

God calls us to create Christ the Victor as a center of generosity. HOW? By knowing and joyfully sharing God's Stories of generosity. Paul's letter to the Corinthians helps us to do this. He begins: "*We want you to know,*" Paul wanted the Christian community of faith community in Corinth "to know" the witness and faith practice of their sister Christian churches in Macedonia through their extreme generosity.

Those first-century Christians living in Macedonia were common ordinary people. They focused daily on how to best service Christ. They were very poor, but they shared what they had and gave beyond expectations. They did not let their extreme poverty and numerous challenges stop them from recognizing God's abundant grace in their lives and their singular desire to serve Him. They lived in extreme joy.

Paul contrasts the Macedonian church with the quarreling and jealousy ridden church in Corinth. They focused on themselves and only themselves. Along comes Paul to remind them they need to be more like their sister churches in

Macedonia. He explains - it is not the amount of money but their response to what God has done in their lives and the desire to serve Jesus that is missing in the Corinthians lives.

We too, would like our "wants" – those things we think we need but know we could live without. We do not need the latest new car, video game, newest fashion. Sometimes, being generous is pushed aside to have these "things" that will soon be forgotten as the next "I have to have it thing" emerges. (Melissa and Baby Alive)

Paul challenges the Corinthians and us "to know" God's story – to live God's story in our lives. God wants us to share our stories of generosity but why?

The Apostle Paul is ready with suggestions in his letter to the Corinthians:

1. Encouragement He encouraged the Christian's in Corinth to be generous. His message encourages us be generous

to those we live with, as well as our congregation and the synod.

2. Replicate The Corinthian were to replicate God's generosity found in Macedonia. We, too, are to replicate God's generosity to all we meet.
3. Excel He wanted Corinth to excel in generosity as the Macedonians did. Their generosity was reflected in the faith practice of joyfully sharing their time, talent, and treasure.

*"We want you to know..."* Five words in the Apostle Paul's letter but research and the "science of generosity" tell us being generous brings a multitude of personal benefits. We experience joy as the Macedonians did which can give us a longer and healthier life. We experience less depression, and we have a deeper sense of God's purpose for us.

Talking of money and generosity is uncomfortable. We all have memories of meals ruined because of the money talk. We may have not learned to be generous but taught to hold it all

close as it might be lost to us. Money talk is taboo in our culture and congregations. Yet – here we are in the midst of it.

Ponder this – we wish our loved ones to live, long, joy-filled lives, don't we. Lives filled with the purpose and meaning that comes from knowing the love of God, the presence of the Holy Spirit and following Jesus. Living lives of generosity helps us introduce others to Jesus.

My sisters and brothers, we are made in the image of God! God is a generous God! We are made to be generous too! The good news is we are a blessing to others as we serve God with our grace-filled, generous hearts and hands.

What does that mean for us this God's Work. Our hands. Sunday and for our service in the Victoria community? As we build relationships of trust with each other and those in the community, we are more open to God's movement within those relationships. He leads us to places not imagined and opens our community to resilience in the midst of life's disappointments,

ours and others. This trusting and holy space is where we are able to offer our presence as God's people.

Today, our presence matters in the work we will be doing at Promise Pointe. As we worship, fellowship, and work together God uses us as models of generosity for them to emulate. God will amaze us as He uses our willing hearts and hands to give generously of our time, talent, and treasure just as the Macedonian Church did.