

### A Heart for Giving

Matt. 6:19-21

1 Cor 16:1-3

**Intro:** This is the third in my three part series on **Giving**. Like I said last week I warned you that I was speaking on the giving of our treasures today. As your pastor, however some of you know that I am hesitant to talk about giving money to the Lord.

There are many reasons that a pastor is hesitant to talk about giving:

- The past abuses of other Christian organizations; you know what I mean, *"if you give to us, and God will bless you!"* This kind of thinking puts God in debt to us for our good works and just isn't biblical.
- Satan's lies to the world about money; *"It's your money, you earned it you can do with it what you want!"* That kind of thinking is in the world but unfortunately it has crept in to the church and pastor's know that speaking on giving automatically generates a resistance of thinking in the hearers.
- Pastor's like to be thought of a pious and speaking of giving somehow sound just the opposite They think, *"All that preacher thinks about is getting my money."*
- One more reason many pastors are hesitant to preach on giving; *"There is only so many angles one can take on the topic and most Christians have heard them all before."*

It is this last reason that most preachers shy away from preaching on giving. The problem is that regardless of how many times Christians have heard messages on giving the static's show that, according the A Barna research study back in April 2000, only 8% of born-again Christians give 10% of their income or more.

While 1 out of every 5 verses in the Bible speak of money, Jesus **talked** about money and giving:

- **16 of the 38 parables** were concerned with how to handle money and possessions.
- In the Gospels, **one out of every ten verses** deals with money (288 verses in all).

The Bible offers **500** verses on prayer, less than **500** on faith, and over **2,000** on money.

Therefore, it would be a sin for me to not speak on giving since I am commanded to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

So, as long as the static's show that only 8% of all born again Christians give then I and all pastors need to keep preaching until all born again Christians get it.

In our text today we are going to see just what is at the heart of this thing called giving.

#### [Ready Matt. 6:19-21/Pray/dismiss Jr. Church]

George W. Truitt once said that the purpose of systematic stewardship is to develop "the giver in the Christian life. To give is to live; to withhold is to die."

We stand in church and say, "Let sing praises to our Lord." We shout AMEN. We say, "Take God's Word and read." We shout AMEN. We stand in church and say, "Lets take our offering" and we moan. Why is that?

Tithing is a law to be obeyed but more importantly it is a responsibility to be shouldered; I can tell you that in this church the few carry the bulk of the finical responsibility.

Behind the principle of stewardship is a simple theological truth: God owns everything and we are appointed as stewards or managers to act responsibly with what we are given.

Returning to God a portion of our income is a spiritual decision; it is a matter of devotion. It is a matter of catching a vision of who God is and who we are as a result of what God has done in our lives.

Robert Ross said that "to meet Jesus is to look yourself in the pocketbook, which is the most unmistakable way of looking yourself in the heart."

What is at the heart of giving?

A biblical understanding of heart; Jesus said that **“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”** Matt. 6:19-21

So, what is at the heart of your giving?

**In your heart...**

**1. Who's Money is it? – This addresses the issue of Ownership**

A. "That's pretty obvious, pastor. I own my money"

1) Do you?

2) If you say your money is yours then you need some heart medicine.

3) Your money belongs to the Lord, you are only a steward of that money

4) 1 Cor 4:7 says, **“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”**

B. Everything that we have we have received from God.

C. When we understand that in our hearts, suddenly the focus isn't on our generosity ("I'm giving God 10% of my money") but on God's generosity ("God is graciously letting me use 90%").

D. In Asaph's Psalm of warning to the Israelites for making insincere sacrifices we are told that everything belongs to the Lord, **“For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.”** Psalm 50:10-12

**In Your Heart...**

**2. What is your Reason for Giving? – This addresses the issue of Motive.**

A. It is said **“What you keep, you lose – what you give, you keep.”** (cf. Mt. 10:39, 16:25; Mk 8:35; Lk 9:24; John 12:25)

B. Most of us think, **“The utilities I paid for and the stereo I bought, at least I got something for my money. But the money I gave to the church, it's just gone.”**

1) That's not true. In fact, it's exactly backwards.

2) All the stuff we bought, we'll leave behind when we leave this world; but the money we gave that the Kingdom of God might increase, we will see the dividends of that on the other side.

3) Investment firms say, "Invest for the long term." I couldn't agree more: invest for eternity.

C. **By Giving we Learn to fear God.** According to Deut 14:22-23 God's commands us to tithe so we will, **“...learn to fear the LORD thy God always.”** (V.23b)

D. **By Giving we please God, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”** 2 Cor 9:7

E. **By Giving we learn to trust God,** In Mal 3:10 God says he to bring – **“... all the tithes into the storehouse, ... and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”** Mal 3:10

F. Not that we give to receive but the Bible is very clear in its teaching regarding giving – when we give with the right heart blessings are promised.

1) Mal 3:10-11 tells us

(a) if you give God will **“...open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”**

(b) Verse 11 tells us that not only will he pour out blessing in abundance but he will **“...rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, ...”**

- (1) This means that part of his blessing will be making what you currently have go farther and yield more.
- (2) Do you have investments that are failing? Are you giving?
- 2) 2 Cor 9:6 tells us that God's blessing can be directly proportionate to our giving, **"...He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."**
- 3) Jesus taught the samething, **"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."** Lk 6:38

### **In Your Heart...**

#### **3. What is Your Plan for Giving? – This addresses the Issue of Commitment.**

A. All of us should purpose in our heart to give something to the Lord, **"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; ..."** 2 Cor 9:7

- 1) You've got to commit to an amount to give.
  - (a) If your finances are a mess and you can't commit to a tithe right away, that's ok. But commit to a specific dollar amount each payday that will come off the top.
  - (b) If you only give whatever's left over, you're not going to give Him anything.
- 2) Commit to increasing it.
  - (a) You might decide every six months you're going to increase it \$5. You find the timing and amount that are plausible for you.
  - (b) As your finances straighten up, you can slowly move toward the level of giving you want to be at.

B. Once you have purposed in your heart to give something to the Lord then develop in your heart a biblical plan for giving.

C. 1 Cor 16:1-3 gives us the clearest plan for giving; **It is to...**

- 1) **Be Systematic** V. 2
  - (a) A setting aside
    - (1) Every one – all of us
    - (2) Lay up by him in store – set aside God's first
  - (b) A Measure
    - (1) Before the cross God determined the tithe – Deut 14:22-29 **"...Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed..."**
    - (2) For those of us on this side of the cross we are to give **"...as God hath prospered him..."**
      - (i) For some of us this means that the tithe is all we can do
      - (ii) For others this means we should give above and beyond the tithe.
  - (c) Be Consistent
    - (1) First day of the week – Sunday
    - (2) Biblical giving is a discipline
    - (3) Biblical giving is to be done regularly and without fail:
      - (i) You don't skip it when you are on vacation
      - (ii) You don't stop because the cost of something new you buy tightens the budget.
- 2) **Be Sacrificial** 2 Cor 8:1-3 **"Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; <sup>2</sup>How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. <sup>3</sup>For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;"**
  - (a) **Our Sacrificial giving** comes from an understanding of God's grace V.1
  - (b) **Our Sacrificial giving** comes from going beyond what is expected V. 3a
  - (c) **Our Sacrificial giving** comes from a willing heart V. 3b
    - (1) Lk 21:4 – the Widows mite
    - (2) Mk 14:3 – Mary and the **"...alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious..."**
- 3) **Be Cheerful** 2 Cor 9:6-8 **"...Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."**
  - (a) If we have the right heart then giving cheerfully is easy because we see our giving as just another form of worship the Lord.

- (1) It is worshipful because we recognize the Lord as the source of all our possessions
- (2) It is worshipful because it involves giving of our whole lives (Rom 12:1)
- (b) Cheerful giving produces Joy
- (c) Cheerful giving pleases God – “...**God loveth a cheerful giver.**”

**Conclusion:** On the wall of President Lyndon Johnson's White House office hung a framed letter Sam Houston wrote to Johnson's Great-grandfather Baines more than 100 years ago. Houston's signature makes the letter valuable, but the story behind it is much more significant. Baines had led Sam Houston to Christ. Houston was a changed man--no longer coarse and belligerent but peaceful and content. After his baptism, Houston said that he would like to pay ½ the minister's annual salary. When someone asked him why, his simple response was, "my pocketbook was baptized too." We need to ask ourselves, "have our pocketbooks and wallets been baptized too."