



SERMON NOTES & PERSONAL/GROUP STUDY

Sunday, November 15

THEME

GIVING

PASSAGE

2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-9

OLD TESTAMENT GIVING

- Did you know that there were MULTIPLE GIVING REQUIREMENTS of the Israelites from God -- which ADDED UP TO WELL OVER 10% of a person's income.
 - **The Lord's Tithe** -- this was 10% of EVERYTHING FROM THE LAND that was to be given to the LEVITES (priests) -- it was NOT AN OPTION -- the PURPOSE of this tithe was to ALLOW MINISTRY TO CONTINUE.
 - **Festival Tithe** -- this was an additional 10% given for THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION -- this was put into practice AFTER the Israelites had CONQUERED THE PROMISED LAND -- the PURPOSE was to BUILD RELIGIOUS CELEBRATION & COMMUNITY WITH GOD'S PEOPLE.
 - **Poor Tithe** -- this was 10% every 3 years = 3.3% per year -- the PURPOSE of this tithe was to PROVIDE FOR THE POOR.
- AFTER THE ISRAELITES GAVE THEIR 23.3+% -- then the HEART GIVING -- or GRACE GIVING -- took over -- this was a NON-REQUIRED OFFERING.
 - **Firstfruits Offering** -- was given to God OUT OF THEIR LOVE FOR HIM -- they brought the first fruits -- THE BEST -- of their CROPS and LIVESTOCK to God -- the family did this BEFORE HARVESTING THE FULL CROP -- so THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THEY WOULD ULTIMATELY BRING IN -- they GAVE THEIR BEST TO GOD TRUSTING THAT HE WOULD PROVIDE THE REST -- this was FAITH GIVING.
 - **Freewill Offerings** -- when building the Tabernacle EACH PERSON GAVE AS HIS HEART PROMPTED HIM TO GIVE -- the people gave so much that MOSES HAD TO TELL THEM TO STOP GIVING.

NEW TESTAMENT GIVING

- PAUL IS WRITING TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH about the GENEROSITY OF THE CHURCHES IN MACEDONIA as an EXAMPLE and MOTIVATION to them.
- **Verse 2** -- *“During a severe trial brought about by affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.”*
 - The believers in Macedonia SUFFERED BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH -- but they ENDURED -- they were being SQUEEZED BY THE DIFFICULTIES OF LIFE -- and out of their MOST SEVERE TRIAL -- their ABUNDANT JOY and their EXTREME POVERTY resulted in their RICH & EXTREME GENEROSITY.
 - Even though their MATERIAL WEALTH DETERIORATED TREMENDOUSLY -- they GREW LEAPS & BOUNDS SPIRITUALLY -- this happened because of GOD’S GRACE and HIS FAVOR on them.
- **Verse 3-5a** -- *“I can testify that, according to their ability and even beyond their ability, of their own accord, they begged us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints, and not just as we had hoped.”*
 - This was Paul’s THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY -- he was collecting money from churches TO GIVE TO THE POOR BELIEVERS IN JERUSALEM.
 - The Macedonian’s gave AS MUCH AS THEY WERE ABLE TO GIVE -- and even BEYOND THEIR ABILITY TO GIVE -- they did this on THEIR OWN ACCORD -- they were not forced to give.
 - The poor Macedonians were the ones who actually BEGGED PAUL TO ALLOW THEM TO GIVE MORE to the believers in Jerusalem because they counted it a PRIVILEGE TO GIVE.
- **Verse 5b** -- *“Instead, they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us by God’s will.”*
 - FIRST -- the Macedonians made the choice to SURRENDER EVERYTHING THEY HAD TO GOD -- THEN they decided to GIVE TO THE MINISTRY OF THE POOR.
 - **The point of giving is NOT THE AMOUNT YOU GIVE -- but the REASON & HEART behind what you give.**
 - Did you know that your MONEY & POSSESSIONS can be A SPIRITUAL HANDICAP if we depend on it MORE THAN WE DEPEND ON GOD.
 - **Matthew 6:24** -- *“No one can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”*
 - **Luke 12:15** -- *“He then told them, ‘Watch out and be on guard against all greed, because one’s life is not in the abundance of his possessions.’”*
- **Verse 7** -- *“Now as you excel in everything—in faith, speech, knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love for us—excel also in this act of grace.”*
 - Paul knew the Corinthians would never be all they could be UNTIL THEY LEARNED THE GRACE OF GIVING.

- The Macedonians knew that no matter how much they gave -- that GOD WOULD PROVIDE FOR ALL OF THEIR NEEDS.
- You and I will not reach SPIRITUAL MATURITY without SURRENDERING OUR GIVING TO GOD.
- **Verse 8** -- *“I am not saying this as a command. Rather, by means of the diligence of others, I am testing the genuineness of your love.”*
 - Giving is a NATURAL RESPONSE OF LOVE.
 - Paul DID NOT ORDER the Macedonians to give -- but he encouraged them to PROVE THEIR LOVE for Christ THROUGH THEIR GIVING.
 - If you refuse to give to God -- what is that telling Him about your LOVE FOR HIM?
 - THINK ABOUT THIS -- God can have our MONEY WITHOUT OUR HEARTS -- but HE CAN'T HAVE OUR HEARTS WITHOUT SURRENDERING ALL THAT WE HAVE TO HIM.
 - **Matthew 6:19-21** -- *“Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*
- **Verse 9** -- *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: Though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.”*
 - Though JESUS WAS RICH IN HEAVEN -- HE BECAME POOR FOR YOUR SAKE by STEPPING OUT OF HEAVEN and becoming a HUMAN.
 - WHY DID HE LEAVE HEAVEN TO COME TO EARTH -- because HE LOVES YOU!
 - GOD DID NOT FORCE JESUS TO BECOME HUMAN -- Jesus VOLUNTEERED to do this.
 - **Phil 2:6-8** -- *“Jesus Christ, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. 7 Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, 8 he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross.”*
 - He TOOK ON MANKIND'S DEBT OF SIN and PAID FOR IT WITH HIS LIFE.
 - **THEREFORE** -- is giving back to God too much to ask of you and me?

TODAY'S TAKEAWAY

- Give God your **BEST** and **TRUST HIM** to take care of the **REST.**

APPLICATION

1. Giving begins with you FIRST GIVING YOURSELF TO GOD.
 - a. **Romans 12:1** -- *“Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.”*

- b. **Matthew 6:3-4** -- *“But when you give to the poor, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”*
2. Giving DOES NOT ENHANCE your position with God.
3. Giving BRINGS ABOUT BLESSINGS.
 - a. **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. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”*
 - b. **2 Corinthians 9:6-7** -- *“The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not reluctantly or out of compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver.”*
4. Giving that pleases God is GENEROUS & SACRIFICIAL.
 - a. **Mark 12:41-44** -- *“Sitting across from the temple treasury, he watched how the crowd dropped money into the treasury. Many rich people were putting in large sums. 42 Then a poor widow came and dropped in two tiny coins worth very little. 43 Summoning his disciples, he said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 For they all gave out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had —all she had to live on.”* -- this widow gave generously and sacrificially.
5. Give YOUR FIRST 10% as a starting point.
 - a. **MALACHI 3:10** -- *“Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house. Test me in this way,” says the Lord of Armies. “See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure.”*
6. Give REGULARLY.
7. Start giving NOW -- DON'T WAIT or YOU WILL NEVER DO IT.
 - a. **Acts 20:35** -- *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”*
8. ASK GOD WHAT HE WANTS YOU TO GIVE -- what you give to God should be determined between YOU & GOD -- PRAY ABOUT IT.

May you & I be faithful to give OURSELVES and ALL WE HAVE to God.



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Face the Issue:

This week, Drew taught on the expectation of giving that God has for His people.

A recent study found that ten percent of evangelical Protestants in America give no money at all, and 36 percent give less than 2 percent of their income. Only about 27 percent give 10 percent or more. If all these Christians gave 10 percent of their income, they would add another \$46 billion to the work of ministry around the world.

How do you approach giving? How high a priority is giving in your life? What keeps you from giving more?

When money gets tight, how do you adjust?

Into the Word

Read 1 Chronicles 29:1-20.

The idea of giving a portion of our possessions to God goes back to Genesis 4, the account of Cain and Abel. God rewards Abel for his gift of “fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock,” but He rejects Cain’s offering of “some of the fruits of the soil”. Scripture doesn’t suggest that there is anything inherently wrong with Cain’s gift. The difference between the two is the spirit in which they are presented; while Cain keeps the very best for himself, Abel gives up something that he will really miss.

In building the temple, King David displays the same attitude toward giving that Abel had. He gives from his own private collection of gold and silver—not just a portion, but his entire store—and he encourages others to do the same. When the building is complete, he offers a prayer of thanks that acknowledges the truth most essential to an understanding of giving: everything we have belongs to God.

Why do you think this passage includes so many details about how many pounds of gold or how many tons of silver were used to build the temple?

What does it mean to live as though we are “strangers” passing through this life (v. 15)? What does it mean for how we view our possessions? How does this tie into Drew’s point about what we take with us when we die?

How does David pray about obedience (v. 18)? How can we pursue this kind of obedience?

Apply the Word

Read Genesis 1:26-31.

God has given us a great responsibility by entrusting us with His creation. We know we are to be good stewards of what we have been given but we generally think of stewardship in terms of amounts. How much can we afford to give? How much is needed? But stewardship isn't only about us. Just as we need to consider the amounts we give and how we give, we need to consider where we give and WHY.

Drew pointed out that Paul placed giving on the same level as spiritual gifts—faith, preaching, knowledge, enthusiasm, love—pointing out the role of giving in building up the church.

We often focus on the practice of giving but not the purpose of giving. The Bible identifies multiple purposes of giving: to support professional clergy, to celebrate God's goodness, and to relieve suffering and demonstrate God's love. All of these need to be a part of our giving as we seek to be good stewards not only of the financial blessings we have received but also of the world God has placed us in and left in our care. These two things go hand in hand. By giving to support the ability of the church to help those who have need—spiritually, emotionally, financially, and physically—we love “with actions and in truth” as the Scriptures tell us.

What is God's command in Genesis 1:28? How does this relate to money and giving? In what ways does generous giving further the kingdom of God?

What kingdom priorities have you been called to support financially?