

04-20-08

Stewardship – Giving Gladly

How Much Is Enough?

1 Chron. 29:10-18

Lee Iacocca – “No matter how much you have it’s never enough.”

John D. Rockefeller once was asked, “How much will satisfy a man completely?” – or – “How much is enough?” -- He answered, “Just a little bit more than he has!”

Ron Blue – “Stewardship is – the use of God-given resources for the accomplishment of God-given goals.”

We had set aside April as Stewardship Month, but due to circumstances, it is now the third week and we are just getting started. At least we have had a related flyer in the worship folder each week. Stewardship is not just about money, but is about how we consider our time, talent, and treasure in relation to God and the building of His kingdom.

We are going to be looking at the Old Testament today primarily. So find 1 Chron. 29:10 in your Bibles. I will be reading from the NIV that you have in the pews, please follow along. I hope you are reading along with us each week. You should come up to this passage next week some time.

As a backdrop to our text, King David desired to build a house for the Lord God in Jerusalem. God tells him he is not to build it because he is a man of war, but his son will be the one to build the Temple of the Lord. David can plan it all out and gather the supplies needed for its construction. In the previous chapter, David is instructed by the Spirit of God on all the details of the building plan and dimensions as well as the articles within the Temple.

1 Chron. 28:19 – “All this,” David said, “I have in writing from the hand of the LORD upon me, and he gave me understanding in all the detail of the plan.”

God is concerned with details and inspires a full plan for His works. We can learn something from this regarding planning work and planning events. Planning is good; it doesn’t mean we are not led by the Spirit – actually **planning is good stewardship!**

David gave all the resources available to him as King of the nation of Israel for the building of the Temple of God. Then he says in ***1 Chron. 29:3 – “Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple:”*** He then lists tons of materials and valuables he personally gave for this work. Stewardship and giving gladly should be modeled by the leadership. I hope we as pastors and the board members and ministry leaders are models of stewardship for you all to see.

David then calls for all who are “willing” to consecrate themselves to the Lord and be part of this great endeavor. The leaders all then gave willingly to the work of the Lord.

1 Chron. 29:9 – “The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David also rejoiced at the response and prayed this prayer that is our text for today...

1 Chron 29:10-13

10 David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying,

***"Praise be to you, O LORD,
God of our father Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting.***

***11 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power
and the glory and the majesty and the splendor,
for everything in heaven and earth is yours.
Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom;
you are exalted as head over all.***

***12 Wealth and honor come from you;
you are the ruler of all things.
In your hands are strength and power
to exalt and give strength to all.***

***13 Now, our God, we give you thanks,
and praise your glorious name.***

I – Praise God for who He is –

***v. 10 - David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying,
Praise be to you, O LORD, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.***

From everlasting to everlasting He is God. Eternal Father – even father of the patriarch Israel.

- Temple built for God – for his presence to be with his people
- To honor God – Come together and celebrate and fellowship
- Same today – Do not forsake the assembly together to worship
- Support the ministry of God – support the ministers of God – support the temple
- Levites had no land as inheritance – They received from the sacrifice of the people

Billy was given 2 quarters by his grandma on Sunday. One was for the Sunday school offering and the other for an ice cream cone on the way home from church. Billy was flipping both quarters in the air on his way to church when one of them slipped from his hand and fell into the storm drain. Billy immediately bowed his head and said, SORRY GOD your quarter is gone.

We acknowledge God by our giving.

II – Everything is God’s – greatness, power, glory, majesty, splendor, etc.

v. 11 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.

- Everything in Heaven and on Earth are His! EVERYTHING!
- He created it all – He owns it all – It’s NOT yours.
- “Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom...” - Sound familiar – for Thine is the kingdom?
- It’s all His – ALL of it. – Everything you can think of.
- We should have an attitude like David (v. 14-16) ... ***14 "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. 15 We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. 16 O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.***
- Isn’t it so much easier to give away what isn’t yours?
A teenager was sitting in church, and when the collection plate was passed around, he quickly pulled a dollar bill from his pocket and dropped it in. Just then, the person behind him tapped him on his shoulder and handed him a \$20 bill. The boy smiled, placed the \$20 in the plate and passed it on, admiring that the man was being generous. Then the boy felt another tap from behind and heard a whisper: "Son," the man said, "that was your \$20 bill that had fallen out of your pocket."
- The father – allowance to son – the savings (mit) – request - willingness – reward
- I learned a lot about giving from my dad... allowance - giving knowing God will provide – gave him my first car – what a blessing - I learned early on about giving gladly and
- Ps. 75 – Promotion comes from God – God gives you so you can give to God.

III – God Controls Your Prosperity –

v. 12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

- wealth, honor, strength, and power to give strength to others – belongs to God
- God allows us to prosper – for His purposes and reasons
- God gives you the health and strength to work and gain wealth – Why?
- God provides enough for everyone to give back a portion to Him and others
- He created a mechanism where everyone is provided for if we follow His command
- The more you give, the more He provides for you to give. It is really cool.
- People come up with all kinds of justification for why they spend what they do...
A man explained why he bought his new car... “I was faced with the choice of buying a \$32. battery for my old car – OR – buying an \$8000. new car, and they wanted cash for the battery!”

- Years later from our text, they neglected the temple and its maintenance – Joash restored interest in its upkeep – **2 Chron. 24:8-12** ...

8 At the king's command, a chest was made and placed outside, at the gate of the temple of the LORD. 9 A proclamation was then issued in Judah and Jerusalem that they should bring to the LORD the tax that Moses the servant of God had required of Israel in the desert. 10 All the officials and all the people brought their contributions gladly, dropping them into the chest until it was full. 11 Whenever the chest was brought in by the Levites to the king's officials and they saw that there was a large amount of money, the royal secretary and the officer of the chief priest would come and empty the chest and carry it back to its place. They did this regularly and collected a great amount of money. 12 The king and Jehoiada gave it to the men who carried out the work required for the temple of the LORD. They hired masons and carpenters to restore the LORD's temple, and also workers in iron and bronze to repair the temple.

2 Chron. 24:6 – refers to the temple tax instituted by Moses. This was a tax and a means of revenue and had three sources....

- 1 – “money collected in the census”
 - 2 – “money received in personal vows”
 - 3 – “money brought voluntarily to the temple” – into the chest.
- They had enough with extra to spare for all needs to be met.

I am so thankful to the many people who have volunteered their time and talent and treasure to build the church offices next door. These are examples of the type of obedience God is looking for in His church. They will be blessed by God somehow in their lives and families for giving gladly to the LORD. They didn't do this for Pastor Jerry or the church per se – they did this as to the Lord and if their motives are pure, He will bless them.

IV – Be Thankful and Praise God –

v. 13 Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.

- He has allowed you to have what you have (whether you think it's enough or not)
- It is what God has decided is good for you. He loves you and knows what's best.
- Be thankful and praise Him for it all. It's all His anyway.

1 Chron. 29:8,9 –

People gave and gave – They gave money, treasured possessions, gold, silver, and precious stones (jewelry), voluntary work – for the repair and upkeep of the temple. People gave **“willingly”** – **“gladly.”** Everyone rejoiced at the **“willing response”** of their leaders – “because they had given freely and wholeheartedly **to the Lord.**”

- Time, talent, treasure – learn to give willingly to the Lord – He will bless you.

- (v. 17,18) - *17 I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. 18 O LORD, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.*
- God knows your heart – He sees your integrity or lack of it
- You can snow those around you – you can't snow God – He knows you completely
- You want revival? Revival is NOT going to come to us from outside. Revival comes from within. It's going to start with us and our attitude toward God. It is evident in the desire of God's people to give in various ways – joyfully, willingly, genuinely – doing whatever it takes to worship Him and spread the Gospel.

Conclusion:

We have to get to a place where we acknowledge His ownership of everything. We are only giving back to Him what He gave us. We can't lose. He blesses our love for Him and our giving for the work of the Kingdom – consistently and constantly.

2 Cor 9:6-11

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work...

10 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. 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

2 Cor 8:1-3,7

8:1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability...

7 But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

2 Cor. 8:3-5 – They gave to the need. They insisted to be allowed to give. They gave more than financially – and they were blessed by God.

“They gave themselves first to the Lord – then to Paul” (leaders) to do whatever was necessary in the church (where are the workers, etc.?)

“They recognized that dedication to Christ involved dedication to his servants. All was part of God's will” (p. 684 – Zondervan Commentary on the N.T.).

(v. 8:7) – “grace of giving” – stands with love, faith, speech, knowledge, etc. – **its part of the Christian experience.**

We are not giving to a project or even to the “church” (this church) – we are giving to the Lord, for His work and His will to be accomplished – here and beyond here.

“A ‘willing response’ to the needs of the Lord’s worship produced great rejoicing on the part of both the king and the people; and, still today, **‘God loves a cheerful giver.’** (2 Cor. 9:7)” as Paul tells us in the N.T.

David’s words sum it all up... ***“O Lord, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to You.”***
This is our prayer for you! For us!

2 Cor. 9:6-11 – As you learn to be generous and give, God will cause you to be rich so you can be even more generous. You can’t out-give God! The more you give and learn to be genuinely generous by God’s grace, the more you will prosper and have opportunity to give to new needs. (This is not a command, but sound advice from Paul.)

Don’t be like Oscar Wilde who said – “When I was young, I used to think that money was the most important thing in life; now that I am older, I know that it is!”

We are praying for revival here at our church, and the churches of Long Island are praying for the same thing. Let me tell you something ... Revival is NOT going to come from the outside. Revival is going to come from the inside – from within each of us as we draw closer to God personally. One of the first evidences of revival beginning among us is how you approach giving gladly. You can monitor where we stand in our devotion to the Lord by our giving – giving of our time, talents and treasures. It’s all in our attitude. Measure your own attitude. Where do you stand in your giving to the Lord? What are you going to do about it? Follow the examples of Scripture to know what God expects and blesses.

How much is enough? I guess that is between you and God. What level are you at in your personal relationship with God? How does your love for Jesus reflect in your giving of your time, talent, and treasure?