

## A Good Giver

A question as we begin to examine this scripture truth that I will read for us in a moment from Luke chapter 6. The question is, "Are you a giver"? "Am I a giver"? Not just, "Do you give, but are you a giver?" "Do you have a giving heart, a giving spirit"?

In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, the Lord tells us that as believers, we are more than just individuals who believe in Christ, we are actually part of a big family of believers, a family that functions not only as individuals, but more importantly, we function as one body, a body with members that actually need and depend upon each other for most all the matters of daily life.

And here in our scripture passage for today, Jesus tells us how we are to go about meeting some of those needs. Listen to these very simple, but very profound words given to us in Luke chapter 6, verse 38 . . .

<sup>38</sup> Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38)

The question again that I asked a moment ago, "Are you a giver"? "Am I a giver"? Not just, "Do you give, but are you a giver?" "Do you have a giving heart, a giving spirit"?

This year's tax preparation season recently ended in April, and one small way that you can begin to answer this question about whether or not you are a giver can be measured as you take a close look back at your giving record for last year. Did you give at least 10% of your income to the needs of the church? And I don't mean just this church. God's church is widespread, and there are needs everywhere.

The question again, did you give at least 10% of your income to the needs of the "Body of Christ", this church, and perhaps to The Billy Graham Association, or to The Samaritan's Purse, or to missionaries and other similar Christian workers?

God has clever ways of examining and measuring our trust in Him for the provision to meet all the matters and needs of this life, and also of examining and measuring our heart attitude towards other people and their needs. And money truly is one of His more definitive instruments of measure.

Recently, in another message, we talked about this matter of “tithing” and other giving. But God has brought the matter before us again in the words of our scripture passage for today. So, for that reason, I believe that He would have us talk about it again.

In that earlier message I read words of instruction to us regarding “tithing” from the Book of Malachi, chapter 3. Listen again to those words! There God asks the question,

- <sup>8</sup> “Will a man rob God?  
Yet you have robbed Me!  
But you say,  
‘In what way have we robbed You?’  
In tithes and offerings.
- <sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse,  
For you have robbed Me,  
Even this whole nation.
- <sup>10</sup> Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,  
That there may be food in My house,  
And try Me now in this, “says the Lord of hosts,  
If I will not open for you the windows of heaven  
And pour out for you *such* blessing  
That *there will not be room* enough to receive it.” (Malachi 3:8-10)

Here in these words, God used an interesting word to describe our lack of giving a tithe of our income. He used the word “rob”. Why do you suppose that God used that word “rob”? Folks, the answer is a simple one. It's because money, in all of its forms, belongs to God from the very beginning, both before and after we earn it in our salary. And as a test of our faith, He asks that we return at least 10% of it to Him.

And yes, some of the New Testament bible teachers tell us that the requirements regarding tithing were only for the days of the Old Testament law. But folks, I am not of that understanding. And so, as for me and my house, we tithe.

And no, God does not really need our money. He obviously has no need for such things. But in His infinite wisdom and purposes, He has raised up people and organizations that are designed to help meet the needs of other people, both in their Christian faith and in the needs of their daily life.

Churches like ours and other ministry organizations need a certain amount of money each month to pay the bills and to support their ministries. And to provide for those needs, God provokes your and my conscience to know that we need to give some of the money that He provides to us.

And folks, our giving must also extend outside of the Body of Christ on into meeting the needs of even the unbelieving community of people. He tells us in verse 35 of this chapter 6 that "He, God, is also kind to the ungrateful and to the evil".

And as this cycle of provision and giving takes place, God is able to reveal to us our own personal heart attitude towards it all, towards our trust in Him and in our care about other people. And He tells us here to take a careful look at our heart about it all. Isn't God truly amazing?

And note here also in Malachi 3 that God is a sweet and loving Father, one who showers back, great blessings upon His beloved children when we prove faithful in our trust of Him. Verse 10,

<sup>10</sup> Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,  
That there may be food in My house,  
And try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts,  
If I will not open for you the windows of heaven  
And pour out for you *such* blessing  
That *there will not be room enough to receive it.*" (Malachi 3:10)

And then also in our scripture text here in Luke chapter 6, God makes a similar promise.

<sup>38</sup> Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. (Luke 6:38)

God loves us as His dearly beloved children. And He wants to literally shower us with blessings. All we have to do is love Him back and put our trust in Him, and He will pour out blessings upon us that we would never have imagined.

So, my question again is, "Are you a giver"? "Am I a giver"? And not just, "Do you give, but are you a giver?" "Do you have a giving heart, a giving spirit"?

Think with me about this for a moment. Where is your heart attitude right now in this matter of money? Do you regard it all as belonging to you? Because folks, it does not! It never has belonged to you and it never will belong to you. It matters not that you have worked hard and earned your paycheck through some secular means, perhaps your employer. And it matters not if it comes through Social Security, or others. The money still ever and always belongs to the Lord, even as He gives it to us.

And here the Lord is calling out to you and to me to be generous with His money. And if we are, and if we give it out freely, then He will multiply it back to us many times over. He says to us,  
“ . . . try Me now in this and see if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

Folks, you and I need to freely pour it out. And then watch to see what the Lord will do! It all really does work in exactly this way! I know!

The admonishment that's being given to us in these words is that as you and I go from this church today, we should watch ourselves carefully to see what we do with our money. To see if we simply busy ourselves with spending our money on our own needs, perhaps at restaurants, and then on household bills and other family type needs?

And yes, doing those things, eating and paying the household bills is the right thing to do. But God is calling out to us to go a step further and to begin to trust Him in all the matters of our finances, and to actually test Him and see what He will do.

And that test will begin with your dividing out of the “first-fruits” of your income back to Him with the “tithe”? And then He invites us to watch what He does in return. Yes, it might be tough at first, but six months or a year later, we will be able to look back and see how our faith has been rewarded.

Listen carefully to these familiar words about faith given to us in Hebrews 11:6. There we are told that

<sup>6</sup> . . . without faith *it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

And again, here in our scripture passage for today, God promises us,  
<sup>38</sup> Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38)

With all of this being said, may I also take a moment here and give us a warning about these words of our Lord. While these words are the pure and precious truths of God, there are segments of the modern church who misuse these words for personal gain.

Over the recent decades, we have seen the rise of what has become known as "Prosperity Religion", churches and church organizations that probably began their ministries with good intentions, but over time, with the lure of great sums of money corrupting their efforts, those ministry leaders have become personally very wealthy.

It seems that the faithful members of those churches are regularly encouraged to give over and beyond the provision of monies that God truly intends to be returned to Him, with the excess finding its way into the pockets of the corrupted leaders.

And that corruption is not just at the national level. It takes place in many small local churches, the pastors pushing their congregation members to give over and beyond what God would desire for them to give.

And unfortunately, this passage today is one of the favorite passages that is misused to accomplish their efforts. Using these words, the members are told that if they want God to give to them, they must themselves first be willing to give more and more. Listen!

<sup>38</sup> Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38)

Folks, these words truly are the pure and precious truths of God. And we must do this. But we must also be very careful to allow the Holy Spirit to guide our responses.

The Holy Spirit will help us to know if we are being guided wrongly by our church leaders. And we need to humbly listen for the guidance of His still small voice.

With that being said, may we turn our thoughts back to God's real intended purposes regarding our money and the faithfulness with which we give.

God truly will reward the diligence of our faith as we give. And no, God is not using our response to reveal our hearts to Himself. He already knows our hearts. He is instead using our responses to reveal our hearts to ourselves, to our own understanding.

Because folks, it is so very easy for our hearts to become divided. In times of stress, and a shortage of money in the family, there can be difficult trials. And instead of our continuing to love and to trust the Lord with our whole heart, our hearts can quickly become divided. And the Lord wants us to see ourselves as we really are and to quickly turn back to a oneness with Him, trusting Him with our whole heart.

It is in oneness, that God will be blessed and that we will find rest for our troubled souls. In Psalm 119:2, God tells us, "Blessed are they that seek Me with their whole heart".

And in our passage for today, He reassures us with the promise that if we will <sup>38</sup> Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38)

You and I must not let the worries of this life divide our heart and take it captive. We must continually seek the Lord with our whole heart and trust Him for our every provision. It is then that we will be blessed beyond anything we could hope or imagine.

But with all of this being said about the giving of money, you and I must also clearly understand that money is only one of the measurements that God uses to test our faith. True giving and having a "giving spirit" reaches far beyond the boundaries of money.

True giving is an attitude that wells up from deep within our spirit and it spills out into all of the other matters of life, into everything that we have, everything that

we are, everything that we say, and everything that we do. It translates into every part of our personality, every part of our life. "True giving" is the giving out of oneself, giving and giving, and asking nothing in return.

There is a secular song by Allison Krauss that I enjoy very much that speaks these words so very clearly. The song is about a father and his family, a simple man who gave and gave and gave, asking nothing in return. The words of the chorus call out to me as I listen to them, saying

"I want a simple love like that,  
Always giving, never asking back.  
When I'm in my final hours looking back,  
I hope I've had, a simple love like that."

Those words folks are my prayer for myself. "When I'm in my final hours looking back, I hope I've had, a simple love like that, always giving, never asking back."

And so, may I ask you again, are you a giver, never asking anything in return? You ought to be! I ought to be!

And we must always keep in mind that God is the author of all the needs and the circumstances that come to us each day. And for that reason, you and I need always to seek His wisdom as we give.

Simply put, all of our giving, whether it be our money, our time, our emotions our efforts, they are all very valuable and they should be used wisely to assure that we are accomplishing the special purposes God brings to us. If we do that, then God will be faithful to always keep our feet on the right path in all those matters.

One last thought before we close . . . as we give of our money, of our time, of our emotions and of our efforts, the scriptures are clear that our giving should always first begin with our families.

While it may appear that we should sometimes sacrifice our money, our time, and our work with our families for some "greater good" of giving to others, it really does not work out that way. In providing for others, God also always makes provision back to our families.

God's plan will never conflict within itself. We can know that as we reach out beyond our family, to friends, to neighbors, even to remote parts of the world, God will still make wonderful provision for our families.

And men, let me remind each of us that we are the "God ordained" leaders within our families. And in these matters of the giving out of ourselves, our time, our emotions, and our monies, we are also training up our sons and our daughters.

So, my question for us again is, "Are you a giver"? "Am I a giver"? And not just, "Do we give, but are we givers?" "Do you, do I have a giving heart, a giving spirit"?

God wants you and me to have a giving heart and a giving spirit. Why, because it is a real and true measurement of our faith. If we truly trust God for all of our needs, then we will be able to freely give back out all that has been given to us.

Let me close with these words again! True giving is an attitude that wells up from deep within our spirit and it spills out into all of the other matters of life, into everything that we have, everything that we are, everything that we say and everything that we do. It translates into every part of our personality, and every part of our life.

"True giving" is the giving out of ourselves, giving and giving and giving, never asking back. So then,

<sup>38</sup> Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38)

Let's Pray.