

“Pastor I want the gospel to spread more. I want more and more people to come to hear what I’ve heard and to believe what I believe. I want them to understand that Jesus died for them. I want them to be able to pray to God and know that he hears them. And I am willing to pray for this work. I’m willing to encourage young people to get involved in being a pastor or teacher.” “That’s great, I’m so glad to hear that. Have you considered giving more in offerings to achieve this too.” “Whoa Pastor! Don’t talk to me about money. That’s not the church’s business.”

Isn’t money God’s business? Some of you might be uncomfortable today with me talking about money. Talk about how God strengthens or renews us. Mention the meaning God gives to our lives. Talk about anything other than money. Why? Is there worry that by talking about money we’ll feel bad for not giving enough? Is there some thought that God doesn’t have say over our money because it’s ours? To give to church means not spending on self. To give to church means not seeing immediate benefits to me. So we resist or give God less than our best.

The people of God were preparing to build the temple of God. It would be costly. So God’s people got a lesson in money in what we read as the first lesson. Today God’s people look for the same lesson for our faith and action. God’s Word teaches you to...

Give your best to God
Saying thanks to God
Rejoicing at God’s best for you

King David wanted to build the temple for God. It was the least he could do for God who had done so much for him. But he wouldn’t, his son Solomon would. The plans were huge, the project costly. Solomon wouldn’t accomplish it alone. David could give resources and money to get things started. David gave God the best. Reflecting on God’s grace in his life, David gave a huge offering. **“In my devotion to the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: 3000 talents of gold and 7000 talents of refined silver.”** That’s 220,000 lbs of gold and 520,000 lbs of refined silver. Today valued approximately \$5.7 billion. David was leading in saying thanks to God.

Do you think King David was showing off? Do you think he should have given anonymously? Understand King David wasn’t showing off. The people benefited from seeing and hearing what their king gave of his own personal wealth. He was showing that he placed his trust in God his Lord. God was still in control. David said thanks to God with his offering. Then he asked his officials to do the same, **“Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the Lord?”** David saw in his officials the same desire to say thanks. And they did. They brought the equivalent of \$10 billion. These officials gave their best and said thanks to God too.

There are times we see money as our security, our future, our comfort. Times we rely on money to give us the feeling of control. We get greedy thinking the money is ours and we can do what we want with it. We control how others see us by the restaurants we go to, the activities our kids are in, or the cars we drive. We say we don’t want our money to be seen, but we like it to show. We even give our offerings to control matters at church. But what control can money give over your health or relationships? Or what about your eternal life, can money help you with that at all? Even if we think it can, money can’t give us control over the things that matter. When greed is rising in us then our hearts aren’t thanking God. We’re thinking we’ve done something, accomplished something, given to God and God’s happy. Now we can go on spending without feeling guilty. It’s greedy and sinful. It’s refusing to thank God, and refusing to give God our best.

Giving is proper, motivation is key. What’s proper motivation? Look around our “temple of God.” There are built in reminders of what God has done. The tile work on the altar that speaks the name of Jesus Christ and reminds us Christ was sacrificed for us. The glasswork in the windows offers a picture of baptism, Lord’s Supper, the Holy Spirit bringing us to faith, things God has done for us. The cross on the wall that’s empty reminding us Christ Jesus did not stay dead but rose for us. We have reasons to thank God. We have reasons to care for this house. That’s why we give. We give our best to God to say thanks.

When saying thanks is your motivation then the amounts will seem less significant. We can give generously not worrying about our bottom line. We can give willingly without holding back. It’s our best we want to give. We’re giving to God who deserves nothing but the best, not the leftovers or what you’re wanting to throw away and get rid of. We can even grow the amounts we’ve given in the past. Stretch yourself to a number that makes you a little uncomfortable when you think of doing it yourself. Remember God is still in control. God still provides. Go ahead give God your best saying thanks to him for his forgiveness in Christ.

When the woman poured her jar of expensive perfume over Jesus and it ended up on the floor the disciples were shocked. It seemed wasteful. All that money could have been used for so many things, things they wanted. They looked at her actions wrong. When David gave huge amounts of money for a building some may have been shocked. All that money for a building seemed like a waste. Couldn’t a much smaller, more efficient building make more sense and that money be used for other things, mostly to give to citizens? They were looking at it wrong. The perfume on Jesus and the gold for the temple were giving to rejoice. Rejoicing at the best that God had already given to them.

The temple wasn't going to last forever. Nothing built by sinful people ever will. On God's instructions they were building it anyway because it would be the place of his presence among them. It wouldn't always be that way. God promised David that through him and his son the line of the Savior would be preserved. Eventually God would come and dwell with his people without a building. Through the Messiah God would be among his people.

The peoples' reaction to their leaders' giving was what we might expect. **"The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly."** Everyone was rejoicing because the money and resources raised were awesome and a great show of faith. Who wouldn't be moved at the sight of people trusting in their God and giving joyfully and willingly? The best was being given to God. But it was God's best for them that they were rejoicing in. It was God's best, the promise of a Savior, the promise of his presence, that caused this explosion in giving. The people rejoiced in God's greatest gift to them, the Messiah.

Fear causes you to close your fist tightly around your money. Deep down that's what it is. You struggle to find joy in giving because of fear you won't have enough left for you. Giving God our best with joy seems impossible if our trust in him is weak. Without trust we worry we won't have more money, more possessions, more of what we need. So we might sinfully hold what we've got. Maybe we give a little, knowing the heat must be paid, the salaries, the lights, now new air conditioners. We figure others can give and do their part. Are you giving grudgingly? Are you giving with tight fists and fear?

Great David's greater son, Jesus gave up all his wealth and gave up his life. He gave up heaven so we might be brought to heaven. His sacrifice became blessing for the whole world, for you and for me. Jesus' blood was shed so that we might receive the opposite of what we deserve. Jesus shed his blood so we might enter God's presence. Connecting to Jesus brings the blessings of God into our lives. God gives with no expectations of getting anything in return. He doesn't want it. He does all this freely for you.

Now it's time for rejoicing at what God can accomplish through you, through your works, through your offerings. When we realize that Jesus took his hands off of his own life for us, we start to take our hands off of our lives and money and rejoice for him. Recognizing Jesus is still in control we can rejoice over our Savior's best for us.

God doesn't want to take your wealth. He doesn't need it. The creator of the universe needs your \$5, \$50, or \$500? God wants your hearts. He wants your best. When you give him freely what the world wants to desperately hold it expresses your love for God. It is giving God your best and saying thanks to him for what he's done for you in Christ. It's rejoicing in the best God gave you in Christ Jesus. Lord, give us hearts that want to give you the best.