

The title of this morning's sermon is, *"Principles for Giving – Part II."*

On Sunday morning we've been discussing giving.

As we talked about last week, the New Testament doesn't command giving a tithe, but it does command giving; therefore, the obvious question is...

*"How do we know how much to give?"*

The NT gives us principles to help us decide. We started looking at the principles last week, and we'll continue this morning.

----

Most of the principles are in **2 Cor 8 and 9**, b/c these chapters provide the richest, most detailed teaching on giving in the New Testament.

Let me briefly remind you of the context...

Paul wanted the Corinthians to give to the poor Christians in Jerusalem. He motivated them to do so by telling them about the Macedonians...b/c they're such a great example of giving.

Just as the Macedonians served as a great example to the Corinthians, they serve as a great example to us.

---

Take a look at **2 Cor 8:1** to briefly review...

**2 Cor 8:1a We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.**

Even though the Macedonians were **in a severe test of affliction** while experiencing **extreme poverty**, they still found a way to produce **a wealth of generosity on their part!**

----

The words **their abundance of joy** are convicting. They were even able to give joyfully during this time. **2 Cor 9:7** says **God loves a cheerful giver**, and they were cheerful givers.

----

Take a look at **2 Cor 8:3**...

**2 Cor 8:3a For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and BEYOND THEIR MEANS,**

The words **beyond their means**, mean they gave more than they could afford to give. Because they were so poor they didn't have the money, but they gave anyway.

Considerable sacrifice went into their gift, which brings us to Part VI...

## LESSON 1: THE NEW TESTAMENT COMMANDS GIVING (PART VI) SACRIFICIALLY.

I left the previous parts of Lesson 1 on your bulletin. You can listen to the last two sermons to get this info.

----

If you remember last week's sermon we talked about giving cheerfully. Now we're talking about giving sacrificially, so I know what you're saying...

*"I can't give cheerfully AND sacrificially. These don't go together! Make up your mind! I can give cheerfully, or I can give sacrificially, but I can't do both! The more sacrifice that's involved, the less cheerful I am. The less sacrifice involved, the more cheerful I am."*

We can give cheerfully and sacrificially, and hopefully the rest of the sermon can equip us to do so!

----

Let me share a story from our lives that illustrates a time someone gave to us cheerfully and sacrificially...

Katie and I were part of a home fellowship early in our marriage. A couple joined our group relatively soon after being released from prison. They became Christians in prison or soon after. Even though they hadn't been saved very long, their affection for the Lord was evident. They were thankful that He forgave them for the things they did and that they could begin new lives in Christ.

They had almost nothing because of the decisions they made that led to their imprisonment, and they'd burned bridges with most—if not all—family members and friends. It wouldn't be too much to say that our home fellowship was just about all they had.

They were part of our group when Katie was pregnant w/ Rhea. Everyone was excited about Katie's birth, but perhaps because this couple had no children or grandchildren, they were more excited about Rhea than anyone else. When she was born, they seemed to love her almost as much as we did. They desperately wanted to give her a gift, but as you can guess, they didn't have very much.

They settled on a dirty, smelly blanket, which they put in a torn plastic bag. They were smokers, so we had to put it on the sanitary cycle quite a few times. This is why Rhea still smells a little smoky



While the blanket didn't cost a lot of money, we knew how much it cost them. And this is why it meant a lot to us: they gave it cheerfully and sacrificially.

----

Although the Macedonians were sacrificial in their giving, there's a familiar account in Scripture that serves as the premier teaching on this topic.

Any guesses?

Please turn to **Mark 12:41**.

**Mark 12:41 [Jesus] sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny.**

There's a lot in commentaries about how much – or how little – she put in. I could bore you w/ a discussion of the different coins of the day, but I don't think it's necessary. You get the point that she put in a tiny amount.

**Mark 12:43 And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. 44 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”**

He called over His disciples to talk to them about what He saw, but He wasn't impressed w/ the **large sums** the **rich people** contributed. Instead He drew their attention to the tiny amount the widow gave.

---

Although the ESV doesn't include the word **how** in **verse 41**, most other translations – such as the NASB, Amplified, NKJV, and KJV – say Jesus watched **how** people were putting money in the offering box.

The Greek word for how – which is in the original language – is *pos* (pronounced: pose), and it means, “*In what way.*”

This is important, b/c it reveals one of the main points of the account:

- Jesus wasn't just watching these people give.
- He was watching **HOW** they gave.

----

If you write in your Bible, in **verse 41**, circle the words **watched the people** and write, “*1 Sam 16:7.*”

**1 Sam 16:7b The Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.**

This account is a good example of this verse, b/c Jesus saw something that nobody else saw...

That this woman gave more than everyone else!

----

The obvious question is...

If the **rich people put in large sums** and she **put in** a tiny amount, how could Jesus say she **put in more than all [of them]**?

He isn't talking about the amount of money. He's talking about the amount of sacrifice.

God sees our proportion versus our portion:

- The rich gave large sums, but they also retained large fortunes...which is to say they sacrificed little.
- The widow **put in everything she had, all she had to live on**...which is to say she sacrificed greatly.

So here's what's interesting...

A few dollars from some can be much bigger than hundreds – or thousands – from others.

George Muller said, *“God judges what we give by what we keep.”*

---

If we get an elevated view of this account, it's almost a window into the way the heavenly reward system works.

Here's what I mean...

- The widow had no idea Jesus was watching her.
- There's no indication she heard what He said to the disciples.

Over the last couple months we've discussed that we have the opportunity to store up treasure – or rewards – in heaven. When the widow put the coins in **the offering box**, it's as though they were being deposited in her heavenly account as well.

Considering Jesus said she **put in more than all [the rich people]** tells me the amount she stored up in heaven was much greater than what she put in the box:

- She put in **a penny** on earth, but it was probably a **large sum in heaven...where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.**
- The **rich people put in large sums** on earth, but maybe only pennies in heaven.

----

One of the reasons the amount doesn't mean much to God is He doesn't need the money.

He can accomplish His goals w/ or w/o our help. If we give a little, but God needs a lot, He has no problem getting whatever else He needs:

- **Deut 10:14 The highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also the earth with all that is in it.”**
- **Psa 50:10–11 God said, “Every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. All the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine”**
- **Psa 89:11 The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours.”**
- **Haggai 2:8 [God said], “The silver...and the gold is Mine.”**

When you own everything:

- All the silver and all the gold
- All the cattle and all the birds
- All the heavens and all the earth

You don't sit back saying, *"I sure hope So-and-So will give, or I'm going to be in trouble."*

----

Let me tell you about the one time in Scripture when I think the greatest amount of wealth was given...

David wanted to build a house (or temple) for God. When he was told he couldn't, he did everything he could to help with the temple, stopping short only of doing the actual building. He collected all the needed materials, including the silver and gold.

Listen to what David said to his son, Solomon, who would build the temple...

**1 Chr 22:14 With great pains I have provided for the house of the LORD 7,500,000 pounds of gold, and 75,000,000 talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond weighing, for there is so much of it; timber and stone, too, I have provided.**

When David later thanked God for all that was given, listen to what he said...

**1 Chr 29:14, 16 But who am I, and who are my people,  
That we should be able to offer so willingly as this?  
For ALL THINGS COME FROM YOU,  
And OF YOUR HAND WE HAVE GIVEN YOU.**

**O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name IS FROM YOUR HAND, AND IS ALL YOUR OWN.**

David understood all they were doing was simply giving back to God what already belonged to Him.

----

So here's the question...

If it all belongs to God, why does He want us to give at all?

The answer is two-fold...

1. First, b/c He graciously allows us to participate in the work He's doing.
2. Second, b/c He graciously allows us to give as an act of worship.

Since giving is an act of worship, and since God doesn't need our money, our worship isn't defined by the amount we give. Our worship is defined by the amount we sacrifice.

And this brings us to Lesson 2...

## **LESSON 2: OUR SACRIFICE IS WORSHIP.**

Unfortunately, when we hear the word "worship" we typically think only of singing in church...but we should think of sacrifice!

----

Follow me for a moment...

Under the New Covenant, we tend to think there's no:

- Priesthood
- High priest
- Temple
- Or sacrifices

But...

- There's still a priesthood...the priesthood of all believers: **1 Pet 2:5 You are a holy priesthood**
- There's still a high priest: **Heb 4:14 We have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.**
- There's still a temple: **1 Cor 3:16 and 6:19 Do you not know that you are God's temple?**

And there are still sacrifices!

Just like we become priests and the temple, we're also expected to BECOME sacrifices...

**Rom 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as LIVING SACRIFICES, holy and acceptable to God, which is your SPIRITUAL WORSHIP.**

Under the Old Covenant, God accepted the sacrifices of dead animals as worship:

- With Christ's sacrifice, dead animals are no longer acceptable.
- Instead, He wants us to worship by offering ourselves as living sacrifices.

If we live sacrificially, our very lives are worship.

For our worship to be meaningful it must involve sacrifice – and for our purposes this morning – this includes in the area of giving.

----

You've heard me explain the "Principle of First Mention" before. The idea is the first-time words are used in the Bible they reveal the truest meaning of the word.

The first instance of the word "worship" is in **Gen 22:5** when Abraham was going to sacrifice Isaac...

**Gen 22:5 Abraham said to [the two men who accompanied them], "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there and WORSHIP and come again to you."**

It's hard to believe that Abraham was going to sacrifice Isaac and he referred to it as worship.

But consider this...

If the greater the sacrifice, the greater the worship, this might be the greatest act of worship in the Old Testament.

----

But interestingly, who else did Abraham say would worship?

Isaac!

Why?

Isaac was making a sacrifice too...he was willing to be sacrificed!

- We just read **Rom 12:1** which says **present your bodies as LIVING SACRIFICES**, and Isaac is probably the best picture of this in Scripture.
- So his sacrifice was a tremendous demonstration of worship.

----

Speaking of sacrifices, consider this...

God wanted animal sacrifices in the OT. We would think this means if an animal was alive, it could serve as a sacrifice.

But there was another requirement!

Twenty-four times in Leviticus it says animals must be **without blemish**.

Why is that?

Because animals that are old, sick, dying, and full of blemishes, aren't very good sacrifices...and why's that?

B/c offering them doesn't involve much sacrifice.

----

Someone who understood this was David, the Man After God's Own Heart. I've mentioned this account before, so I'm going to go through it quickly. It's worth repeating, simply b/c it's a perfect illustration of what we're discussing...

God told David to build Him an altar – something traditionally used for sacrifices and worship – on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. Araunah was a generous man who thought highly of David, so when David asked to buy his threshing floor, listen to this...

**2 Sam 24:24** Araunah said, **“Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him. Here are the oxen for the burnt offering and the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood. 23 All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king. May the Lord your God accept you.”**

Araunah offered David everything he needed for the sacrifice, including the threshing floor, animals, and the wood. But if David accepted all this for free it wouldn't be David's sacrifice. It would be Araunah's.

So listen to David's wonderful response...

**2 Sam 24:24** “No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

David said, “I won’t offer anything to the Lord that costs me nothing,” b/c he knew that sacrifice that doesn’t involve any sacrifice isn’t really a sacrifice.

----

Let’s tie this back to giving...

If we give, but it doesn’t involve any sacrifice, it isn’t a sacrifice and it’s not worshipful. It’s like offering animals that are full of blemishes.

Erwin Lutzer said, “*Those who give much without sacrifice are reckoned as having given little.*”

----

So while I can’t say how much you should give, I can say this...

You should feel it. If you can’t, you probably aren’t giving enough.

----

I know this has been a challenging sermon up to this point...

- We considered the Macedonians who can put the most generous givers to shame...
- Then we considered the widow who gave all she had...

It can start to feel like, “*Do we have to give away everything? Is that what God expects?*”

The answer is no.

I want to help you figure out how much to give w/ an illustration, and I want to use this illustration, b/c Paul used this w/ the Corinthians when he helped them figure out how much to give.

If Paul thought this was good enough for the Corinthians, then it’s good enough for us!

Turn back to **2 Cor 8**. Skip down to **verse 15**...

**2 Cor 8:15** As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.”

The words **as it is written** mean Paul’s quoting the OT. This is **Exo 16:18**.

Paul was talking to the Corinthians about giving, and then he quoted this verse...but why?

Turn to **Exo 16** so I can show you. We won’t turn anywhere else this morning.

----

What is this chapter about?



Manna!

So here's the question...

*“Paul was talking about money in 2 Cor 8, so why would he mention manna, which is food? What do these have to do w/ each other?”*

The manna is actually a fascinating and fitting illustration of money...and this brings us to Lesson 3...

### LESSON 3: HANDLE MONEY LIKE MANNA.

Look at **Exo 16:4**...

**Exo 16:4** Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, (here are the important words...) **THAT I MAY TEST THEM, whether they will walk in my law or not.**

When we think of the manna, we primarily think of God providing for the Israelites. That's true, but He was also testing them.

Do you see the relationship to money?

God uses money to provide for us, but He also uses it to test us.

----

So you say, *“What was the test w/ manna?”*

The test was two-fold:

- First, they had to trust God to provide...like we have to trust God to provide.
- Second, they had to handle the manna well...like we have to handle money well.

Let me say it like this...

If we look at what the Israelites were – and weren't – supposed to do w/ manna, it reveals what we are – and aren't – supposed to do w/ money.

----

For example...

They had to get an amount of manna – like we have to get an amount of money – but they had to avoid being greedy...like we have to avoid being greedy.

Look at **verse 16**...

**Exo 16:16 This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat (but it implies no more than that). You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.’”**

You might be asking, “*What is an omer?*”

If you write in your bible, circle the word **omer** and write, “tithe.” It’s not my opinion that an **omer** was a tithe. Look at **verse 36...**

**Exo 16:36 (An omer is the tenth part (or a tithe) of an ephah.)**

----

Look back at **verse 17...**

**Exo 16:17 And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. 18 But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat.**

This is this verse Paul quoted in **2 Cor 8:15**.

Do you see how this tested Israel?

They had to take just enough manna, but not too much. They had to avoid being greedy.

---

Look at **verse 19** to see another way they were tested...

**Exo 16:19 And Moses said to them, “Let no one leave any of it over till the morning.”**

They were supposed to avoid wasting the manna, like we’re supposed to avoid wasting money.

They weren’t to squander any of the manna God gave them...like we’re not to squander any of the money God gives us...on trivial or wasteful purchases.

---

Look at **verse 20...**

**Exo 16:20 But they did not listen to Moses (probably no surprise!). Some left part of it till the morning (b/c they took too much...they couldn’t eat all of it), and (notice this...) IT BRED WORMS AND STANK. And Moses was angry with them.**

If they were greedy – if they took too much instead of leaving it for others – it caused problems.

Do you see the relationship to money?

If we’re greedy – if we take too much – it causes problems for us too.

If you write in your Bible circle the words **bred worms and stank** and write, “*Money I shouldn’t keep.*”

This is what happens when we have more money than we should b/c either:

- We’ve been greedy
- Or we haven’t been generous

It causes problems for us too...it starts to decay and stink.

----

Look at **verse 22**...

**Exo 16:22 On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each** (when previously it had been one). **And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, 23 he said to them, “This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.’”**

The manna also taught them to save. They gathered twice as much on Friday, so they wouldn’t have to get any on Saturday, the Sabbath.

Do you see the balance? They were to save, but not hoard.

If they did things correctly, look what happened...

**Exo 16:24 So they laid it aside till the morning, as Moses commanded them, and IT DID NOT STINK, AND THERE WERE NO WORMS IN IT.**

When they saved manna right way, there were no problems...just like when we save money the right way, there are no problems.

----

If Israel gathered manna the way they should:

- Left the rest for others
- Avoided hoarding and wasting

Everything was fine.

Similarly...

If we gather our manna – or money – the way we should:

- Leave – or give away – the rest for others
- Avoid hoarding and wasting
- Everything will be fine for us too.
- We’ll have what we need, while avoiding stinking, decaying, money problems.

But if we don’t handle money the right way – we’re greedy or wasteful – God will make sure it causes us problems:

- It decays and stinks.
- It harms instead of helps us.

----

If you contrast the Old and New Covenants, notice:

- In the wilderness equality was miraculously enforced. Everyone ended up w/ the same – one omer – regardless of how much they gathered.
- In the church, people are cared for, not b/c equality is miraculously enforced, but b/c giving generously, cheerfully, and sacrificially is encouraged.

----

Last thing for this morning. Look back at **verse 15**...

**Exo 16:15 When the people of Israel saw it (the manna), they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is THE BREAD THAT THE LORD HAS GIVEN YOU TO EAT.**

If you write in your Bible, circle the words **bread that the Lord has given you**, and write, “*Matt 6:11.*”

**Matt 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread...**or our daily manna.

In **verse 4** God told them to **gather a day’s portion every day**:

- We pray for God to do the same for us.
- Each day they trusted God for daily bread, and each day we trust God for daily bread.

----

But if we really want to appreciate this account and understand what God meant...

We have to look beyond the physical to the spiritual. This not my opinion. This is what Jesus said...

**John 6:49 [Israel] ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died...**

How great was the manna, really?

- They ate it, but then they died!
- It gave them a few more years.

In light of eternity, this is nothing.

**John 6:51a I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, HE WILL LIVE FOREVER.”**

Jesus is the true and greater manna:

- He satisfies better than any food or amount of money.
- And only He gives us eternal life.

Let me close with this quote from David Platt...

*“When we truly come to Christ, our thirst is quenched by the fountain of life and our hunger is filled with the bread of heaven. We discover that Jesus is the supreme source of satisfaction, and we want nothing apart from Him. We realize that He is better than all the pleasures, pursuits, and possessions of this world combined. As we trust in Christ, He transforms our tastes in such a way that we begin to love the things of God that we once hated, and we begin to hate the things of this world that we once loved.”*

Let's pray.