biggest generosity risk of all on the cross, help us trust You more and sense in a clearer way the leadings of Your Spirit.*

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