**Pastor Tim Klein’s Sermon Notes from 11-12-2023
Giving to the Lord**

Brothers and Sisters, have you ever thought about what God expects from us when it comes to our giving? What are we called to do when it comes to the resources that God has entrusted to us? These resources certainly include our time and our talents and our spiritual gifts, but they also include money. What is God’s view on these things?

In a word, His view is that people are to be stewards. A steward is someone that has been entrusted with certain resources by someone else. A steward is not really the owner of the resources, but a care taker of those resources. A steward is to use those resources for the honor and benefit of the owner, rather than themself.

Truly, God is our Owner. The time and the talents and the spiritual gifts are ultimately His possession. In fact, our very lives are His possession.

But again, one of those gifts that His people are to steward is money.

We know that at worship each week there is an offering that is received. There are also many godly parachurch organizations out there that are all about building God’s Kingdom. Truly, part of being a godly steward is seeking to give a portion of what God entrusts to us to help build His Kingdom on earth in greater measure.

This is an important topic. In fact, it is important enough that as Paul begins to wind down his beautiful letter to the Philippian Church, he takes a moment to speak about their giving.

So as we explore this topic of giving, I invite you to turn with me to Phil. 4:14-20 (NIV):

**14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.** **15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;** **16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.** **17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.** **18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.** **19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.**

**20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

Now you may remember that about 10 years prior to this letter, Paul was there, boots on the ground, in Philippi. It was he and his co-workers with him whom God used as His instruments in helping to plant the church in Philippi. And from its earliest days as a church, the Christians in Philippi wanted to give their support to Paul’s ministry.

**This says a lot about them. They were a grateful church. And a grateful church is a giving church.**

Now as we discussed last week, Paul experienced having plenty as well as being in need. This church from Philippi wanted to help Paul meet his material needs and so they gave to him.

But then, in verse 17, Paul writes something surprising. After commending the generous giving of the Philippians and telling them that they were the only church that was supporting him in the generous way that the Philippians were, Paul then tells them that he didn’t desire the gift.

Why would Paul say this? Why does he say, ‘not that I desire your gifts?’

The answer may sound overly simple, but it was because he truly was not ministering to them in order to receive money from them. Paul was not planting churches and strengthening Christians to make a profit. Instead, he was ministering to them because he loved Jesus and he loved them and he wanted them to know and love Jesus too. Period.

So what did Paul desire? He desired that more be credited to their account. But what does that mean?

In my opinion, Paul is using this metaphor of a ledger, with their generous giving being credited to their account for two reasons. The first reason is that Paul was reminding these generous Philippians that God sees their generosity and He will reward them or bless them or honor them in some way when all things are brought to light at Christ’s return to earth. **In other words, God sees it all and no good deed goes unnoticed by God.**

The second, and I believe more important reason, is that their giving spirit serves as a clear sign of their spiritual health. Paul tells these Christians that their gifts have gone up to the Lord as a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

In other words, God saw their giving as true and powerful expressions of worship unto Him. Truly, one’s giving may be one of the clearest signs or indications of one’s spiritual health. Again, generosity flows out of a grateful heart. And those that are the most grateful are normally the most generous givers.

And it is important to note that generosity is not about a number value. One can be generous with very little and someone else may appear to be very extravagant in their giving, but is actually very stingy.

But here in Philippi, the generosity of these Christians was very clear to Paul. And Paul says in verse 19, **And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.**

In other words, just as they were helping to meet Paul’s needs, Paul wants them to know that it is through Jesus Christ that all of their own needs would be met. We are all needy before God and we all need to look to Him for His help. This is why Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” The poor in spirit recognize their need and dependance on our Triune God for everything.

So, as we move towards considering the larger questions related to giving, what are some things from this passage that we should take with us today?

First, giving is meant to be an expression of worship. Just as we can worship God through singing and dancing, we can also worship God through giving. Paul described the giving of the church in Philippi as an expression of worship.

We need to remember that everything that we do is to be an expression of worship to the Lord. And this includes our giving. So whether our giving is to CG or to a parachurch organization, it is to be an expression of sincere worship to the Lord.

And second, Christians are to be givers even if other Christians and other churches around them may not be. Paul commended their giving as good and important, even though other churches were not as giving and generous as their church was. So likewise, we are not to worry about what others may be giving, but instead just be expected to bless and honor God by giving generously.

Now, before we close, I think that it would be fitting to pull back a bit and simply consider the topic of giving itself according to the Bible. Considering this passage and others, what goes God expect from His people when it comes to giving?

First, God is looking for cheerful givers!

# 2 Corinthians 9:7 New International Version (NIV)

**7** **Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**

Our giving is not meant to be out of a sense of obligation or pressure, but as a response from a grateful heart. Again, generosity flows out from a grateful heart.

It is better not to give than to give reluctantly or under compulsion.

In other words, God doesn’t want us to give because we fear that God will pounce on us if we do not.

Another biblical passage related to giving is Malachi 3:10.

# Malachi 3:10 New International Version (NIV)

**10** **Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.**

A tithe is a tenth. The people of Israel were to give a tithe on their offerings to God. It was one way that they would be declaring the Lord as their God and King. In certain nations there was the King’s tithe. In other words, the King was to receive this 10% as an expression of allegiance and devotion for those that are under the King’s rule and care.

Now as Christians, we are not living under the old Mosaic covenant. Instead, we live under the new covenant and I do not believe there is anywhere in the new covenant that we are commanded to tithe.

Nevertheless, as 2 Timothy 3:16 teaches: **16All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.**

Consequently, there’s a timeless principle from every Scripture, including the passage in Malachi. I believe that the timeless principle here is that Christians are called to be generous and sacrificial in their giving.

We see this echoed in the New Testament as well. Jesus spoke highly of the poor widow who put in 2 small copper coins, telling those around him she had put into the offering more than all the rest. She gave out of her poverty.

**For me, as I ponder what God desires, I believe that a good measure of generous giving is if our giving affects our standard of living**. We are to give in a way that effects or impacts how we live. Our giving should impact our budget and lifestyle in some way.

Again, we need to remember that it is not a have-to, it’s a get-to. And God doesn’t need anything from anyone. He owns it all already.

But He calls us to be His stewards in this world. Giving generously is an opportunity to worship the Lord, to demonstrate our faith, to be a blessing to his church and to the world and to show our allegiance to Jesus as our King.

Finally, what happens when churches become eager and joyful and generous givers? Two important things.

First, they become better able to offer more ministries into the community and world. Generous giving opens doors in ministry.

And second, and just as important, generous giving enables Christians to grow in their faith and love and trust in Jesus. For He’s the One that owns it all. He’s the One that meets our needs.

I truly believe that Chestnut Grove is a very generous church. The Lord had used and is using our generosity to bless each of our 2nd mile missions. Our generosity is quickly wiping out the costs that we took on in departing the United Methodist Church. And our generosity is helping us to better support our Early Learning Center in reaching children and families in the community with the love of Jesus Christ.

I believe that our offerings and gifts have been a fragrant offering and an acceptable sacrifice to God. And I am confident that the Lord has blessed us and will bless us in response to our giving in ways that are far greater than we can ever give unto Him. He is the One that meets all our needs and to Him alone be all the glory. Amen.

Resources: [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

Paul’s Letter to the Philippians by Gordon D. Fee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnDKgXCHfGU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jhVYqQqIx8>

<https://www.crosswalk.com/church/giving/10-examples-of-generosity-in-the-bible-and-how-to-follow-them.html>

Biblegateway.com