

# OVERFLOW:

A LIFE REFRESHED BY GENEROSITY

## Sermon Outline 5

 GENEROUSCHURCH™

**Title: “Openhanded: All we are is released to God for the blessing of others.”**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Welcome

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

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

1. We’ve been looking at the lives of people who are generous.
  - a. Jesus has been our model of time, energy & attention.
  - b. Ruth/Boaz cared for the vulnerable.
  - c. David invested in the future.
  - d. A widow supported God’s work from her meager supply.
2. Generosity flows by living our whole lives in relationship with God – receiving everything with gratitude as a gift from God and turning it all back over to God for the blessing of others.

3. This week, I want to look at how God's love can move us to turn our whole lives over for the blessing of others in a radical way.

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

## 2. GOD'S LOVE MOTIVATES A GENEROUS RESPONSE

### A. The Disciples Turned Their Whole Lives Over to Christ's Call.

1. There is a special group of 12 people in the NT called "disciples". Jesus trained them to lead the church after He left.
2. Four of the Disciples get a lot of attention: John & his brother James, Andrew and his brother Peter.
  - a. They knew Jesus from the start when He was baptized.
  - b. When they first met Jesus (Jn. 1), John and Andrew were first trained by John the Baptist (Jesus' cousin). They introduced Jesus to their brothers James and Peter.
  - c. They were there when Jesus turned water into wine (Jn. 2) and when Jesus started baptizing people (Jn. 3:24). They saw miracles and heard Jesus teach – they had a lot of exposure to Jesus.
  - d. In our language, they would have called themselves "Christian". They believed Jesus was unique in leading someone to a relationship with God.
3. Jesus is now coming to them with a 'Big Ask'.

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*"When Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the lake because they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, '**Come follow me, and I will make you fish for people.**' So Simon and Andrew immediately left their nets and followed him. Going a*

*little farther, Jesus saw two more brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat, mending their nets. Jesus immediately called them, and they left their father in the boat with the hired workers and followed Jesus.” (Mark 1:16–20 NCV)*

a. Jesus was asking them for a unique commitment:

1. “Come Follow Me”

- i. In Jesus’ world, a Jewish Religious Teacher (Rabbi) would open a school and train new Rabbis – students asked the teacher to enroll.
- ii. Jesus is turning things around (did that a lot). The teacher is inviting the students to enroll.
- iii. Follow is not ‘become a Christian’ – follow is join me, live life with me to be trained. This is an invitation to become a leader.
- iv. It’s a leader in the shape of *Jesus Christ*. Learn to lead like Christ. (WWJD – What Would Jesus Do?)

2. “I will make you”: they weren’t prepared for this call, and they were inexperienced in ministry. They were commercial fishermen who were willing to be trained to lead. Willingness is the first qualification, and Jesus makes them qualified by His investment.

3. “Fish for people”: Jesus is putting His call into words they would understand. This is the first iteration of what we call the “Great Commission” – to Make Disciples of ALL NATIONS. Like drawing in fish from the whole sea, their call was to bring in people from the whole world to become followers of Christ:

- i. Medical Professionals: Follow me and I’ll teach you how to heal people.

- ii. Politicians: Follow me and we'll build a new society for God.
  - 4. Jesus Christ is calling them to serve on a whole new level – to partner with Him by expanding His work, building a new movement to reach more people.
- b. They understood this call, just look at their response.
  - 1. They leave their businesses to follow Jesus.
    - i. Simon & Andrew were casting nets from the shoreline – James/John are repairing nets – explain their work.
    - ii. This is Mark's account; Luke gives a little more insight into the moment – he mentions how Jesus talks Peter into going out with a boat and then drop the nets back into the water. A miracle happens – they catch so many fish the boat almost sinks. It's a sign that what they'll do for Christ is greater than anything they would do in their businesses.
    - iii. They drop everything and leave their stable source of income – to respond to Christ's call.
    - iv. James/John walk away from their dad and a group of hired workers – difficult decision.
    - v. Peter turns his home into a base of operations.
  - 4. Whatever they had experienced in Jesus Christ up that moment motivated them to radically change their lives for this call – they 'dropped their nets'.

## B. Their experience

1. They witness miracles, crowds of 1000's hanging on every word Jesus teaches, lives completely transformed by nothing more than a simple word from Jesus.
2. Peter gives the first great testimony to Christ's identity.
3. They see Christ crucified, and they witness Him resurrected.
4. They are the core lead team to the first church – shaping our beliefs, directing our work, and spreading our work around the world.
5. They are directly responsible for at least seven books in our New Testament.
6. We would name a great cathedral after Peter, and the Roman Catholic church would consider him their founding pope. Andrew would bring the Gospel to Greece, Ukraine & Russia (where they consider him their patron saint). John would record visions of heaven in the last book of the New Testament.
7. All because they left everything to follow Christ.

### **3. WHEN THEY EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE, GENEROUS PEOPLE GIVE THEIR LIVES TO SERVE CHRIST**

#### **A. Generosity is Our Response to a Christ's Call on Our Lives.**

1. Think of how we have been defining generosity: we live our whole lives in relationship with God; we receive everything with gratitude as a gift from God; and we give everything back to God for the blessing of others.
2. That last part – giving everything back to God for the blessing of others – that's our response to serve Christ's call.

- a. Peter, Andrew, James & John had discovered God’s love in Christ in a way they had never expected nor experienced before Peter describes it.

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*“Lord, where would we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are God’s holy one.” (John 6:68–69 CEB)*

- b. When you discover life, love and freedom in Christ, you’ll ‘drop your net’ – whatever it is that you are holding onto for personal security to respond to Christ’s call.
- c. Sometimes Christ calls us to something big. It’s not a call for everyone—it’s a call for a few, or even one – you know it – it burns in your heart, it pesters your thoughts, it presses in on you. You know that God is talking to you.
- d. Christ is asking you to ‘drop your net’ and take up a call to invest in His work to expand it further and faster.

**B. Examples**

- 1. Sometimes the net of security is your finances – watch this:

**Video – Handful of Rice - <https://www.generouschurch.com/handful-of-rice>**

- a. They are among the poorest of the people in India, yet they have contributed over \$1.5M to their ministry.
  - b. Their net was dropping a handful of rice, one meal at a time into a red bucket to spread Christ’s work farther and faster among the people of their nation.
- 2. Sometimes It’s Full Time Service.

- a. We have people who walked straight into full-time ministry or changed their careers into full-time.
- b. (Optional) Provide examples of people who have changed to full-time ministry.

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- c. These are just a few – people who heard the call to drop the net of a typical career – to go into full-time ministry.
3. Sometimes It's the "Net of Time" to Serve in the Church.
- a. We have people in this church who serve 10, 20, even 30 hours in a week – they are ministry partners, leaders and even coordinators – their service empowers our ministry.
  - b. People here serve to care for your infants, mentor your children/teens, help you encounter Christ in worship, open up their homes to lead Faith Groups, organize our outreach projects and care for people in need (like CR), lead the church, manage the grounds and manage money.
  - c. They serve regardless of age, infirmity, life situation – some immobile, homebound praying faithfully.
  - d. They could be doing anything with their time, but they have decided to invest it in the church.
4. Miracles begin when you take the step to drop your nets and follow Christ's call: your career, your time, and your investment into Christ's mission.
- a. It starts when you give your life over to Christ for the first time – when you move from a spectator to a participator – someone who commits his or her life to Jesus Christ, starts a

relationship with Christ because they have discovered God in Christ.

- b. It continues when you come to place that you are willing to drop your net of personal security to invest in expanding Christ's work so that other people will find the same life, hope, love and joy that you discovered.

### ***Commission: For all of us – the call is Pray/Invite – Discuss Invite Cards***

*Prayer: Thank you for your mercy and grace to help us see clearly where we are and how we should change to live more like Jesus in whole-life generosity. Help us to overcome self-focus and fear to live with open hearts and open hands. We trust that you are in control as we continue on our journey of generosity. We love you because you first loved us. Thank you.*

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