

**WE DON'T GIVE BECAUSE WE HAVE.  
WE HAVE BECAUSE WE GIVE!  
ACTS 4:32-35**

Ujamaa and Cooperative Economics in the Kingdom

Dr. Darryl T. Canady

Rodman Street  
Church

2.22.26

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**Title: We Have Because We Give: Ujamaa and Cooperative Economics in the Kingdom**

**Sermon Summary:**

This powerful message challenges us to reimagine our relationship with resources and stewardship through the lens of Ujamaa—cooperative economics. Drawing from Acts 4:32-37 the sermon demonstrates how the community of believers shared everything, resulting in no one having need. The pastor argues that true stewardship recognizes God as the ultimate owner of all resources, requires the release and circulation of those resources, and accepts the responsibility that comes with increase. The text reveals a profound truth: 'No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own.' This was a voluntary, Spirit-led understanding that everything we have is on loan from God. The message connects this biblical principle to our African heritage, showing how our ancestors survived impossible circumstances not through individual accumulation but through collective circulation by pooling resources, building institutions, and practicing cooperative economics when systemic barriers existed.

This sermon explores the fourth principle of Kwanzaa, Ujamaa (cooperative economics), through a biblical lens of stewardship and community responsibility. Pastor Canady emphasizes that God's economy operates on circulation rather than accumulation, teaching that believers don't give because they have abundance, but rather they have abundance because they give. When we hold tightly to what we think is ours, we actually limit God's ability to multiply it.

The message challenges the individualistic "mine" mentality of modern culture and calls the church to embrace a communal "ours" approach to resources. The Community of Hope Vision is presented as a modern application of Ujamaa, where giving supports six pillars: spiritual, physical & recreational, educational, social, economic & employment, and health & wellness. The sermon demonstrated that when we release resources into circulation—supporting ministries, scholarships, community initiatives—we participate in God's economy where giving precedes having. The challenge isn't about guilt or obligation; it's about identity transformation. We shift from asking 'How much do I have?' to 'How can what God entrusted to me create impact beyond myself?' This is stewardship baptized in Scripture, where every dollar becomes a brick in building hope, every tithe becomes a tool for transformation, and every offering becomes an opportunity for generational blessing.

## **Chapters**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction to Ujamaa and Cooperative Economics**

We are introduced to Ujamaa, the fourth principle of Kwanzaa, which means cooperative economics, and learn that we don't give because we have, but we have because we give.

## **Chapter 2: Building an Irresistible Church Through Involvement**

We explore what it means to become a church after God's own heart by actively participating in ministry rather than remaining passive visitors.

## **Chapter 3: Recognizing God as the Owner of All**

We must understand that everything we have belongs to God, not to us, and that we are merely stewards managing what He has entrusted to our care.

## **Chapter 4: Releasing Resources Through Circulation**

We learn that God blesses circulation, not accumulation, and that movement of resources precedes multiplication in God's economy.

## **Chapter 5: Receiving the Responsibility of Increase**

We understand that God's increase in our lives is not a trophy but a trust that comes with the responsibility to bless and enlarge others.

### **Key Points:**

- Unity without economics collapses; self-determination without stewardship stalls; collective work without circulation struggles
- Success is not about stacking for yourself but strengthening your circle and future generations
- The early church practiced cooperative economics where no one claimed possessions as their own but shared everything
- Recognize the Owner: Everything belongs to God (Psalm 24:1) - we are stewards, not owners
- Release the Resource: Circulation creates multiplication; seeds cannot multiply in your hand but only in the soil

- Receive the Responsibility: Increase is a trust, not a trophy; "to whom much is given, much is required"
- Historical examples of cooperative economics: Black families pooling money for homes, Black Wall Street in Tulsa, historically black colleges funded by collective giving
- Stewardship is a family affair - children learn generosity by watching parents give
- The church becomes irresistible when members get involved in ministry and service
- The Delano R. Paige Scholarship Fund exemplifies Ujamaa - starting with nothing and growing to nearly half a million dollars to bless generations who never met Pastor Paige
- Movement precedes multiplication in God's economy
- When resources circulate within the church, youth are mentored, families supported, seniors cared for, and opportunities created

### **Scripture Reference:**

- Acts 4:32-35 (primary text): The early church sharing all possessions, no needy persons among them
- Psalm 24:1: "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it"
- Luke 6:38: "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over"
- 2 Corinthians 9:10-11: God supplies seed and increases your store so you can be generous on every occasion
- Luke 12:48: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded"

## **Stories:**

- The pastor's 100-year-old uncle in Detroit who lived in the house his father bought in 1940 by pooling resources when banks wouldn't give loans to Black families
- Black Wall Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma (Greenwood District) where money circulated within the Black community - barbers supported grocers, grocers supported tailors, tailors supported doctors, creating collective prosperity until it was destroyed
- The establishment of LIFE Male Steam Academy through cooperative partnerships, grants, and church support rather than one wealthy donor
- The Delano R. Paige Scholarship Fund that started with no money and grew to nearly half a million dollars through collective giving
- African American ancestors building their own banks, colleges, universities, hospitals, insurance companies, and churches when excluded from white institutions
- The pastor's personal story of visiting his uncle and learning about how previous generations sacrificed to create opportunities
- Civil rights leaders like Jesse Jackson and Shirley Chisholm who paved the way for Barack Obama's presidency by breaking barriers for future generations
- Historical reference to ancestors shining shoes and doing side work to pool money for home ownership

## **Scripture References from the Sermon**

### **Explicitly Mentioned References:**

1. **Acts 4:32** - "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had."
2. **Acts 4:32-34** - Extended passage about the early church sharing possessions and there being no needy persons among them
3. **Acts 4:34-35** - "There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time, those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet."
4. **Psalms 24:1** - "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."
5. **Luke 6:38** - "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap."
6. **2 Corinthians 9:10-11** - "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion."
7. **Luke 12:48** - "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

**Alluded to References:**

8. **1 Corinthians 3:6-7** - Referenced as "Some plant, some water, but God gives the increase"
9. **Matthew 25:21** - Alluded to with "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over the little, and now I'm going to bless you with much."

10. **Matthew 7:23** - Alluded to with "I never knew you. Get the hell out of here" (departure from Christ)
11. **Matthew 9:37** - Referenced as "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few"

### **Relevant Verses for Main Themes:**

#### **Stewardship & Generosity:**

- **Malachi 3:8-10** - Robbing God through tithes and offerings
- **Proverbs 3:9-10** - Honor the Lord with your wealth
- **2 Corinthians 9:6-7** - Cheerful giving and sowing bountifully

#### **Community & Unity:**

- **Hebrews 10:24-25** - Not forsaking the assembly
- **Ephesians 4:11-16** - Body of Christ working together
- **1 Corinthians 12:12-27** - Many parts, one body

#### **Faithfulness & Service:**

- **Matthew 25:14-30** - Parable of the talents
- **1 Peter 4:10** - Using gifts to serve one another
- **Colossians 3:23-24** - Working as unto the Lord

### **QUOTES:**

We don't give because we have. We have because we give.

Success is not just about stacking for yourself. Success is about strengthening your circle.

The reason that you are sitting in a school today, the reason that you can attend church today, the reason that you have a scholarship today, is

because somebody gave before they had access. Somebody sacrificed before it was convenient.

Stewardship is not about the amount. It's about the alignment. It's not about pressure. It's about participation. It's not about guilt. It's about gratitude.

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. The world and all who live in it belong to God. Not 10% of it. Not the spiritual part of it. Not the Sunday part of it. All of it.

When you give to Rodman, you are not paying a bill. You are managing God's mission. You are investing in spiritual formation, educational access, economic opportunity, health and wellness, community connection, and recreational stability.

A seed cannot multiply in your hand. It multiplies in the soil. Money that is stored may feel secure, but money that circulates becomes impactful.

God does not increase to impress you. He increases to involve you. Increase is not proof that you are special. It is proof that God trusts you.

We didn't survive as a people because we had abundance. We survived because we had alignment. We didn't build institutions because we were wealthy. We built them because we were willing.

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## **5-Day Devotional: Living the Principles of Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics in the Kingdom**

### **Day 1: Recognizing God as the Owner**

**Reading:** Psalm 24:1-2; 1 Chronicles 29:10-14

**Devotional:** "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." These words challenge our modern mindset of ownership. We often say "my house," "my car," "my money," but today's reading reminds us that we are merely stewards of God's resources. King David understood this when he said, "Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand." This shift from owner to steward transforms how we view our finances, possessions, and opportunities. When we recognize that God owns it all, we stop protecting and start circulating. We move from fear of loss to faith in God's provision. Today, consider: What am I holding onto that really belongs to God? How would my giving change if I truly believed everything was His?

### **Day 2: The Power of Circulation**

**Reading:** Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

**Devotional:** "Give, and it will be given to you." Notice the order—give first, receive second. God's economy operates on movement, not hoarding. A seed cannot multiply in your hand; it must be planted in soil. Similarly, resources that circulate create impact, while resources that stagnate lose their power. The early church understood this principle. They shared everything they had, and "there were no needy persons among them." This wasn't socialism; it was Spirit-led stewardship. When Black Wall Street thrived, it was because dollars circulated within the community—barbers supported grocers, grocers supported teachers, and the whole community multiplied. Today, ask yourself: Where is God

calling me to release resources? How can I participate in Kingdom circulation rather than personal accumulation?

### **Day 3: Unity Creates Strength**

**Reading:** Acts 4:32-35; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

**Devotional:** "All the believers were one in heart and mind." The power of the early church wasn't in individual wealth but in collective unity. They understood that together they were stronger than divided. Our ancestors knew this truth when they couldn't get bank loans—they pooled their money. When institutions excluded them, they built their own. Unity isn't just about getting along; it's about recognizing that your breakthrough is connected to mine, your blessing impacts my family, and our collective stewardship creates generational wealth. A cord of three strands is not easily broken. When families unite around Kingdom principles, when churches align with God's vision, when communities circulate resources together, multiplication happens. Reflect today: Am I building alone or building together? How can I strengthen my spiritual family through cooperative stewardship?

### **Day 4: Increase Brings Responsibility**

**Reading:** Luke 12:48; Matthew 25:14-30

**Devotional:** "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded." God doesn't increase you to impress you; He increases you to involve you. Every promotion is a trust, every raise is an assignment, every opportunity comes with accountability. The parable of the talents teaches us that God expects return on His investment. He doesn't bless you just so you can upgrade your lifestyle—He blesses you so you can enlarge your impact. When God increases your income, it's a trust to bless others. When He increases your influence, it's a trust to open doors for those behind you. The Delano R. Paige Scholarship Fund started

with nothing but now blesses students who never met Pastor Paige—that's stewardship creating legacy. Today, consider: What has God increased in my life? How am I using that increase to impact others?

### **Day 5: Building an Irresistible Church**

**Reading:** Acts 2:42-47; Matthew 5:14-16

**Devotional:** "The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." The early church was irresistible—not because of marketing strategies but because their love was visible, their unity was tangible, and their stewardship was sacrificial. People were drawn to a community that cared for widows, shared with the needy, and lived out their faith practically. An irresistible church doesn't just preach generosity; it practices circulation. It doesn't just talk about community; it builds systems where blessings flow. When the church becomes a place where the hungry are fed, the broken are healed, the lost are found, and resources circulate to create opportunity, the world takes notice. You are part of building that irresistible witness. Your availability, your stewardship, your service on the wall—it all matters. Today, pray: "Lord, I'm available to you. Use my hands, my resources, my gifts to make your church irresistible to a dying world."

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### **Reflection Questions for the Week:**

1. What mindset shift do I need to make from "owner" to "steward"?
2. Where is God calling me to circulate resources rather than accumulate them?
3. How can I participate more actively in building the community of hope?
4. What responsibility comes with the blessings God has given me?

5. Am I living in a way that makes the church irresistible to my community?

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**Small Group Discussion Guide: "Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics"**

**Opening Prayer (2 minutes)**

Begin with prayer, asking God to open hearts and minds to understand His principles of stewardship and community.

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**Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)**

Question: Share a time when someone in your family or community helped you in a significant way. How did that experience shape your view of sharing and community?

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**Key Scripture References**

- Acts 4:32-35
- Psalm 24:1
- Luke 6:38

- 2 Corinthians 9:10-11
  - Luke 12:48
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### **Core Teaching Summary (5 minutes)**

**Main Theme:** "We don't give because we have. We have because we give."

The Four Principles Leading to Ujamaa:

1. Umoja (Unity) - We are stronger together
  2. Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) - We define ourselves
  3. Ujima (Collective Work & Responsibility) - Every family has a section of the wall
  4. Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics) - We sustain what we build together
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### **Discussion Questions**

Section 1: Recognize the Owner (15-20 minutes)

Scripture Focus: Acts 4:32, Psalm 24:1

1. The sermon states, "No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own." How does this challenge our modern view of ownership and personal property?
2. Pastor Canady said, "You are not the owner. You are the steward." What's the practical difference between these two mindsets in your daily life?

3. **Reflection Question:** What areas of your life are you still treating as "yours" rather than God's? (finances, time, talents, relationships, etc.)
  4. **Historical Connection:** How did our ancestors practice cooperative economics even when they had limited resources? What can we learn from their example?
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## **Section 2: Release the Resource (15-20 minutes)**

**Scripture Focus:** Luke 6:38, Acts 4:34-35

5. The sermon emphasized "circulation creates multiplication." What does this mean practically? Can you share an example from your life or community?
  6. Pastor Canady mentioned Black Wall Street in Tulsa. How did circulation within the community create strength? What stopped that multiplication?
  7. **Challenge Question:** The sermon states, "A seed cannot multiply in your hand. It multiplies in the soil." What are you holding onto that God is asking you to plant?\*
  8. **Family Application:** How can families teach children about circulation vs. accumulation? What practical steps can parents take?
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## **Section 3: Receive the Responsibility (15-20 minutes)**

**Scripture Focus:** 2 Corinthians 9:10-11, Luke 12:48

9. "Increase is not proof that you are special. It is proof that God trusts you." How does this statement change your perspective on blessings and promotions?
10. The sermon asks: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded." What responsibilities come with the blessings you currently have?
11. Church Application: How does the concept of Ujamaa apply to Rodman Street's mission to "bring them in, build them up, grow them up, and send them out"?\*\*
12. Legacy Question: The Delano R. Paige Scholarship Fund will benefit young people who never met Pastor Paige. What are you building that will outlive you?

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### **Key Takeaways (5 minutes)**

Have each person share one key takeaway. Here are some prompts:

- ✓ Ownership Shift: Everything belongs to God; I'm just the manager
- ✓ Circulation Over Accumulation: God blesses movement, not hoarding
- ✓ Responsibility With Increase: More blessings = more opportunity to bless others
- ✓ Community Over Individual: We rise together, not alone
- ✓ Legacy Thinking: Building for generations we'll never meet

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. How does the concept of Ujamaa, cooperative economics, challenge our individualistic culture's emphasis on personal wealth accumulation, and what practical steps can we take to shift from a 'mine' mentality to an 'ours' mentality?
2. The sermon states that success is not just about stacking for yourself but strengthening your circle. How can we mentor and create opportunities for others in our professional and personal spheres to ensure we are not the last, but part of a continuing legacy?
3. Reflecting on Psalm 24:1, if everything belongs to God including our salaries, homes, and opportunities, how should this truth fundamentally change our relationship with money and possessions?
4. The early church in Acts 4 shared everything and had no needy persons among them. What would it look like for modern churches to practice this level of communal stewardship without creating dependency or enabling irresponsibility?
5. How does the principle that we do not give because we have, but we have because we give, challenge conventional financial wisdom about saving and security, and what does biblical stewardship require us to release?
6. The sermon mentions that our ancestors built institutions like banks, colleges, and hospitals through pooled resources. What institutions or systems do we need to build today through cooperative economics to strengthen our communities for future generations?
7. If increase from God is not a trophy but a trust with an assignment, how should we evaluate whether we are

faithfully stewarding the influence, income, and opportunities God has given us?

8. The destruction of Black Wall Street demonstrated how economic circulation creates community strength. Where are we currently spending our resources, and are we intentionally circulating them within communities that need strengthening?
9. How can families practically teach children that stewardship is not optional but obedience, and what behaviors must parents model to pass down a legacy of generosity rather than accumulation?
10. The sermon asks what kind of church God is looking for and describes an irresistible church after God's own heart. What specific actions would make your local church irresistible to a community in need of hope, healing, and transformation?



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