



THURSDAY 07.01.10

Luke 6:37-38

In our reflection for day one, we said that “grace is the foundation of the biblical story.” Romans 5:8 reminds us that this grace is undeserved by saying, “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

- It might be helpful for us to think of grace as God’s investment in our future. Grace is God’s way of saying, “I believe in you,” as well as an invitation to live in a generous way. While God’s grace is not earned, God expects it to lead to a changed heart. What does Jesus say in these verses about what that changed heart looks like?
- Jesus’ words about a good measure implies going above and beyond in our giving to others. If becoming a “cheerful giver” who goes above and beyond is the goal, what’s the next step for you in your life?



FRIDAY 07.02.10

1 Chronicles 29:10-16

King David had dreamed of building a permanent temple to God, but that task fell to his son, Solomon. What David did have the chance to complete was the collection of the resources that were to be used in that grand endeavor. To consecrate those gifts, David shares this prayer of thanksgiving.

- As we have talked about throughout our readings this week, God provides the model for our giving. David writes, “Wealth and honor come from you.” How does your participation in the church keep you mindful of the fact that everything comes from God?
- Several weeks ago in our GPS guide we talked about the fact that “cultivating gratitude is one of the essential tasks of a follower of Christ.” Today, take a few minutes to write down 10 things you have received from God that you are grateful for in your life.



GROW • PRAY • STUDY

A RESOURCE FOR DISCIPLES SEEKING TO LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS & SERVE THE WORLD ...

Series: *Why People Leave Church*
Sermon: *I Got Tired of the Church Always Asking for Money!*
Scripture: 1 Chronicles 29:10-16

“The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.” (Psalm 24:1)

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroys, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matthew 6:19-29)

Principle # 1 — Everything belongs to God.

Principle # 2 — I and mine belong to God.

Principle #3 — All my abilities, talents and possessions belong to God.

Principle # 4 — All my money belongs to God.

Principle # 5 — God has trusted me with it all.



Introduction

We've reached our third message in our series of *Why People Leave Church*, and we have arrived at a theme that always makes church leaders as well as church attenders feel a bit uncomfortable. Jesus was never bashful when it came to the topic of money. In fact, he spends more time talking about money than almost every other topic he addresses in his ministry. Perhaps one of the most famous is this, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

This week we want to wrestle with the question, "Where is our treasure?" Jesus not only addresses the topic of money, but within the early church, the apostles shared their need with the communities spread throughout the Roman empire. They asked for the first Christians to give to "the church" for one central reason. They knew of others who had tremendous need, and they believed that following Jesus demanded of them that they do everything they could to meet those needs.

As we think about how God blesses the treasures that we share and brings hope to others by these gifts, may this prayer guide you.

Lord, I want my whole life to be yours, heart, soul and mind. But this is often hard for me. I think I need certain things to give me security and significance, things that put you in second place. Like Paul, I find myself doing what I don't want to do and not doing what I should. Change my heart, O God. Amen



TUESDAY 06.29.10

II Corinthians 8:8-15

In the first few decades of the church's existence, persecution was not experienced by most Christians living outside of Jerusalem. However, for those living in Jerusalem, persecution was immediate. Writing to Corinth, Paul addresses the offering that was to be received by this church on behalf of their sisters and brothers living in Jerusalem.

- Paul makes the argument that Jesus provides for us a model for our giving. "Though he was rich," Paul writes, "he became poor." Can you think of someone else in your life who has modeled a life of sacrifice for you? What has their example taught you?
- Equality is experienced as those with plenty share with those in need. We have probably each been on both sides of that equation. Is it easier for you to give or to receive? How has your life been enriched because of what others have shared with you?



MONDAY 06.28.10

Malachi 3:6-10

There is an overarching theme that dominates the Old Testament story. God is faithful to the promises made to Israel even when God's people do not hold up their end of the covenant. Grace is the foundation of the biblical story, and yet, as Malachi teaches, God continues to expect our faithful response.

- Jesus challenges us to "repent, for the Kingdom of God is near." Repentance is about returning to God and to the way God expects us to live. Do you see "bringing in the whole tithe" as a part of what it means to repent? How does our giving connect with our faithfulness to God?
- "Test me," God says, "and see if I will not open the floodgates of heaven." Is it appropriate to expect blessings in return for our gifts? In what ways might God bless faithfulness in our giving back to God?



WEDNESDAY 06.30.10

II Corinthians 9:6-12

"God loves a cheerful giver," Paul writes. Have you ever thought about why you give? Do you give out of a sense of duty? Do you give out of guilt? Do you give in order to "earn" a return? Or do you give out of joy? Do you anticipate the opportunity to give with as much enthusiasm as the opportunities you have to receive?

- In verses 12 and 13, Paul says that our giving not only expresses thanks to God but also inspires others to praise God for our act of obedience. Have you ever considered your giving to be a part of witnessing to your faith? How has your faith been strengthened because of someone else's faithfulness in their giving? How has the generosity of our church and your participation in those gifts inspired you in your faith?
