



# KINGDOM CULTURE VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

## WEEK TEN

### Teaching Video Transcript | Week 10: Kingdom Culture is Generous

During the Coronavirus millions have jobs have been permanently lost and people are struggling with basic needs. Thankfully we have seen generous people respond to those needs like Pina Andelora and Angelo Picone. (They) "...are street musicians and activists, accustomed to engaging the passers-by on Spaccanapoli, the historic central street in the middle of Naples. Once the coronavirus hit Italy--and hit it hard--it left people like them without a means to contribute to the vibrancy of their city. Or so they thought--until another opportunity unveiled itself.

When Pina and Angelo realized that the lockdown also prevented local soup kitchens from serving the homeless community, they resurrected an old tradition to meet an immediate need. They began preparing meals from their home to give to those in need, but instead of standing on the street, they used an alternative delivery system.

Picone said, "We realized there's the issue of safety and social distance. So, we relied on an old Neapolitan custom — lowering food baskets from our balcony." Included in the baskets was a slogan from a legendary Neapolitan doctor known for treating the poor: "Those who can, put something in, those who can't, help yourself."

The baskets have helped to spur a reawakening of generosity in the city. Not only have citizens contributed food to the baskets, but Pina and Angelo were contacted by a local cheese artisan who wants to ship some of his Parmesan to the couple so they can include it in their food baskets. Angelo hopes this wave of generosity will continue because the need will not abate soon. He says, "This crisis will be long. Artists like us have to pay rent and bills, and many people depend on our assistance." (Sylvia Poggioli, "In Naples, Pandemic 'Solidarity Baskets' Help Feed The Homeless," NPR (4-7-20))

Generosity has always been a hallmark of the Christian faith. Jesus was known for his disarming teaching on generosity. He said in his sermon on the mount: 38 "You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. 40 If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. 41 If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. 42 Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow. (Matthew 5:38-42, NLT) Jesus saw generosity as a way of life. Jesus expected his followers to be generous with their friends and with their enemies. He expected his followers to be generous with their attitudes with their resources and with their service. Conceptually we all can see this and understand it, but it's when we are asked to apply it to our lives that we struggle with Jesus' teaching. This goes against the culture of the world in which we live in, the world that tells us to look out for ourselves and it resonates with us because after all we are naturally self-centered. But Jesus tells us to be selfless and generous and that is the culture of the kingdom of God.

The early church was known for its generosity. Paul actually wrote about how generous the churches in Macedonia to the poor Christians in Jerusalem. Paul saw their generosity as exceptional because they themselves were going through a severe trial. This is what he said:

Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. 2 They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. 3 For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. 4 They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. 5 They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do. (2 Corinthians 8:1-5, NLT)

Paul shares this with the church in Corinth to exhort them to the same generosity. I want you to notice what he said their first act of generosity was. It's a testimony of what it means to live in the culture of the kingdom of God. He says: their first action was to give themselves to the Lord... Christ followers give them-

selves to the Lord first and then they let him direct the rest of their generosity. It's not a financial principle it's a life principle for Christ followers. You may have never thought of it this way but deciding to believe in and to follow Jesus is giving yourselves to the Lord. We learned to love by recognizing how much Jesus loves us and we learn to give by recognizing how much Jesus has given to us.

The Apostle Paul continues to press into this idea of generosity with the church in Corinth and in the next chapter of 2 Corinthians he points out that generosity is a core issue for us all. He says: 6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:6-7, NIV)

Generosity is a heart issue and God loves a cheerful giver. The Bible tells us we are stewards, that s managers of what we've been given while we live on this earth. And at the end of our lives none of these earthly things will accompany us to heaven. So how we use our time, our talent and our treasure should be a reflection of our faith in God. Let me share with you a recent experience of how God has impressed upon me the need to be generous. Years ago I decided that as a Christian I wanted to honor God and be a good witness when I go out to a restaurant and I realized that one of the ways I could do that was by leaving a generous tip, so whenever I went out to eat I would seek to connect with the wait staff and when it was time to pay I would leave a good tip. But that was just when I ate in a restaurant, I almost never tipped when I was getting take out food. When the pandemic hit in March, we didn't eat out for months, but I remember when we ordered take out for the first time, as I sat in my car waiting for the waiter to bring my order to my car with all his PPE on I thought about the folks in the restaurant business who were struggling because business has been cut back so far which means their pay has been drastically cut. So I thought to myself, who cares that it's take out you need to give the staff of this restaurant a good tip and I did. Now I'm telling you this not to pat myself on the back but to share with you that we are all on a faith journey with God and if we are faithful and open our eyes and our hearts he will continue to guide us into deeper discipleship. And it has been my experience that one of the areas where Christians need to grow is in the area of generosity of all we've been blessed with.

The kingdom culture is generous. It's giving. The Apostle Paul quotes Jesus in the book of Acts telling us to remember the words of the Lord Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35, NLT) May we all follow Jesus and be generous givers.

Prayer

*Valley Brook Community Church All Church Study: Video Transcript Week Ten*

