



RADICAL GENEROSITY

Matthew 6.25-34

“Who’s afraid of the big bad wolf?” Well. . .frankly I am. . .and every other big scary thing out there. I am afraid of what is present, the big ugly beasts that comprise my daily life, things like pain, disappointment, sickness, sorrow, suffering, and need. I cower in fear hoping against hope that they don’t blow my house down. To be honest, I am not as afraid of those presently knocking at my door as I am of all of those big hairy beasts out there somewhere, those I haven’t met yet; the needs, disappointments, sicknesses, and sorrows of tomorrow . . .and the next day. . .and the ones after that. These are the beasts that frighten me most, the ones I haven’t met yet. But I am getting ready for them. Every day I buttress my house, seeking and gaining the things that will support me in my time of future trouble, whenever that may come.

Here’s the thing I am beginning to notice. As I seek after the things that I think I will need in the future, I find that my life begins to be oriented more and more around them. I obsess about them. I arrange my schedule around them. Most of all, I protect them with all that I have. Don’t mess with my stuff. And never ever ask me to part with any of it. My future is at stake. At least I think so. Is this really the way life was meant to be lived? Sure. This is the way everyone around us is living, but is it the way life was really meant to be lived? Are we really supposed to spend our lives accumulating stuff? Does our future really depend on the stuff we accumulate? Not according to Jesus. According to Jesus, life is supposed to consist of being with God in what He is doing in the world. As we are with God, we find that He radically reorients the world as we know it. We are not on our own, us against the big bad wolf. God is with us, for us, watching over us every step of the way. We don’t have to buttress our house against future calamities. God is everything we need. And if God is everything I need then I don’t need all this stuff. I can reorient my schedule, and stop worrying about the future. I can enjoy the present, a present filled with the eternal. Most of all I can relax my grip on the things that I have thought made me safe in life, relax my grip to form an open hand, a hand ready to practice radical generosity.

A fellow traveler,

Blake
Spiritual Formation Pastor

My Next Step

We encourage you to consider doing the following as a way of handing off faith to your family. . .

- **Praying for the Kingdom:** Our grip on things, or perhaps their grip on us, is strengthened when we are living for them rather than living for and in God’s Kingdom. Life in the Kingdom of God reorients our lives and the things in them. Living in God’s Kingdom takes a conscious daily choice. We have to intend to live in the Kingdom. One way to choose daily to live in the Kingdom is to pray a form of Matthew 6.33 together as a family each day. At the breakfast table you might consider offering the following prayer, “Father, grant us the grace to seek first Your

Kingdom and Your righteousness.” You might also consider praying the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray in Matthew 6.9-13 as this prayer begins with a request for daily life in God’s Kingdom. If you will begin each day by offering your life for God’s Kingdom, you will find that God will meet you and empower you to live in His Kingdom, which will in turn radically change your approach to all of life, including generosity.

We encourage you to consider taking the following next step on your faith journey. . .

- **Knowing a loving shepherd:** Radical generosity rests upon an intimate relationship with God as our loving shepherd. Only when we come to recognize that God is good and loving, and that He has our present and future needs under control can we begin to release our grasp on material things. We can’t just will ourselves to see God in this way. Our minds are already full of images of God that tell us He is distant and unconcerned about our well-being. We have to fill our mind with new truth, truth found in Scripture about God’s true nature. This week, consider memorizing and meditating upon Psalm 23. In this psalm we encounter God as our good shepherd, One who is with us, even in our darkest and most trying hours. Say this psalm to yourself all through the day. Chew on it and let it soak down into your soul so that you begin to relate to God as a good shepherd. You will find that over time it will relax your grip.