

Christ Community Covenant Church
Zoe Basilikos! – Trust and Obey/Tithing and Beyond
Pastor Dave Scherrer - February 21, 2016

The Bible has these immutable truths in it, unchanging and absolute. They tend to be a bit somewhat mysterious and perhaps paradoxical. On the first read you say to yourself, "Wait a minute, what does that mean?" Things like "***You have to be last to be first***" from Mark 9 or from Romans 6 we learned that "***We have been set free from sin but made a slave to righteousness***" and maybe the most troubling, we read in Luke 9 "***For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.***" We have to die to truly live! These are tough things to figure out.

But much of what God writes about in the Bible especially as it pertains to how we are to treat one another is pretty straight forward. For instance there is a lot written about finances . . .

There is a lot written about finances!

Investing and where to invest, saving, hard work, giving, debt, charging interest; these are all covered in the Bible and usually not as mysteriously presented as some of the spiritual axioms. I think that Kanye West should have been doing some reading of late:



He recently posted that he is 53 million dollars in debt. He reportedly asked Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook to give him \$1B dollars and he has established a GoFundMe page to get some help from people like us. The good news is the Philadelphia City Police offered him a job with a starting salary of \$47,920; and noted that he could be debt-free by the year 3122!

Let's not get too distracted by this stuff, but the point is, our attachment to money and things on the earthly kingdom tend to get in the way of our investing in the Kingdom of God.

Galatians 6:9

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.
(Stewardship is not only about our money but also our time and our talent and our effort.)

Luke 6:38

Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use in giving it will be measured back to you.
(There is some kind of spiritual law in place by God that blesses us when we bless others.)

Matthew 23:23

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

(Interesting here, Jesus does not throw out the tithe, but he does a heart check as well.)

(Tithing is that disciplined baseline gift to the work of the church designed by God to keep the temple undistracted by finances. That rule of thumb continues to be a good first look for us when it comes to seeking the Lord in our giving. We have been freed from the legalities and ritual of the tithe but not from the practice of disciplined giving. Then there is the idea of first fruits and also the idea of gifts and offerings!)

Matthew 25:29

For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

Generous Giving VS Disciplined Giving VS Sacrificial Giving**Generous Giving is when you learn of a need and you participate happily**

It is easier to give generously if we remember that none of it is really mine to begin with:

- Psalms 24:1 — "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."
- Leviticus 25:23 — "The land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants."
- Haggai 2:8 — "'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the Lord Almighty."
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 — "You are not your own; you were bought at a price."
- Deuteronomy 8:18 — "Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth."
- Romans 11:36a — "For from him and through him and to him are all things ..."

Disciplined Giving is when you make giving a rational and planned part of your life

I believe that if we are to jump from one orbit to the next when it comes to giving, giving has to now become an act of self-discipline and obedience. I give the first of the month of my first fruits because God has asked me to. "***On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper.***" (1 Cor. 16:2)

Sacrificial Giving is when you give as Christ has modeled for us – giving in such a way that it changes your lifestyle

This is what we started talking about last week, where I make a decision to live simply and contentedly so that I will be able to make generous and disciplined gifts that will change my earthly lifestyle and make me more Kingdom centered. Of course the definition many of us have for sacrifice is that it hurts. We have to be careful here – the idea "Give until it hurts" isn't quite what I or the Bible are saying here. If we have our hearts right, our giving, even our extravagant giving that radically changes our lifestyle, doesn't feel like a sacrifice. It isn't about giving and begrudging it, it is about giving joyously as though it were a privilege as an act of worship.

Finally I want to talk to you for a bit about *Spirit-led giving*:

Spirit-Led Giving

Let's turn to our main passage for the morning:

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, 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 having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

¹² For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. ¹³ By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your

contribution for them and for all others, ¹⁴ while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Let's look at two ideas from this passage . . . the first is that each of us must give as God leads us in our minds and hearts.

Each must give as God leads

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

This tells us that first, giving is to be an individual matter that is settled in the privacy of one's own heart. *Each*, Paul says, *should give what he has decided in his heart to give*. *Each* is placed first for emphasis. "How much?" is a question that each person must answer for themselves. And it is never to be determined by how much "the Joneses" are contributing.

Second, giving requires resolve. The text reads *what he has decided* (literally, "as each has purposed"). The verb *proaireomai*, found only here in the New Testament, means "to choose deliberately" or "to make up one's own mind about something." Paul says that giving is to be based on a calculated decision. It is not a matter to be settled lightly or impulsively. The second idea is that you have been blessed to be a blessing, just like Abraham of old!

You are blessed to be a blessing

I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others" (Genesis 12:2 NLT).

2 Corinthians 9:11

You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

Rick Gager Interview

- Tell us a little bit about you and your family . . .
- In the process of raising your kids and doing life, your finances became a hardship. Can you tell us a little bit about that?
- Rick you have said that these financial issues came from some bad financial decision, but these are also spiritual battles as well for us aren't they?
- Where have you and Pam landed on your understanding of giving as it relates to the church?
- If you had one piece of advice for us, maybe one or two Bible verses that have shaped your understanding of these Kingdom issues we all face, what would that be?

Trust and Obey

Malachi 3:8-10

⁸ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰ ***Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.***

The Malachi Challenge – Keys to a new car

Malachi 3:10 Challenge

Name _____

What I currently give to church a month
\$ _____

What my family earns a year \$ _____

That per-month calculation is (annual
divided by 12) \$ _____

My monthly tithe calculates out to be
\$ _____

I want to begin with this Spirit-Led,
sacrificial gift per month \$ _____

I understand that when the Malachi 3:10
Challenge is over on May 29th and I can ask
for any portion of my pledge returned, no
questions asked!

*Lord I believe,
Help me with my unbelief!*

Signed _____

Signed _____

Offering - Trust and Obey

Discussion Questions for Community Groups

Personal giving is a very private subject for many people. Yet the Bible is very forthright in talking about our finances and our giving. Why do you think people find this conversation so troubling?

What do you make of this Bible verse? How can what we don't have be taken away? For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away (Matthew 25:29).

Also read Malachi 3:8-10 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-15. What is the meaning behind these passages?

Dave spoke of generous giving, disciplined giving and sacrificial giving. How would you make a distinction between these ideas? Do you have a problem with any of these lifestyles?

Is God a generous, disciplined and sacrificial giver? How so? Has He been a sacrificial giver in your life? How so besides the cross?

Dave spoke of trusting and obeying and that giving is good practice in the discipline of obeying? Do you agree?

If sacrificial giving means "changing my lifestyle so that another can receive a blessing," what could that look like in your life? What would a sacrifice of time look like? How about a sacrifice of talent?
