

Warm-up

What comes to mind when you hear this statement?

“Generosity is the ultimate expression of freedom.”

Take a moment to read it slowly. You might read it two or three times, allowing different thoughts or feelings to come to mind. There’s no right answer.



Generosity is the ultimate
expression of freedom.

Read together: 2 Corinthians 9:6–15

Paul encourages the church in Corinth to give willingly and generously to fellow believers in need. Each person is to decide in their heart what to give, not reluctantly or under pressure, because “God loves a cheerful giver.”

Paul reminds the Corinthians that God provides what they need so they can continue doing good. Their gift will meet real needs, lead people to thank God and strengthen the bonds between churches. Paul ends by praising God for his “indescribable gift.”

For Paul, giving is not a transaction or a competition. It grows from God’s generosity towards us. It is freely chosen, and its blessings reach beyond the giver.

Pause and reflect

- Where do you notice or experience God’s generosity in your life?
- What could “holding what we have with open hands” mean in ordinary life?

Our life together at St James

At St James, we seek to encounter God, grow as followers of Jesus and take part in God’s purposes through the power of the Holy Spirit. We seek to see God’s presence and purposes grow in our church, our community and the wider world. Giving is one way we can share in that work.

Discuss together

1. Where do you see St James helping people encounter God, grow in faith, or take part in God’s purposes? What excites you about the life of St James at the moment?
2. How much do you know about St James’ finances? If you were at the service on Sunday, what was new to you? If you weren’t there, where might you find out more?

Explore together

If everyone is happy to, get your phones out and visit the St James website. Find the Money Matters page and explore its sections together. What information do you find helpful? What questions do you still have?

Luke 18:18–30

Read the passage together.

A respected leader asks Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” When he calls Jesus “good teacher,” Jesus replies, “No one is good, except God alone.” This turns the conversation towards God’s goodness and the meaning of life with God.

The man’s question can sound like he is looking for something to do to secure his place with God. Jesus leads him beyond a checklist. He names the commandments about how we treat other people, and the man says he has kept them. Jesus does not challenge his answer. But there is still a deeper question: Is God truly first in his life?

“**One thing you lack.**” Jesus names what is holding the man back from following him freely. His wealth is more than something he owns; it has become a source of security and identity. Jesus invites him to let go, give to the poor, and follow.

Two details in the parallel Gospel accounts:

1. **Mark adds:** “Jesus, looking at him, loved him” before saying, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own...” (Mark 10:21). Jesus’ challenge comes from love.
2. **Matthew adds:** “If you wish to be perfect...” (Matthew 19:21). The Greek word for “perfect” is **τέλειος** (*teleios*), meaning “perfect,” “complete,” “mature,” or “whole.” The word carry the sense of being complete or whole. Jesus invites the man into a fuller life with God.

Pause and reflect

Jesus “looked at him and loved him” before naming what was holding him back. How might this change the way we hear a challenging invitation if we remember that it comes from Jesus’ love?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, you bring to light whatever keeps us from following you wholeheartedly, not to condemn us, but because you love us and long for us to live freely. Bring us home to God. Grow in us wholehearted trust, willing surrender and unbroken communion with you. Raise our joy, quiet our fear, overflow us with generosity, and open our lives in glad obedience to you, the One who holds us safe. **Amen**

