

BE RICH TO OTHERS: GIVE!

Scripture used: [John 3:16 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

In this third sermon of the series “Be Rich to Others”, Pastor Hurmon emphasized the love-give connection. Indeed, our Scripture says that God so loved the world that He gave His son. God’s love encompasses everyone - all of mankind - and represents an unconditional, extravagant, and redemptive gift. This is “agape” love, the essence of altruistic Christian love which is not conditional, is not earned, and does not force a particular response. Instead, this kind of love acts in the other person’s best interest, and allows the recipient of love to respond in secure gratitude and authentic relationship. Because giving is a part of God’s DNA of love, then as God’s children, we too should be generous to others and express love to others through our giving.

KEY POINTS

- 1) God’s love for us is generous. To Him, we are precious, irreplaceable and cherished. Jesus has the power and choice to lay down His life for us. God’s love is unconditional. Pastor Hurmon used to tell his kids that as long as they had good grades and treated people right, they could get almost anything they wanted from him. But he came to see this as representative of love conditional on performance and behavior. He now prefers: “I will always be your father, and I will always love you.”
- 2) One aspect of love involves feelings. [Genesis 6:5-6](#) shows God as heartbroken when faced with so much wickedness in the world. But love is far more than feelings. Love is an enduring commitment, dependable in the extreme ([Jeremiah 31:3](#)). It’s also an irreversible decision; Jesus decided to express His love for us on the cross, and that decision is one that can’t be taken back. When we love like God, we not only love with feelings, but we also love with our commitments and our decisions.
- 3) Unconditional love is a reflection of the character of the giver, and is not dependent on the behavior of the recipient. God loves others through our generosity. [Matthew 5:44-45](#) calls us to love our enemies, to pray for those who persecute us, because in this way we model God’s love, which extends kindness of sunshine and rain to both the just and unjust. God’s DNA of love is expressed in how we live. [Proverbs 23:5-7](#) warns us of the dangers of stinginess. [Acts 20:35](#) calls us to work hard so that we not only provide for ourselves, but we also are able to provide for others in need, because giving is a much bigger blessing than receiving. We must strive to be greater instruments of God by stretching our hearts for giving.
- 4) It is a mistake to give in order to be seen ([Matthew 6:2](#)), i.e., trumpeting our gifts versus giving privately. It is wrong to give when pressured ([2 Corinthians 9:7](#)) - one should give cheerfully and thankfully, knowing that we have been so well loved by God. It is misdirected to give to gain advantage or out of selfish greed (with the primary expectation of reaping more). Instead, God teaches us in [Matthew 6:33](#) that if we put the things of God’s kingdom first, that God will have our back and will take care of our business, so we shouldn’t allow fear or worry to keep us from being generous and faithful.
- 5) We give out of love for God and because we want to love like God. We also give because we belong to a church community and we are called to be a part of the community’s mission and vision. If we have been wounded by churches in the past, we can find another avenue of being generous, so our hearts don’t grow hard. But we should be careful that our real issue isn’t stinginess!

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - How have you experienced generosity in your life? Through God? Through others? How have you experienced the opposite of generosity - fear, anxiety, or selfishness when it comes to finances? When it comes down to it, do you want to be more generous? Do you believe it is a better way to live?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider [Matthew 6:33](#). What does it look like for you to seek first God’s kingdom and righteousness? What makes it hard to do so? Do you feel motivated to support the Church and its mission with your giving? Do you believe God’s promise that He will have your back if you are generous?
- 3) **DO** - Remember [2 Corinthians 9:7](#). Make a personal decision to establish a giving plan that reflects your desire to be faithful. Consider the recommendation to set a percentage for your giving, give regularly, and increase progressively. This week’s response: I will practice loving through giving!