

Not If, But When you...Give

1.9.2022

Sermon 2

Matthew 6:1–4 (CSB)

HOW TO GIVE

6 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven. ²So whenever you give to the poor, don’t sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. ³But when you give to the poor, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.’

Introduction. Jesus expected every disciple to pray, forgive, fast, and give.

A. These core behaviors aren’t optional.

1. Jesus signals this by introducing these with the phrase:
2. “When you...” Pray, “When you Give...”
3. **These core behaviors are not options you can tack on if you want to pay a higher price.**
 - a. Fasting, giving, and prayer are not like the option of heated seats or a heated steering wheel when you buy a car.
 - b. My life isn’t simpler easier or more fun when I tack on fasting, or giving, or prayer.
 - c. These behaviors are standard equipment.

4. Christianity devoid of giving, prayer, fasting, or forgiving is a Christianity that Jesus would not recognize.

B. Jesus expected that every disciple would give financially.

1. Jesus describes giving as practicing "your righteousness".
2. Some manuscripts say "charitable giving".
3. A good word for us would be piety.
4. In other words, giving is not evil, for evil is never called "righteousness".
5. Jesus stressed that there is a righteous and correct way to give.

C. The Jews practiced giving to the poor in a very organized manner.

1. This wasn't tithes and offerings, this was money for the poor.
 - a. The Jews were very serious about tithing.
 - b. And there were specific offerings specified throughout the year.
 - c. This kind of giving is beyond all of that.
 - d. Jesus expected God's followers to be generous.
2. In other words, there is to be money for God's house, money to bless others, and money to provide for my needs.
 - a. This all starts with money for God's house and purposes and what we call tithing.
 - b. For some here, this will be merely a review.
 - c. But for others, as you grow a disciple of Jesus, one of the areas you are being called to grow in is in the area of financial stewardship.
 - d. I believe that today's message will encourage us all to handle finances the way God intends for us.

Where do we start with giving?

1. Giving starts with tithing.

A. **Tithing is based upon the principle that everything belongs to God.**

1. All that we have belongs to God.
2. You and I are simply stewards of that.
3. Tithing reminds us that we are not the owners but the stewards of God's resources.
4. Even though I have an incredible amount of freedom in how I steward these resources, they don't belong to me.

B. A "tithe" is 10% and has its roots early in Scripture.

1. Some people, who know just enough to be dangerous, say that tithing has only to do with the law.
2. But the first tithe was given long before the law in the example of Abraham.
 - a. In Genesis 14, Abraham wins a victory in battle.
 - b. Upon his return, a priest named Melchizedek brings Abraham bread and wine.
 - c. Abraham, in return, grants the priest a tithe or 10% of the spoils.
 - d. This took place before the Law was established and before the enacting of the Abrahamic Covenant.
3. Especially during the time of the Tabernacle and Temple, the Israelites were to bring the first and the tenth to God.
 - a. The firstborn of the animals.
 - b. The first 10% of the crops and harvest.
 - c. Cash was not king, and most didn't receive paychecks like we do, but they were to also give 10% of any valuables they received.

4. **What was God's purpose for the Tithe?** The Tithe has always been used to supply the needs of the priests and of the House of God.

C. Today, we practice tithing when we give 10% to God through the local church.

1. Your tithe provides for the maintenance, upkeep of the facilities and provides for the pastor.
2. Simply put: When you and I tithe, we are providing for the ministry of the local church.
3. If you ever ask where this church's money comes from, the answer is easy: It comes from God through you.

D. There are a few guidelines for tithing we must keep in mind.

1. You tithe where you are planted:

- a. If this is your church home, you tithe here.
- b. If you are visiting today and have a home church elsewhere, that is where you should tithe.

2. Second, your tithe is not designated.

- a. In other words, we don't put stipulations on the tithe.
- b. When I give my tithe to the church, I don't give my tithes to missions.
- c. I don't give my tithes to the Salvation Army.
- d. I don't give my tithes with strings attached.
- e. My tithe is not a bargaining tool or a way to keep the pastor in check or to keep him humble.
- f. When we tithe, we are merely returning what God has provided to His house.

3. He asks that each person gives the first 10% to Him through the Church.

- a. Even though I'm an employee of the church, I tithe.
- b. Tithing challenges us to trust God.

E. In the earthly realm, tithing does not make sense.

1. It doesn't make sense that we can do more with 90% of our income than we could with 100%.
2. Yet, 90% under the blessing of God has more buying power than 100% outside the blessing of God.
3. Tithing, in conjunction with a budget, is a powerful stewardship tool in the hands of a believer.

2. Second Level Giving: Offerings are above the tithe.

A. Offerings are where generosity begins.

1. Tithing is responsibility.
2. Offering is opportunity.
3. When you and I give ABOVE our tithe, we begin to walk in generosity.
 - a. Illustration: Say I give you \$100 to give to another church member. I'm not going to see them real soon, but you will so I ask you to pass that money to them.
 - b. But instead of giving that \$100 to Brother or Sister So-So, you give it to the person pan-handling at the intersection.
 - c. What you did not was not generosity, it was stealing.
4. When we wrongfully give our tithes away, even if our intentions are good, we are not being obedient; we are stealing.
5. Tithing is not generosity, it's obligation and responsibility.
6. When we go ABOVE the tithe, we are now being generous.

B. Tithes and offerings are not taxes.

1. The Government doesn't care about my attitude toward giving.

2. In contrast, my attitude in giving of tithes and offerings matters.

3. The Apostle Paul wrote in 2Corinthians 9:7 CSB] Each person should do as he has decided in his heart -- not reluctantly or out of compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver.

C. Our attitude towards stewardship and giving matters.

1. Jesus told us to not give in order to be seen.

2. In a day and age of self-promotion, we are advised to NOT promote all of our generosity.

a. **When I give out of a need to be seen and celebrated, I've already have received my reward.**

b. Jesus has a way of applauding those things we do in secret and condemning the things done openly.

3. Let me encourage you to avoid the trap of self-promotion.

a. I can honestly say that this is not a problem for most of you in this room.

b. Most of you give and serve far above what is required, and you do so without any desire for praise or congratulation.

c. Dare I say, that **when you are willing to give and serve in obscurity, God has a way of blessing far and beyond anything we could have imagined!**

D. Don't bring your own trumpet, Jesus said.

1. **Don't feel the need to always be noticed, recognized, or celebrated for everything you do.**

2. Serve as unto the Lord and WATCH what He does.

3. It's important for all of us to have a Christlike perspective on money.

A. All of us are prone to be out of balance when it comes to money.

1. We are either spenders or savers.
2. And those people usually marry each other.
3. For both groups, the love of money is a trap.
4. The spender wants more money to buy more stuff.
5. The saver wants more money to put back for security.
 - a. Spenders want money for stuff, Savers want money for security.
 - b. Whether you have lots of money or no money, money can be a dangerous trap.

B. If you are a spender, what can you do to be more balanced?

1. **#1. GIVE before you buy.**
 - a. Make a budget that includes tithing, missions, and generosity.
 - b. If you really struggle with buying stuff, make a rule that says for every new thing you buy you have to give away and bless someone.
2. **#2. Go on a spending fast.**
 - a. If you really struggle with buying stuff (not groceries and toilet paper), go on a spending fast.
 - b. For a period of time, say you won't spend any money you don't have to.
 - c. So don't look at the ads in your email.
 - d. Avoid your favorite websites.
 - e. And absolutely don't window shop on Amazon.
3. **#3. Look for ways to give of yourself.**

- a. Serving others is a powerful antidote to the narcissistic spending we engage in.
- b. Often we buy stuff not because we need it, or want it, but we are afraid of missing out.
- c. Could it be possible that self-obsession we engage in is because we aren't serving like we should?

C. If you are saver, what can you do to be more balanced?

#1. Give some money away.

- a. Seriously, **what you can give away cannot control you.**
- b. I am all for financial responsibility.
- c. I support budgeting, and stewardship, and saving for future emergencies and opportunities.
- d. But **too often we start viewing money as our security and not as an opportunity to be a blessing.**

#2. Include blessing in your budget.

- a. Tithe and then endeavor to give above your tithe.
- b. There are people in this room that each year pray about how much they want to give and then make that their goal.
- c. Be creative in giving.
- d. Keep some cash on hand to be an unexpected blessing while you are out and about.

#3. When you feel "nervous" about money, reflect on the times that God has provided.

- a. Through the process of moving, Julie recovered a note I wrote for her on Valentine's Day, 2011.
- b. That note said something to the effect, "Because you have let me chase my dream of pastoring, I know money is tight. So this little note is my valentines gift to you..."

- c. 2011, I didn't have enough money to buy my wife a Valentine's day gift.
- d. In 2022, if my wife does not receive a gift, it will be because I forgot not because I couldn't afford it.
- e. Reflecting on the past reminds us of God's faithfulness in the present.

4. Giving reminds me of what Jesus did.

A. When we give, we remember what God has done for us.

- 1. God so loved the world that He GAVE...
- 2. I give because God has given to me.

B. We cannot walk in step with Jesus if we don't give.

- 1. It is part of God's nature to give good gifts to those who love Him.
- 2. I give because that was the example Christ set for me.
- 3. The Cross is the ultimate expression of giving, love, and generosity.

Close: Jesus expected every believer to give.

A. We are all called to give of our time, talent, and treasure.

- 1. The days before us present numerous opportunities.
- 2. The Lord intends for us to leverage opportunities by utilizing what God has given us.

- a. If you don't use the talents God has given you, who will?
- b. If you don't steward the time God has given you, who will?
- c. If you don't give of the treasure God has given you, who will?

B. Many churches miss Divine Appointments and Opportunities because they refuse to release what they have.

1. As God opens more doors for us, we will all need to be tithing and giving.
2. I don't know the percentage of people who tithe.
 - a. I don't know how much you make.
 - b. I do know that not everyone tithes.
 - c. That's good news.
3. That means there is room for all of us to grow.
 - a. There is room for all of us to grow in obedience in the realm of giving.
 - b. There is room for incredible growth, and there is help to give like never before.

C. A few ways to start growing in giving:

1. Pray for a heart to give.
2. Get on a good budget.
 - a. We have several people who are willing to help you with a budget if you want help. Pam Klotz is a retired banking executive and has agreed to help anyone who would want help.
 - b. Listen to Dave Ramsey to learn about finances and money.
3. Set a goal to tithe.
 - a. If you make \$300 a week, you would tithe \$30 EVERY week.
 - b. Use online giving, make it recurring, do whatever you need to do.

c. God challenged Israel to “Test Him with tithing and see if God doesn’t bless.”

d. Endeavor to tithe for 3 months.

1. Mark down any money in the bank, bills that aren’t paid, and anything like that.

2. Then, in 3 months, look back and see what has happened.

3. God’s blessings shows up in myriad ways.

a. All your bills will be paid, which is unusual.

b. Your car that always breaks down hasn’t broke down.

c. Or your washing machine quits, but guess what! You have the money somehow to buy one and you find one on sale!!!

d. Tithing doesn’t make you bulletproof, it makes you blessed

Prayer: I want to pray that this Church will grow in stewardship and generosity.

May Rivers of Blessing flow through this place.

We have witnessed time and again how God provides.

Let us grow in that.

Prayer for boldness in tithing.

Prayer for boldness in giving and generosity.

“I can’t rebuke the devourer if you aren’t tithing.”

[Malachi 3:10-11 CSB] 10 "Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house. Test me in this way," says the LORD of Armies. "See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure. 11 "I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not ruin the produce of your land and your vine in your field will not fail to produce fruit," says the LORD of Armies.