

Open: Branson Time Share Presentation – high pressure sales. They made sure we were both there and had our CC handy and didn't give us much time to think. Had we bought we would have felt like we didn't understand or independently choose to do so. We didn't buy and felt like we'd escaped.

That is not what today is. We will talk about giving (the first sermon here I've ever preached on it). And yes, giving more. But we did not move the contribution until after the sermon. There will not be some special second change with deacons watching over you. Go home and think about our study. Study it. Pray about it. Talk about it throughout the week with your family. Come back next Sunday with your choice, your sustainable commitment to giving more for the Lord's work.

Two things to discuss today. The two P's of Giving. Big one today. Second one tonight.

PURPOSE

- a. All giving among God's people was ALWAYS about fulfilling a purpose.
- b. **I Corinthians 16:1-4** – They were collecting for a specific purpose.
 - i. It was not to prove how faithful they were.
 - ii. It was not because there is some connection between amount and holiness.
 - iii. It was for the SPECIFIC purpose of helping needy saints in Jerusalem.
- c. Did you know they are ALL like that? Every passage on giving carries PURPOSE:
 - i. **Acts 2:43-45** – Why did they liquidate and give? To help those in need.
 - ii. **Acts 4:32,34-35** – Why did they give so much? To help people in need much.
 - iii. **Romans 15:26** – Churches giving. Not just because. But to help Christians!
- d. ***So, when the check hits the plate, it needs to be for the REASON God designed. Just giving as some act of worship or some habit or to show faith is not a Bible Idea!***
- e. Giving is for the PURPOSE of accomplishing GOD'S WORK
 - i. We know that work to consist of three Scriptural Things
 1. **Contributing to Needy Christians** (previous passages)
 - a. Note: most often discussed purpose in the Bible.
 - b. We'd do well as members and elders to remember that.
 - c. **Ex)** *Man got upset I didn't give out of pocket to help.*
 - d. I do that every single Sunday! (Hurricane Harvey in months to come)
 2. **Supporting Preachers and Evangelistic Efforts**
 - a. **II Cor. 11:8-9** – Churches supported Paul's work
 - b. **Phil. 4:15-18** – Paul amply supplied by the Church.
 - c. Would include local preacher. Young men training.
 - d. Would include men we support in other areas.
 3. **Assembling for Worship**
 - a. **I Corinthians 11:17-18; 14:23,26** – Assemblies
 - b. Our building provides a place to assemble, room for more to come, space for special bible studies, and amenities so we can stay hours.

Here are the main TWO REASONS why God's people GIVE LESS than they COULD

Christians are Not Emotionally Invested in our Purpose

1. If giving is just a habitual putting of money in a plate, I'm not liable to change that amount or get emotionally moved to do more. (**Like with Baptism** – is it okay to do without passion for the purpose?)
2. But If I BELIEVE in our work. If I look at this building and say, *"YES, this is a way we can change this community for Christ."* If you look at your local preacher and his family, or the Summer trainee and say, *"YES, this is what we need. This is our best effort to learn and grow and be fed."* If you look at the names of the men we support on the board and read their reports and say, *"YES, this is exactly what we need MORE of. This is the best thing we could do."* If you hear of us sending funds to the Philippines or soon to SETX and you say, *"Oh YES, I'm so, so glad we are in a position to help."* Then the check in the plate is something else entirely. (LIST OF GUYS WE SUPPORT – 12)

3. Giving becomes your personal effort, your sacrifice to make all of that work possible, to put your hand to the plow to sow the field. To put your hand out to give support to the hurting.
4. **II Corinthians 8:1-5** – Why are they doing this? They are giving more than they can. They are begging to participate. To show how great of Christians they are? To get some blessing from God? NO. Because they believe in the WORK, the PURPOSE – they genuinely want to help.

Leadership has not Clearly Defined our Purpose

1. Listen, if there is NO PURPOSE to GIVE MORE, we should NOT GIVE MORE. Let's go do something else. And this happens in churches all over. I've done this. I have intentionally given much less than I could because there was no clearly defined purpose.
2. I mean, there is some purpose noted, but we are fulfilling that already. So why give more? If I stood here today and said, *"We are presently giving exactly the amount of money needed to operate this building, keep this preacher, support 8 men, and have a little put back to help needy saints or prep for a rainy day, but today you should give more."* That would be wrong.
3. So, it becomes important for elderships to share all of that with the church and then say, *"We are forward thinking and higher thinking in terms of purpose. We want to do MORE of God's Work. We want to expand our efforts to help the needy and support evangelism. We have name and places and hopes to help right now. If you give, we can do it!"*

But when both of these issues are addressed. When the purpose is BIBLICAL, clearly DEFINED by leadership, and EMOTIONALLY powerful for members.... Oh the work we can do for God! Well, I have some great news – *the eldership has authorized me to show you some forward thinking Purpose!* They've had it for a while in getting us to the point to have this building, but its time for something more!

I want to show you four men and their families who are preachers and who need our support. They are doing important work, sacrificial work, for the sake of the kingdom and helping Christians. All four are short on the support they need to make ends meet. We are their answer.

- **David Osteen** – 39 - Preaching 16yrs. Texas City and Port Arthur. Now in San Antonio at the O'Connor Road church. 50 members. Bilingual efforts. David is there with his family of 6: wife **Adriana**, kids **Joshua, Melanie and Kadry**, and mother in law **Delia**. Needs \$500 per month.
- **Tim E. Stevens** – 35 - Great neph. of RJ Stevens. Full time preaching for 3 years. Was in Mexia, TX. Now in Siloam Spring, AR. Wife **Michelle**, kids **Weston, Madison, Texas, Mandy** – needs lots of support.
- **Craig Rice** – 33 – Works in Liberty, TX – 18months – first full time work. Safe from flooding. With wife **Meagan and son Canaan**. They are needing \$500 per month more to cover monthly expenses.
- **Daniel Lee** – 30 – Has done preacher training – now at first full time work in Granbury, TX. About 70 members there. With wife **Kelsey and soon to be daughter Harper**. Transitioning to full time work.

Final Thoughts – Understanding Purpose and being Emotionally connected to helping people and honoring God and doing better... is a win for everyone involved. It really is amazing beyond description. Let's finish with some really, really encouraging words on the subject:

II Corinthians 9:6-12 – We can't unpack all of that today, but leave here with a few observations:

- 1) *Give little for God's work, expect little from God*
- 2) *Give much for God's work, expect much from God*
- 3) *God wants to give you an abundance to do abundant good works.*
- 4) *You will be enriched by God unto prosperity to God's mission and God's people.*
- 5) *So giving is a way of showing thankfulness to God for what He has given and will give to you.*

Funny how much time we put into working, earning, saving, and keeping. **And it turns out, the only priority is God.** Who would have thunk it? And when His ways come first, we get all we need.

We have less to cover tonight so give me a few minutes to recap this morning's study.

- (first slide) – PURPOSE – three areas – must connect to it and elders must provide it.
- (second slide) – 4 Preachers Waiting On Us – Men in need to do the Lord's work.
- **II Corinthians 9:6-12** – Read Again – Everybody wins when we give with Purpose!
 - o *Give little for God's work, expect little from God*
 - o *Give much for God's work, expect much from God*
 - o *God wants to give you an abundance to do abundant good works.*
 - o *You will be enriched by God unto prosperity to God's mission and God's people.*
 - o *So giving is a way of showing thankfulness to God for what He has given and will give to you.*

But there are questions right? I mean, even if you are excited about the purpose for giving, about our purpose for giving here in Lindale, and about what the elders are proposing and the idea of helping these families... there's still questions like: "is Kris talking about me?" "He didn't say my name, is it others who need to give more, or is it me?" "How much is the right amount?" "How often should I be reevaluating this?" *Cubs win.

The first answer to these questions has to do with PURPOSE – if we believe in the purpose and we support the goals our elders have set for us – we give until we meet those goals!!! But maybe we need some more concrete, objective ways of figuring this out.

For this, we need to take a few minutes and examine our second P word in Giving:

PROSPERITY – the amount of Goods or Gains that God gives You. No matter how much you give,

Giving to God. Giving for God. All giving has always, since the earliest recorded cases, and through to the time of the New Testament church, has always been DIRECTLY CONNECTED to Prosperity. This immediately means our giving will CHANGE. It is not STATIC. It is not set once every 5 years to a number that fit us at the time. It will move in direct proportion to PROSPERING.

I Corinthians 16:1-4 – Every week, right? Every week what? Give. Why? For the work we believe in. **How much?** Each week give according to your **PROSPERITY!** The amount that pleases God is a direct extension, a direct REFLECTION of APPRECIATION of what GOD HAS GIVEN.

We understand this when prosperity goes DOWN. Very few set an amount to give to God in 2008, go through hard times, lose their job, have to find part time work, but all the while give the same, right? But do we understand it the other way: You are unemployed for a month and prosper nothing, give nothing. You get a part time job worth a little, give a little. You get a full time job worth more, give more. You get a lot at the end of the year in a bonus, give a lot. Right?

II Corinthians 8:1-5; 11-12 – They had limited abilities but they gave by it, according to what they had, and because they were so committed to God and the cause – they went beyond. So how do we know we are giving according to our ability? How do we know God is measuring us faithful in our giving by virtue of what we have? Well, firstly, it must be ABILITY CONNECTED.

To delve into what our ability is and how much we should be giving, let's talk about **10%.**

Let me be clear: there is no passage in the New Testament that demands that God's people give that amount. And yes churches worldwide have pressed this number into mandatory tithes. But here is what we know:

1) It was commanded by God for Israel – II Chronicles 31:4-5

2) It was a baseline offering and they did give more – Deuteronomy 12:5-6

a. Some was free will given – some were as offerings for sin. All in addition to tithe.

Yes, I know this is Old Law stuff, but it serves as a standard which we know pleased God and which was not explicitly replaced under the New Law.

But did you know that Tithing predated even the Law of Moses. You know how we look to Abraham and his faith as the beginnings of our own, before the Law of Moses. Well, tithing was there.

Genesis 14:18-20 – Where did Abram get this idea? Don't know! But he gave 10% to this priest.
Genesis 28:20-22 – Abram's grandson understood the power of tithing to God!

Again, you know I'm not advocating this as mandatory to be pleasing to God. But it was the idea of our father of faith, and his grandson. And then it governed Israel for 1500 years as a base line.

Then, God gives HIS SON for us. And leaves us with passages on giving like this:

II Corinthians 9:6-8 – He challenges us to set something in our hearts aside for God's Work!

What if that was 10%? Let's look at that. When you get some time this week, pull out a sheet of paper to write down three numbers.

- 1) At the bottom write down your weekly contribution
- 2) Then figure your take home pay, take off last digit, and write that down in the middle.
- 3) Then figure gross pay, take off last digit, write at the top.

Then just look at it. Think about it. Talk to your spouse about it. Pray about it.

Not saying they must match, but I will say this --- they SHOULD ALL MOVE TOGETHER!

If those top two numbers go UP, the bottom number should go UP accordingly – AS WE PROSPER.

There are some great tips to put all of this in place if we want to give more. If you genuinely buy into our purpose and are passionate about it... If you want to help those four families from this morning and be above and beyond ready to help needy saints in the South... If you know you can give more, and you want to give more... the most helpful tip for my family is THE DAVE RAMSEY BUDGET.

- Have a spreadsheet. At the top is your monthly budget. At the bottom is zero. Spend it all!
- The very first line is... CONTRIBUTION... pray about it then put a number in there.
- The next line are mandatory expenses. Then bills paid down. Then incidentals.
- If you have a negative number at the bottom, start trimming from the BOTTOM.

Conclusion: **Luke 21:1-4** – The Widow. None of us are this woman.

Firstly, because we are way more blessed in this life than she was.

Secondly, none can or should give every last cent.

But somewhere between her and the rich people is you and me.

Who are we more like? That's the question.

One day (v5-6) – all of this will be gone. Only our work in the Lord will still be before us.