

OVERFLOW:

A LIFE REFRESHED BY GENEROSITY

Sermon Outline 6

 GENEROUSCHURCH™

Title: “Better Together: Generosity thrives in community.”

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.)

Slide

3. I love these stories! Generosity spreading from one coast to the other – parents mentoring their children – people thanking God and the church – inspiring others to join in – it’s contagious!

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

1. Defined Generosity: living our whole lives in relationship with God, receiving everything with gratitude as a gift from God, and then giving it all back to God for the blessing of others.
2. We’ve been looking at the lives of people who are generous.
 - a. Jesus focusing time, energy and attention to help people.
 - b. Ruth/Boaz cared for the vulnerable.

- c. David invested in future generations to worship God.
 - d. A widow supported Elijah, one of God’s workers.
 - e. Disciples dropped their nets to lead the church.
3. This week:
- a. I want to return to business people. Last week, we saw people leave their business behind to serve in ministry.
 - b. This week, I want to talk about staying in your business to work for God full time.

Transition: First, let’s pray

2. GENEROUS PEOPLE SERVE GOD THROUGH THEIR WORK

A. Lydia, a prosperous business woman touched by God’s love

- 1. There’s a small story in our history about a unique woman who had a big influence on the work of the church in its early stages.

Slide – bold text

*“On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where we thought people would be meeting for prayer, and we sat down to speak with some women who had gathered there. **One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth, who worshiped God.** As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying. She and her household were baptized, and she asked us to be her guests. ‘If you agree that I am a true believer in the Lord,’ she said, ‘come and stay at my home.’ And she urged us until we agreed.” (Acts 16:13–15 NLT)*

- 2. 5 Characteristics We Can Surmise about Lydia
 - a. She’s Sharp:

1. A businesswoman in a world that favored men – not easy.
2. There's no mention of a husband – there's evidence that she probably was single, widowed or divorced. It's not easy to run a business or family on your own.

b. She's Wealthy:

1. She produced an expensive purple cloth. This was labor intensive process using rare materials sold to people of high social rank and great wealth. Think of the NYC fashion scene – high end fashion materials.
2. She has a large home:
 - i. She hosts a small group of travelers on short notice for a few weeks. That requires a good size home and plenty of provisions.
 - ii. Later in the story, we find out that she hosts a church start-up in her home – that takes space.
3. She has a staff of people that run her home.

c. She's Godly:

1. She's present at a prayer meeting by a riverside.
2. She's a 'God-worshipper' – someone who worships the God described in our OT, not because she was born Jewish but because she chose to believe in Him.
3. She's primed for an encounter with God – "The Lord opened her heart to respond...". This is someone who has been searching for God a long time. He's moving on her heart and suddenly she has an 'aha' moment where it all comes together.

We see this all the time at [Church Name]. You're on a journey searching for God, and it's led you here. You have

an 'aha' moment where it all crystallizes and you realize: "it's Jesus I've been looking for all this time".

4. She jumps at the opportunity to get baptized – she's 'go-getter'. I say all the time, "If you don't remember getting baptized, you should" – make the commitment to Christ solid by making it your own, not someone else's. Lydia is ALL IN.

d. She's Influential:

1. She's a wealthy successful businesswoman – that is hard earned clout. She would have influence in her community and among other business people.
2. Look at what happens. She goes from pursuing God, to discovering Christ in an 'aha' moment and makes a solid commitment to Christ, gets baptized and shares her new-found faith with everyone in her home with such conviction that everyone follows suit.
3. That's influence – people acting by your persuasion.

e. She's Generous:

1. She convinces Paul and his entourage to stay at her home. They don't know her but she's so persuasive that Luke, the author, remembers, years later, what she said that prompted them to accept her invitation.
 2. Eventually, her home becomes the meeting place for the church there. She's the first to say 'yes' to Christ and the one to open her home to the church.
3. What a remarkable woman: sharp, wealthy, godly, influential and generous. To think she turns that all over to God for the blessing of others! She's a prime example of generosity!

B. God has always used business people to expand His work.

1. Think of the people we've talked about so far:
 - a. Boaz was a successful landowner who helped Ruth/Naomi.
 - b. David was a successful military leader/politician who invested in a building project he would never see.
 - c. The disciples were four commercial fishermen who use their experience in running a business to run a church.
2. There are more:
 - a. First book of the Bible: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph were all successful in their businesses. They didn't leave their work but turned it over to God to expand His work.
 - b. Paul, mentioned here in this story, made tents and sold them to subsidize his ministry.
 - c. Luke, the author of this story, is a physician who travels with Paul and records the history of our Christ and the church.
3. Here is Lydia – a successful businesswomen who uses her home, wealth, influence to support the work of the church.

3. GENEROUS PEOPLE USE THEIR WORKPLACE TO EXPAND CHRIST'S WORK IN THE WORLD

A. This is ancient history, and here's some modern examples.

1. This is a video of one couple that caught this vision.

Show a sample video clip here

- a. This is an example of using work for ministry.

Slide: Bold

- b. It's about **LIFE: (Labor, Influence, Finance, Expertise)** – you have at least one if not all four of those to give.
 2. Think of the Other Videos We've Seen.
 - a. (List other videos that you've shown during this sermon series)
 3. Consistent theme: "It's all out of gratitude for what Christ did for me". There is a joy they experience in expanding Christ's work.
- B. [insert church name]
1. We have doctors, dentists, nurses and therapists who go on medical missions to put their skills to use in vulnerable nations.
 2. Here at the church and in this area:
 - a. List people or organizations in your local area who are generously giving their time, talent, and/or resources.
 3. Generous people work through their business all the time.
 - a. When they travel internationally, they look for Christians/churches with whom they can connect and help.
 - b. They try to apply their skills to helping people through the church who are in need or help nonprofits.
 - c. They help in accounting, education, counseling, home repair and service, legal aid, medical help, and job skill training.
 - d. They give their life's work over to God for the blessing of others.
 4. A Generous Lifestyle Mobilizes Christ's Work in the World.

Slide: GPS

- a. I believe that God has called us to bring hope to people by being a vibrant church that shares Christ's love in remarkable ways.
 1. We've seen that in the generosity bags.
 2. We've seen that through praying/inviting people.
 3. We'll see that as we seek ways to welcome people into our church.
- b. In order to do that, we'll need to partner God to give, pray and serve so that the church is empowered for vision. How will you contribute?

Commission: Take a simple & brave first step – pray for someone to invite to our next series: “Bad Advice”

Prayer: Father, we thank You first for the generosity You've shown us through Jesus—our source of whole-life generosity. As You continue to make us more and more like Your Son, we thank You for the role the individuals in this group play in that. You have an incredible adventure ahead for us as we continue to grow in whole-life generosity. We want to say that we are available, and ask You to lead us in pursuit of that, and grow our trust in You to live it out.

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