

Theology Tuesday  
Thanksgiving Sunday  
Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9: 6-15

As I sit in my office writing this, I am struggling to find the words which lay heavy on my heart. This year, Thanksgiving will be different for so many of us. We will not be seeing family members in person. Rather, we will be breaking bread with them over Zoom or Face Time. We are saddened by this reality. Yet, I know, that even as I write these words, they come from a point of privilege. My family will still have plenty of food on our table. My family of four will still be able gather and celebrate. My family will still be able to have some sort of Thanksgiving.

But there will be people in our community who can't, who won't be able to do these things. The realization of this goes beyond collecting for Thanksgiving boxes to give to those in need. The realization of this goes beyond wanting to help in some way.

The realization of this brings to light once more how broken our system really is. Our world shifted because of COVID-19. Our world continues to shift because of COVID-19. Images of people standing in lines for food, cars lined up, filled with people who need help....these are things I assumed my generation would never see, that they were images from the Great Depression, caught forever in black and white photos but would never experience in color in the year 2020.

Knowing all this, I find very little comfort in Paul's words this week. His pleas to give, to support come off as a sleazy car salesperson, trying to make a deal. They seem false and hollow. They can certainly be lifted up as an example of what is wrong with the church, only caring for its wants and needs while ignoring the cries for justice, the cries for mercy, the cries for grace which surround it. For me, the saving grace which turns Paul's words from a pitch to an authentic statement of faith comes in verse 14 (Message version), "moved by the extravagance of God in our lives." We can almost hear the prayers and readings of Passover in Paul's words. "It would have been enough", God has time and time again provided, more than we could ever imagine. This is the very foundation of our faith and our understanding of how to be in relationship with one another. As I re-read Paul's words, the words from a hymn come to mind: "We give thee but thy own, whatever the world may need."

Paul understands that we cannot love our God with all our heart, mind and spirit without also loving our neighbors as ourselves. These two commandments cannot be separated "because in the shalom/peace of God, no one can be left out or left behind. To bring them along and to assist them from abundance of what we have is to keep covenant with God."

Cultivating this mindset of abundance changes everything about Paul's words. They introduce a way of being. They become a way for us as people of faith to change the narrative, moving it away from power and scarcity to grace and sustainability. It is a way to worship our God, knowing that our God is steadfast, faithful from generation to generation, and since the beginning of time, it has been enough.

And as you meditate on the question below, please listen to this song: (<https://youtu.be/XO7Dbd9mKvo>)

So my question this week is: How do you cultivate a mindset of abundance?