**Generosity – We can be a blessing Machine – 21 April 2024, Rendle Williams (BCT)**

We are shortly going to bring our tithes and offering to the Lord. Before we do, I would like to tell you a story of generosity. I love the drama of a good story.

I love a story where there's ambition for good but there is a serious barrier - there is a dragon in way or there’s a giant who wants to kill you, or you have to take ring on a long dangerous journey and drop it in a volcano. All the good stories tell of a mountain to climb, an impossible task. With no certainty of success. The same is for sport. I love sport for the drama it brings.

**<Insert story>:** Mine: *You never know how it is going to end. You could be a Lions fan or a Roar fan, or a Reds or a Broncos fan. 2 out of 4 won on Saturday*.

All popular or loved stories there’s the eternal struggle of our hero. Writers like to call this the arc of the hero. The story of what God has done for us in the bible follows the same pattern.

In the Easter story, a significant point occurs =where Jesus’ followers had thought all was gone with the death of Jesus, but really the narrative changed dramatically. Death no longer was the end. With the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his promise of eternal life for us, the story of our lives has changed. The story of Christ life, death and resurrection it’s the best story I have ever heard. We can be victorious. We are promised a comforter until we die. So we can live a hero’s story. This is life is not the end, but we know our story with Jesus will end in victory.

I love to hear the stories of this corps*.*

**<Insert story>:** Mine: Interestingly two stories I am happy to share is how the initiatives of our weekly free Community lunch was started. The other is how around 15+ years ago the Street level Mission, started from this people in this Corps. Both are stories of people at our corps seeing a need and doing something about it. They saw a need to help the people in the CBD battle homelessness, isolation and the struggles of life.

These are stories of how our corps became Jesus to the world around us. How did that happen?

I'll tell you. The good folk of this corps were generous. With their tithes and offerings this Corps was able (and still is able) to serve its community. They had to overcome the barriers. But God brought the blessing. This meant that God brought further generous offerings of people who wanted to help.

**<Insert story>:** Mine: People like RM were able up call on others into this generous community to keep Open House running. B&A Redman, I’m told were responsible for the idea of Streetlevel Mission starting. These projects are still running due to the generosity of many in the community of Brisbane. The blessings flow to people each day that Open House and Streetlevel Mission serve and help the people that come to them. I see myself weekly the blessing of Open House. The generous people of BCT have started an engine of blessings.

Each week you and I are asked to bring to God a portion of what he has given. As you bring your financial gift to our church, God wants to bless you. With your financial gifts this corps can continue to be a blessing machine.

Right at the heart of our story is God’s generosity. It is our joy to bless others. In this day & age, generosity is at the heart of the hero's story. As Paul explained in **Act 20:35**

*In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’*

As you are generous in your time, your talent and very soon in your treasure you become part of the church blessing, or god’s blessing. Being generous is right at the heart of our faith. The call of generosity to us comes from Gods generosity to us. God has poured out his generous to us in Jesus. We are called to respond in faith and generosity to others. The key to the blessing is generosity.

That is what we are called to be as a church and as individuals. With generosity we really can become a **blessing machine**. The phrase was actually coined by a vicar of the Church of England in his attempt to describe the Church and all faithful people as ‘blessing machines’.

Be excited as we bring our offering. On the screen is how you can give. If you want to make a transaction right now, the information is on the screen. There is time to do that now or later today. If you wish to use envelope or get a giver number so your offering can be recruited each quarter. Talk to our officers.

Let us pray first.

*“Lord, we thank for your great generosity in you love for us. We seek you. We want to see your glory, we see your blessings to us each day. Help us to be generous in our love for other, just as you have loved us.*

*For each of the people in this room and watching online we ask for your blessings and the seed of generosity to begin new blessings. We come with our offerings, and we ask you to bless them.*

*Amen”.*

Please bring your gifts.

Be a ‘blessing machine’

Philippians chapter 2 – what a chapter. Paul knows the joy of being a ‘blessing machine’. Have you ever thought of yourself as put here in this beautiful place to be God’s blessing?

Paul writes, ‘Do everything readily and cheerfully – no bickering, no second-guessing allowed! Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society. Provide people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God. Carry the light-giving message into the night.’ (Philippians 2:14–16a, The Message)

You and I have the immense privilege of being able to give people, not just money, but ‘the word of life’ (verse 16a). There is no greater joy than seeing people who are spiritually dead come to life through Jesus.

*Lord, help me to do everything without complaining or arguing and to hold out the word of life to someone today. Amen.*

Philippians 2:14–16a (NIV)

**14**Do everything without grumbling or arguing, **15**so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%202%3A14-16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29407a)] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky **16**as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.