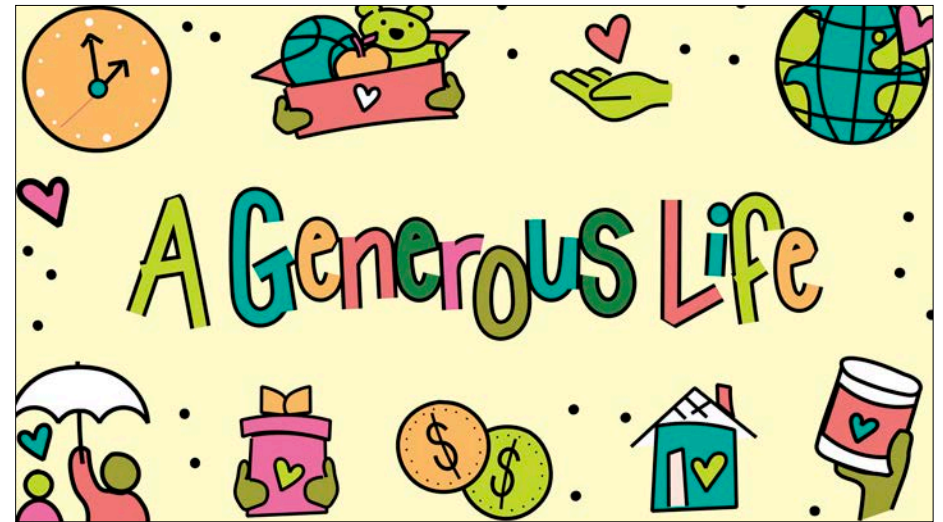


God & Money

The Church has a bad reputation when it comes to money.

- So many bad examples!
- Prey on the vulnerable
- Make faith into a get-rich scheme



A Generous Life

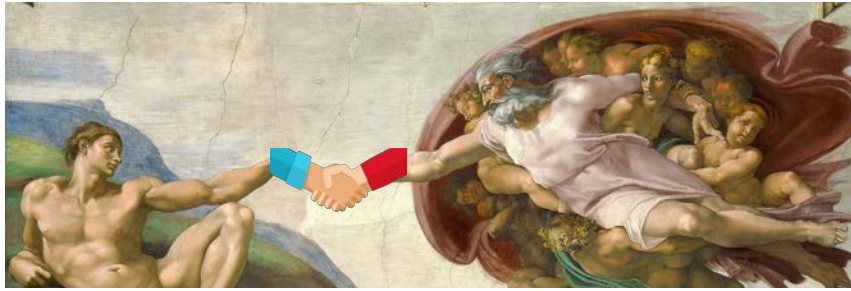
Our God is a generous gift-giving God who wants to shape us into his image to be a gift-giving people who are generous with our time, talents, and treasures.

How do we think of God?

Our images of God may be different than God's reality.

- Not only are we finite (Isa 55:9), we are often unduly influenced by the features of the gods of this world.
- As Christ followers, we believe God is revealed in Jesus Christ, God's Word incarnate as witnessed in the Scriptures.

How do we think of God?



God as Negotiator

How do we think of God?

“On the cross, God is not setting up the terms of a contract that humans need to fulfill in order to get what they want. Neither is God saying on the cross, ‘I died for you, now you’ve got to do what I tell you.’ ... God’s goods are not for sale; you can’t buy them with money or good deeds. God doesn’t make deals. God gives” (Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge*, 26).

How do we think of God?



God as
Santa Claus

How do we think of God?

“What is the difference between a Santa Claus God and a gift-giving God? The bare-bones answer is this: a Santa Claus God gives simply so we can have and enjoy things; the true God gives so we can become joyful givers and not just self-absorbed receivers. God the giver has made us to be givers and obliges us therefore to give” (Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge*, 28).

God Gives in Creation

“The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters” (Ps 24:1-2).

“The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it. The north and the south —you created them” (Ps 89:11-12).

“Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture” (Ps 100:3).

God Gives in Creation

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else” (Acts 17:24-25).

“‘Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?’ For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen” (Romans 11:36).

God Gives in Creation



God Created out of His Triune Love

- “God who needs nothing, loves into existence wholly superfluous creatures in order that he may love and perfect them” (C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 127).
- God’s generosity in creation flows out of his love!

Doubting the Giver

Yet in our fallen condition, we doubt the Giver!

- In the garden, humanity doubted God’s generosity and claimed to know better than God (Gen 3).
- We worship creation instead of the Creator (Rom 1-3).
- We usurp God’s ownership and claim God’s gifts as our own.

God Gives in Redemption

Even though we have rejected, spurned, mistreated God the giver and his gift of creation, God continues to give out of his endless love!

God Gives in Redemption

This is seen especially in the Gift of His Son



- “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8).
- “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

God Gives in Redemption

“But here, the innocent and offended party is the one who gives the gift: God has done nothing wrong, nor have we achieved anything worth celebrating. God looks at his rebellious creation, defined by resistance to him, and what does he do? He gives a gift, *the Gift!*” (Kelly Kapic, *God So Loved, He Gave*, 69).

God Gives in Redemption

At the heart of justification is God’s generous love. As both creator and redeemer, God is a pure giver.

God Gives in Redemption



The Gift of the Holy Spirit

- “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).
- “God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us” (Rom 5:5).

Responding to God’s Gifts

We respond with Faith

- A posture of receptivity, recognizing we are fundamentally receivers and we accept God’s gifts with faith (Eph 2:8-9).



Responding to God’s Gifts

“Faith, like love, cannot be commanded, but only received, experienced, and lived out. Faith opens up a new relationship to God, a relationship human beings can only gratefully receive” (Udo Schnelle, *The Apostle Paul*, 521).

Responding to God’s Gifts

We respond with Gratitude

- Whenever a gift is given, gratitude is appropriate.
- “Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” (2Corinthians 9:15).

The Lord's Table

"Eucharist" from the Greek
ευχαριστω which means "to
give thanks" (1Cor 11:24).

We remember together
God's great gift in Jesus
Christ with gratitude.

