



Luke 6:38

38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.'

Reflection

I love Jesus' imagery in today's verse of Scripture. Have a listen to it now. It's one of joyful abundance. Luke 6:38,

38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.'

We all know the experience don't we? Queuing in that patisserie, our stomach grumbling as we look at the croissants piled high in the display. The ones up the front of the display are a good, generous size. Perfectly formed, golden brown, fresh-from-the-oven-looking flaky, buttery pastry folded over and over again on top of itself – French culinary art at its finest. But then behind those perfect specimens, and within ready access for the person about to serve you, the croissants aren't

so perfectly formed. A little smaller, a bit more knocked-about looking, one or two of them are definitely squashed – could they have been baked earlier in the day? Perhaps they're the last ones from an earlier batch? Surely they're not from yesterday? And so we begin to weigh up in our mind trading off the public embarrassment of pointing at the fattest most perfect croissant at the front of the display and demanding that one, with the private dissatisfaction of walking out of that shop biting down on one of the mangy ones from up the back.

That's why I love Jesus' language in today's verse. We know exactly what he's talking about don't we?

A good measure, pressed down,

shaken together and running over,

Generous abundance. That satisfaction of being on the receiving end of a double-portion – a croissant from right up front with a pain au chocolat thrown in free of charge; unexpected, lavish generosity. To the ancient hearer, having paid with precious coins for their container to be filled with grain so that they can feed their family, we imagine the shock and surprise and then the smile on their face as the shopkeeper fills it past the brim. Then squashes the grain down. Then shakes the vessel so the grain settles and makes room for more. Then he overfills it again, the grain piling so high above the rim that it begins to spill down the edges into clothing of the person laughing and struggling to carry the precariously overfilled container out

of the shop. Generous abundance.

And yet this passage begins with giving, not receiving. Let me read it again,

38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.'

The concept of measure for measure was widespread in the ancient world and referred to fairness. But this is different isn't it? And, at one level, this passage might also be viewed as simply a variant of Jesus' Golden Rule that we looked at last week in Luke 6:31, the rule to end all rules, where Jesus summarises all his ethical

teaching in the words,

31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

But again, this verse is that; but it is also something more.

38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.'

Be unexpectedly and abundantly generous in all you do. In your interactions with your fellow human beings give 'a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over'. Don't be a reluctant

or sparing giver. Don't offer up the bare minimum. Don't be half-hearted or miserly or give a person exactly their due and not a jot more – give them far more than their due for this is the spirit of Christian discipleship. Lavish kindness. Unmerited favour. Grace, in place of just desserts.

Give, and it will be given to you. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap if you are abundantly generous to others and to God. This is Jesus' promise to his followers.

Jesus makes this promise in other, starker language as well – but the results are no less extravagant. Mark 10:29–30

29 ‘Truly I tell you,’ Jesus replied, ‘no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – along with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life.

God will repay lavishly and abundantly (here it says a hundredfold!) those in the Christian community who are generous. While some members of Christian communities give and others do not, true disciples of Jesus give. They give and give and give. When they are wronged or mistreated they don’t judge or condemn they forgive. And of their time and their skills

and their money they give and give and give; cheerfully, sacrificially and regularly for they,

know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for [our] sake he became poor, so that [we] through his poverty might become rich. 2 Cor 8:9

And the testimony of the lives of Christians like these, both the poor and rich in world terms, is one common voice; a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, poured into their laps by our God who is never outdone when it comes to generosity.

Does this mean that giving money to God results in financial blessing for your house-

hold? It can, and often does. But never to people who are generous with a transactional mindset. Generosity isn't a business proposition with God to make you more wealthy. But hearts that are truly generous with no expectation of financial recompense are often, in my experience, blessed financially. I think of Jesus' Parable of the Talents,

‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!’ (Matt 25:21)

But the money means little to these people except for the prospect of them being able to be even more generous, in which they take the deepest joy and delight. And of

course the God's blessings come in many and varied forms: health, peace, long-life, deep and abiding relationships, intimate communion with our Father in heaven, increased faith, wisdom and influence, treasure in heaven, rock-solid hope amidst adversity, as well as material blessings. Yet no matter the ultimate nature of God's blessing, Jesus promises us,

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Think & Pray

Which is a lovely verse to take out with you

and try today. In what contexts can you be unexpectedly and abundantly generous? And when you do, you might be surprised how much satisfaction there is even in the act itself. The ways of God are like that. They're internally affirming. They feel right and are rewards in and off themselves.

See how you go today and take careful note of both how you feel and also of the reactions that you receive. You might be surprised how quickly you feel God returning your generosity in the warmth of the responses from people and also the strange warming of your heart as you are generous like him.

Spend some time praying this morning to God thanking him for the lavish kindness he has shown us in the Lord Jesus. Thank

him for the joy we have in the Holy Spirit – a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and spilling over into the lives of the people around us. Help us do so more and more, in his strength, and let this joyous cycle of abundant giving and receiving, pouring ourselves out and in love and service of each other and being lavishly loved and served in kind, continue on forever!