

Giving Generously through Grace

This week we are taking a break from our Mark's Gospel Sermon Series. This follows after the realisation that the subject of Giving has not been covered by the Elders on a Sunday despite us having preached over 150 sermons since becoming ChristCentral Church. Money is something Jesus spent 15% of his time talking about. It's not a new subject which has just become relevant to modern-day church. It's not about how the church can get more money, it's not about paying church staff - giving is a biblical principle that goes back to before the law of Moses and is seen throughout the Old and New Testament.

1) Why Do We Give?

Giving is not a membership fee. It is not us paying our dues for the church. Giving is a response of worship. This talk follows closely the talk Dan gave a few weeks ago about The Extravagant Worship of the King. During that message, we saw how Mary valued Jesus, anointing him with perfume worth a year's wage, seeing Him as worth more than everything she had. The work of Jesus on the cross has given us the greatest gift we could ever receive, new life in Christ. Jesus has supplied for our every need (Romans 8:32). Our giving is a response to all that Christ has given us. **Read Exodus 13:11-14** Like the Israelites, we too have been brought out of slavery, Christ's work on the cross has freed us from bondage to sin. We give because we have received so much.

Q. Why do you think we find it uncomfortable when the church talks about money? How do you feel right now?
Q. Name some of the many ways God has given to you? How does our giving reflect our worship of Him?

2) What Do We Give?

Abraham and Jacob gave 10% of their possessions. The Law asks for 10% of 'firstfruits'. But we are not under the Law, we are under Grace. No longer are we required to fulfil the Law and give 10% of our income. Instead, Grace equips us and enables us to give even more generously. Matthew 5 shows how grace compels us to go above and beyond the Law. The law says 'Do Not Murder', Jesus tells us that even if we get angry we're subject to judgement. Grace doesn't mean we can go around murdering people, because we are not under Law, it means we can go over and above the requirements of the Law.

We read in Acts 4:33-35 of the new church seeing their belongings not as their own, but instead all belonging to God. 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 sees a church who were predominantly poor eager to give to the work of the church. Why? Because they understood the Grace of God and want to give everything back to God. We can be tempted to evaluate our giving at the end of the month, knowing what we have spare; giving God our left-overs, the spare change. The Bible challenges us to give first to God. Proverbs 3:9 tells us to give our firstfruits. God calls us to prioritise Him, giving in faith to Him, relying on Him to provide for our needs.

Q. How does grace change our view on the 10% requirement of the law? What does generous giving look like?
Q. How does giving at the start of the month, reflect our priorities, and our reliance on God's provision?

3) Why Do We Give To The Church?

Why should we prioritise the church? There are many great charities doing great work, but the Bible says to give to the church first. We should be generous, giving to charities through the overflow of grace, but that shouldn't get in the way of giving first to the church. Exodus 23:19 *"The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God."* We are to bring our tithe to the House of the Lord, to support the work of the church that God has placed us in. This passage tells us to 'bring' not 'give' our tithe, reflecting that truth that we are simply stewards of our money, entrusted to bring to Him what He has first given to us.

Q. Do you struggle to think of your money as being given to you by God? How can we seek to remind ourselves of this?

4) Why Do I Give To This Church?

If you are a member of ChristCentral Church then you have made a decision to partner with us in the Gospel; you are part of God's plan to build His church in this city. The Elders are responsible before God for how the finances are stewarded and they are committed to prayerfully seeking God on where to spend the money that is given to the church. They will seek to use the money to further our mission to seek to make Christ's name famous in this city, to see the lost come to know Jesus, to equip the church and advance the Gospel. They are committed to being transparent, and are happy to discuss where money is being spent.

PRAYER:

1. Spend some time praying for one another, particularly if there are specific struggles with this topic.
2. Pray for the church, that as we respond together, we will see God doing amazing things with our finances.
3. Pray for the city, that as church practices generosity, it will reach many in this city with the Gospel and many lives will be changed with God getting all the glory.