

You Will Be Made Rich!

- ✦ **Bountiful harvest** (vv.10-11)
- ✦ **Overflowing generosity** (v.11-12)

In the Name of Jesus, our bountiful Savior, dear wealthy recipients of God's grace in Christ:

What is it about our Christian faith that conquers so many of life's problems? Last Sunday we celebrated Reformation when God brought to light once again His precious Gospel of full and free forgiveness through Dr. Martin Luther in Wittenberg, Germany, 501 years ago. How could Luther write a kind letter to John Tetzel later in life when Tetzel sold the indulgences that sparked the conflict? And for Andreas Karlstadt who caused all sorts of trouble in Wittenberg, Luther still provided financial support. Could it be the same power that made Paul so eager to win the hearts of hardcore Corinthians criticizing his ministry? Doesn't this still extend the hand of fellowship between members previously at odds?

If the doors of our church advertized: **You Will Be Made Rich!** – and we got a reputation for handing out millions of dollars for free, wouldn't we need new doors for all the crowds bursting through? Everyone wants to make life about money even though it cannot buy happiness and hearses don't have trailers. But God offers us gifts and blessings that money cannot buy. These spiritual blessings empowered another miracle at New Life last spring. We listened to God's Word and said our prayers. God's Word went to work on our hearts and our bank accounts, so that in a matter of weeks we kept our commitments to God for offerings beyond what we promised. Stewardship is not about budgets, not even about money. This is so much more. Here's God's promise: **You Will Be Made Rich!** First in a...

✦ **Bountiful harvest** (vv.10-11)

Spring, 1987, walking up to a home I heard a woman shout, "All right, what are you selling?" "I'm not selling it; I'm giving it away." "What do you have, money?" "No, it's better than that." And you, dear Christian friends, know just what it is, because like the Corinthians, "***you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.***" (2 Corinthians 8:9 NIV84) Many of us were taught as children about the "***overflowing joy***" and "***rich generosity***" of folks like Lydia and the Jailer at Philippi who overcame persecution and hardship, demanding that their pastors let them take part in this collection. It was for Jewish famine victims back in Jerusalem, and these Gentiles wanted to express thanks for the Gospel of grace that God gave us through the Jewish Messiah. Their attitude was, "Don't tell us we're too poor!"

All by itself, that's a **Bountiful harvest** of victorious faith. Statistically it's still true that the greatest givers are not among the world's wealthy. Not just by percentage, but in actual dollars, "poor" Americans give more to charity than the banking rich. What did it take for that hated tax collector Zacchaeus to turn around? Just a visit from Jesus. Zacchaeus' **Bountiful harvest** gave half his possessions to the poor and paid back four times to anyone he cheated. Sweet, sweet Jesus said: "***Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.***" (Luke 19:9-10 NIV84) Z-man passed the test. God had his heart.

Non-farmers discover that little whirly seeders cannot dispense enough seed for grass under oak trees in Shoreview black sand. Broadcast like ancient farmers: "***The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. The one who sows generously will also reap generously.***" (9:6 EHV¹)

¹ EHV ~ *Evangelical Heritage Version* (<http://wartburgproject.org>) © 2017. NPH: 800-662-6022; also Amazon-Kindle.

Fear can cripple our farming unless we trust our generous Creator. He promises through Paul: ***“He who provides seed to the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your seed for sowing, and will increase the harvest of your righteousness.”*** First, God’s grace gives us a right relationship with God by the perfect life and innocent death of God’s own Son who ***came to seek and to save*** all of us when we were ***lost***. Now God uses our hands and feet, lips and lives to help others. But the more you scatter the “seed” of your time, talent and treasure, the more God increases it. Haven’t you noticed? Everybody is busy? Isn’t it amazing that among the busiest people you’ll ever know are New Life members who clean the church, work together on cleanup days, and do countless chores behind the scenes that only God knows, but He truly loves. This is all the grateful response of faith-born love.

But God’s not done raising up a **Bountiful harvest** in your life. He says, ***“You will be made rich in every way so that you may be generous in every way, which produces thanksgiving to God through us.”*** Farmers go into huge debt for their equipment, but all our debts of sin and guilt are paid by God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Farmers will suffer losses from bad weather and even insects, but all our losses are covered by the greatest crop insurance ever, the grace of God. He turns even our apparent failures into victories for us and our loved ones.

It happened to two of our members while still in college before they knew about New Life. She asked her friend the question he always dreaded. He answered that God does not explain why young fathers die and leave behind a widow with children. But because he answered honestly, she was ready to come and hear God’s Word. And the **Bountiful harvest** is going on in both their lives among us today. Keep sowing the seeds. Don’t dig them up to see. God will make them grow. Let God be God so good.

✦ **Overflowing generosity (v.11-12)**

“You will be made rich in every way so that you may be generous in every way, which produces thanksgiving to God through us.”¹²...***The administration of this service is not only making up for what is lacking among the saints, but it is also overflowing in many prayers of thanksgiving to God.”***

Sometimes there is a reason why even Christians feel they’re always ***lacking***. One future pastor and his wife talked to the Seminary President about why they could not pay their bills. “Are you giving God the first and best of your offerings?” he asked them. “We’re studying to give our lives to God for ministry,” they replied. “God wants your hearts first. You can really only show this with your firstfruits gifts to God in thanks for all the food and clothing He already gives you.” Their finances turned around.

Our sinful nature always wants to grab quick and hard and keep whatever he can get. If left to ourselves we’d all be like the Dead Sea – water flowing in, nothing flowing out, and nothing living around us. God wants to keep pouring in even after we’re full. Then there’s plenty for us, and the overflow is for those around us. Remember Psalm 23:5? ***“My cup runneth over.”*** (KJV) David loves to speak of overflowing joy in the Psalms, and this is one of Paul’s favorite concepts in his thirteen God-inspired epistles. **Overflowing** abundance is where God wants us to live because then there will be **Overflowing generosity** for those in need.

What if you don’t pour out for others? God can’t pour more in for you. Finally, the water of life can become stagnant if it just sits there, never shared. But **You Will Be Made Rich! in every way so that you may be generous in every way** which finally produces ***overflowing prayers of thanksgiving to God.***

New Life once lacked the financial support for one pastor plus property, building, etc. Other Christians were **Overflowing** with rich **generosity** to get us up and running as we enjoy today. Now that God has blessed us with two pastors, and an administrative assistant, plus rich gifts for missions and Christian education, we’re pouring out far more for others to hear God’s Word and praise His glorious grace. Will we run short? Not as long as God’s own Son rules all things for the good of the Gospel! Keep pouring out in **Overflowing generosity**, and you’ll see again you cannot outgive the Giver. But it sure is fun to try! Amen.

For *The Preacher’s Apprentice (TPA)* sermon study or copies: m.cordes@comast.net . New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church
You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at www.wels.us/newlife . 180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126

¹⁰ ὁ δὲ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπόρον τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρωσιν χορηγήσει καὶ πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπόρον ὑμῶν καὶ αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν. ¹¹ ἐν παντὶ πλουτιζόμενοι εἰς πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα, ἧτις κατεργάζεται δι' ἡμῶν εὐχαριστίαν τῷ θεῷ. ¹² ὅτι ἡ διακονία τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης οὐ μόνον ἐστὶν προσαναπληροῦσα τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν ἀγίων, ἀλλὰ καὶ περισσεύουσα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν τῷ θεῷ.

God Provides

⁸God is able to make all grace overflow to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will overflow in every good work. ⁹As it is written:

He scattered; he gave to the poor. His righteousness remains forever.^c

¹⁰And he who provides seed to the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your seed for sowing, and will increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be made rich in every way so that you may be generous^d in every way, which produces thanksgiving to God through us.

¹²To be sure, the administration of this service is not only making up for what is lacking among the saints, but it is also overflowing in many prayers of thanksgiving to God. ¹³By proving yourselves in this service, many people are glorifying God, as they see the obedience shown in your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity^e shown in your sharing with them and all people. ¹⁴At the same time as they pray for you, they also express their longing for you, because of the extraordinary measure of God's grace given to you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

^c9 Psalm 112:9

^d11 Or *single-minded*

^e13 Or *single-mindedness*