That video shows exactly the kind of generosity that the passage in Acts is talking about. A community in Christ experiencing great power - and great grace. Or, as we read in Acts, “There was no one in the group who was in need. For those who owned fields or houses would sell them, and bring the money they had received from the sale.”

When the family of Christ gathers together, generosity erupts. It cannot be stopped! Generous living defines and shapes the church in Acts, almost two thousand years ago, and in the video, right here and right now.

This passage teaches us that how we use what we have (not just money, but everything) is fundamentally a spiritual issue. A faith that’s anchored in God is intimately tied to generous living. They go together like a horse and carriage, like piña and colada. One cannot exist without the other. In Acts we read that those who believed lived generously. God had given them so much, they couldn't help but give in return. Or, as one woman says in the video, "I give because I believe it is a way to show my gratitude to God" - even though she belonged to the poorest of the poor...

To be a Christian is to be a part of a generous family; because Jesus Christ himself lived with an extravagant generosity that defined his life, death, and resurrection. God is generous! That is the basic reality of God, the provider of all good gifts. You and I cannot "outgive" God!

If you've ever been to visit a newborn baby and its parents, you're probably familiar with this scenario. You're in the room with other friends and relatives, and everyone is beaming and smiling and cooing at this precious new life. And usually there is someone who will say to the mom or the dad, "He looks just like you". And you look at the baby, and you look at the dad or mom, and you think, “No he doesn’t.” But often, when you look again, you find yourself thinking, "Hmm, maybe he does after all. Yeah, they do look alike..."

There is something special about this family resemblance that tells you that this child belongs to this family. Likewise, all of us have been created in God's image, in God’s likeness, the God Jesus calls "father", dad. And I believe that God is
pleased when there is a family resemblance in us and our dad through what we say and do. And others should see it, too. They should see God's image in us because of what we say and do.

The tough question for all of us of course is, "how?". How do we take on a family resemblance and move into generous living through the giving of ourselves and what we have? Well, do what Jesus did: start with prayer. Get honest with God in careful-listening prayer, and God will provide the guidance you need.

I've seen it happen up close with a good friend of ours who asked herself that same question: "How can I live more generously?". And she prayed and meditated about it, and to her own surprise the answer came to her as she was having lunch in a restaurant in Kakabeka Falls. So many people cannot even afford to pay their own grocery bills, she realized, let alone go out for lunch. So she decided that from that point on, every time she would be eating out, she would set aside the same amount for a charity that fights poverty. Just one example of generosity that started with prayer.

She also realized something else: generous living is not about giving God your leftovers. Give to God first. Or, as Proverbs 3:9 puts it, "Honour God with everything you own; give him the first and the best." The joy of generous living comes through giving the best you have - not what you can spare, not your leftovers.

And that's connected to another basic idea: you give of yourself. Generous living is not about simply writing a check for some cause, and presto you're done. The joy of generous living comes through serving. It's a life style.

Great power and great grace belonged to the first Christ followers because they took care of those in need: the marginalized, the misfits and the losers. That's why it worked so well in that church for India's poorest of the poor we watched in the video. They are those people in need, the marginalized, the misfits and the losers. The gospel is about them and for them. Compared to them we are incredibly rich and wealthy. We never have to worry where our next meal will come from, or how to clothe our children.

We often lament that the church is struggling to survive. The video we saw makes you realize that, yes the church may be struggling here, in the wealthy West - but it sure is blooming and prospering in India and Africa, some of the poorest countries in the world. I think that is telling us something. What I think it is telling us is that affluence can be a hindrance to generosity, a hindrance to live
the way Christ showed us. He knew that when he said, "The first shall be last - and the rich shall be poor". Or, as Mother Teresa once said, "The more we have, the less we can give".

Christ asks us to be transformed by God's love and generosity. To share generously everything we have been given. The poor villagers in the video literally spared the food from their own mouths and, just like the believers in the story from Acts, they brought it to their faith community so it would thrive in the midst of poverty. Life winning out on death, Jesus resurrected! There is so much we can learn from that.

When we're eating out, filling up the gas tank, booking a vacation, buying new clothes, or coming to church... they are all wonderful opportunities to share, truly share what we have. Share God's image that's inside each and every one of us.

So ask God how. Pray about it, sit with it for a while. And experience God's power and grace at work in you - and in this faith community. And you'll be amazed by the transformations that will happen in you, and this church.

Amen.