

Life Group Notes
Sunday 27th February 2011

Title: Dwell Deep – Generosity

The bible has much to say on generosity (Proverbs 11v25, Psalms 112v5, Proverbs 22v9, 1 Timothy 6v18). On Sunday Sean reminded us what the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the Macedonian church.

Read: 2 Corinthians 8v1-9 - Paul has just taken a collection in Macedonia on his way to Corinth and they have been unbelievably generous: "*their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity*", even to the extent that somehow "*they gave beyond their ability*"! Now, rather than questioning their wisdom or rebuking them for recklessness, Paul actually holds them up as an example to follow. The Macedonians had a clear grasp of God's grace & generosity towards them.

God's grace & generosity - The Macedonians would have known God as the 'uncreated creator', yet mankind rebelled and so God's perfect creation was spoiled, tainted & corrupted by sin and rebellion. Bildad Shuhite was right when he referred to Man as a maggot (Job 25v2-6), and yet this is not the full picture of how God see us; David captured this better in Psalm 8. God not only 'set His love upon us' but he also 'sent His Love to be amongst us' in the person of Jesus (John 3v16-17). Those who once were little more than unholy, rebellious maggots, have through their faith in Jesus encountered God's unmerited favour and generosity (Galatians 4v7; Ephesians 1v3, 1v5, 2v10; Colossians 3v3; Romans 8v1&28).

The Macedonian response - The Macedonians seem to have God's grace & generosity burned into their hearts and souls; it shaped them to their core. Presumably they would have had access to the OT and were aware of the elaborate obligations to help the Jews be big hearted and open handed, reflecting their trust in their generous God. This kind of expertise in percentages of tithes and offerings didn't seem to be in the Macedonians thinking. They seem to be pursuing reckless, "beyond their means" giving and meeting the needs of others. They had a carefree concern for their possessions.

Our response - We aren't perfect @ RFC but we do many things well ... let's '*excel in this grace of giving*' (2 Corinthians 9v6-8). Dwelling Deep in Generosity is not so much about giving to RFC as it is about knowing and imitating the very heart of God. Dwelling Deep in Generosity is not so much about stewarding Jesus' money for the benefit of others, as it is living a life of trust and worship to our generous God. Let's chose to be those who 'Dwell Deep' in generosity.

Suggested questions for discussion:

- 1) It may be you have never known a generous heart – ask God for help to trust in the generosity of the Father.
- 2) Have you lost ground & stopped giving/ being generous? Repent of your independent attitude and decide again to follow Jesus on this issue (Acts 20v35).
- 3) Are you losing your joy in generosity & giving? Ask God that you would know again the Macedonian joy of giving in all circumstances.
- 4) Are you doing well in generosity & giving? Ask God that you may excel even further so you may bless many more whilst storing up even more treasure in heaven.