

The Life Challenge

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

Sermon Series: Body Building

Title: Giving

Speaker: Matt Ewert

Text: Deuteronomy 16:16-17; Acts 4:32-5:11

Date: May 20, 2018



WARM-UP

- Which one of the following might best describe your attitude when you hear that a message on money is coming your way?
 - ⇒ Since I know that a sermon on giving is coming this next Sunday, I'll be elsewhere!
 - ⇒ Sorry, I've made up my mind on giving, so you don't try to convince me differently.
 - ⇒ Okay, I can't argue that money is not important, so I will give this sermon an honest shot.
 - ⇒ I need a refresher on why I'm giving at South Abbotsford Church, so I'm open to this message.
 - ⇒ Other?
- If you as the principle donor gave \$50,000 to a worthy project, would you want to have your name on a plaque in recognition of your generosity? Why or why not?

DISCUSSION

Reviewing the Message:

Bruxy Cavey says, "The gospel is always free...but living together in way that allows us to effectively express that message, and to share that message with others...to be on mission...requires dollars."

"First fruits" in contrast to "Tithing"

- Tithing – 10%, straight, clean and simple, right? Before or after tax?
- First fruits: Deuteronomy 16:16-17
 - ⇒ Don't show up before the Lord empty-handed
 - ⇒ Give according to the blessings God has given you

Tests of Generosity:

- Pastor Matt said, "There are indications in the Old Testament that maybe God actually wants us to think about Him who is actually learning things about us in how we handle our moments of testing." See Exodus 32:7-14; Genesis 6:6-8; Genesis 22:12
- **Giving "As you are able":** Genesis 16:1
 - ⇒ Giving with as little as possible if there are no set parameters?
 - ⇒ "God, just tell me how much."

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DISCUSSION

⇒ God tests us:

- * "You know how I (God) have blessed you...how about you decide what worth that has in offering something to me?"
- * Example: How big is a corner on your field? Leviticus 19:9-10
- * No fixed measure for giving. **Our generosity reveals one's heart to God.**

Generosity and Our Corporate Identity. (Text: Acts 4:32- 5:11)

- **The Principle: "Laid at the apostle's feet"**

- * Leaders were given authority to make decisions about the best usage of the funds given.
- * An expression of body life – "We give up control and power in exchange for submission and oneness."
- * Partnering together financially – in a way that builds the body; that thinks more *about the whole* rather than *about the individual*.

Application:

- Is it better to give to the annual budget in order to repair the roof on a church building than it is to give to build a shelter for the homeless?
- How comfortable are you with the idea that God is testing you, looking upon you to give "as you are able?" Would you prefer a God who sets parameters for you instead, like tithing?
- As a church, we are more than a collection of individuals. We are a body, thus we have a corporate identity. Theoretically we work toward the same goals and the same mission. How does this affect our thinking on giving to South Abbotsford Church?
- Are you uneasy or okay with the idea that leaders should be given the responsibility to direct giving to further the mission of the church? Would you prefer to personally direct your funds specifically to a project instead? Why or why not?
- "The 'value' of getting to retain control over the decision making every dollar I give, is actually a *spirit of individualism that we are called to die to.*" Do you wrestle with this kind of corporate thinking on giving? Why?
- How do our three priorities interface with the idea of giving with generosity?
 - 1) Prayer engagement
 - 2) Holy Spirit empowerment
 - 3) Difference-making faith