



WHAT'S IMPORTANT

What's important about Giving!

Luke 6:30a

Message #5 of 12 – S797

Sermon given on June 24, 2018



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

What's important about Giving!

Luke 6:30a

Opening Comments

- We're going to take a break from our study of Luke
- We'll get back into it next week
- Back in October, I shared a four-part series called **What's Important?**
- That series was born out of the idea that there are things that we do in church that some people might not understand
- For most people, what we do here on Sunday morning is unlike anything they do for the rest of their week
- And some of you are like me, I wasn't raised in the church
- Or if you do have experience in a church, they did things differently than we do
- And even for those of you who are familiar with these things, my hope is to deepen your understanding and challenge your faith to grow in these areas
- So far, we have looked at:
- **What's important about the Bible!** – we talked about what we believe about the Bible and why we teach through it the way we do
- **What's important about Worship!** We discussed why David and the team do what they do up here each week, and about worship means to each of us
- **What's important about Prayer!** That message said that prayer is talking with God, and why it is so important
- **What's important about Community!** – God created us to be connected with other people, and that message explained why we do some of the community-oriented things we do
- **What's important about Communion!** – Monthly, we do something we call a sacrament – Communion – can be very weird to people who haven't been around church much – but it can be precious and powerful once you understand it
- All those messages are online if you want to go back and watch them

- Today, the sixth message in this series is on a topic that is often misunderstood, even by people who are familiar with church things
- Let's pray and then we'll get into our topic for the day
- **Pray**

Teaching

- Turn to **Luke 6**
- In a recent Board Meeting we discussed me teaching this topic
- And then last week one of the verses we looked at spoke about it, so I thought I would start there to open our message today
- In last week's message, I described 7 traits of a true disciple
- The sixth of those seven traits is the basis for today's message
- **Luke 6:30a**
- The sixth trait of a true disciple is **Give Freely!**
- One of the characteristics of a true disciple of Jesus Christ is a generous spirit
- Every week, usually between the worship and the message, someone comes up and talks about giving, or the offering, or tithes
- And then we pass bags down the aisles and people put money in them
- Why do we do that – why is it important?
- Our topic for today is **What's important about Giving!**
- Before I was saved I believed churches were all about getting people's money
- Most of my experience was what I had seen from televangelists telling people why they needed to send their money in so that God would bless them
- I believed the only person that would end up being blessed was the televangelist
- I have grown to understand there is so much more to it than that
- Oh, there are some who are taking advantage of people for their own enrichment – they will answer to God someday
- This morning I am going to share three reasons why we should be generous
- While we can't separate being generous from a discussion about money – that is not the only part of being generous

- Before we look at those three reasons
- Let's look at a promise connected to being generous
- **Luke 6:38**
- God is saying that if you will be generous, He will be abundantly generous with you
- God, who owns the cattle on a thousand hills and the gold and silver under the ground can be infinitely more generous with us than we can be with Him or others
- It is one of those mysteries of the faith that is hard for some people to comprehend
- The more willing I am to freely give to others, the more willing God is to give to me from His abundance
- The first reason to be generous – **Glorifies God**
- The glory of God is His manifested presence in the world
- The Bible records times when God manifested His presence in a tangible manner – the burning bush, the wilderness cloud/fire
- The most profound of those manifestations was the incarnation of Christ – when Jesus, God the Son, took on human flesh and walked amongst us
- To glorify God is to make His presence known to the world
- We do that when we talk about Him to others **Luke 2:20**
Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.
- We do it when we act in a way that reveals the character of God
Matthew 5:16
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.
- They may not know they are glorifying God, but they are
- Being generous glorifies God, because God is generous **Romans 8:32**
He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
- The apostle justified his life based on the infinite generosity of God and Christ **Galatians 2:20**
I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
- God is generous and when I allow God to help me to be generous, I am glorifying Him

- In some small way people can see God's generosity when I am generous
- The second reason to be generous – **It blesses others**
- Turn to **1 Timothy 6**
- The first reason is the highest reason, but part of glorifying God is blessing others
- In fact, you can't really glorify God if your life doesn't bring blessing to the lives of others
- Being generous with others is how I express generosity toward God
- But it also communicates that I trust God and am thankful for what He has given me
- **1 Timothy 6:17**
- Compared with the rest of the world, most Americans are rich
- Even the poor are exhorted not to trust in riches
- **1 Timothy 6:18-19**
- God gives us everything we have for our enjoyment, but also to share with others
- And promises blessings in heaven for those who are generous in this life
- When we are generous with others – it glorifies God and it blesses others
- The third reason to be generous is **It grows your faith**
- For a Christian, faith is the basis with which we live our life **2 Corinthians 5:7**
- **For we walk by faith, not by sight.**
- That means we choose to live our life based on what we believe, not based on what we know
- For example – someone asked to borrow Kelly's pickup to move
- We didn't know how that was going to turn out – Will he take care of the truck – will he wreck it – will it have gas when he returns it?
- None of that mattered – God gave us the truck – It was available to be used by God to bless others – so, we did!
- Throughout the Bible we are told that faith is to be the basis for how we live

- Faith is what we believe about God and His Word that is showing up in our life
- Faith is not a static reality in our lives – it exists on one of three states
- It is declining, stagnant, or growing
- It is God’s plan for your life that your faith would continue to grow until it is perfected **Romans 8:29**

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

- Until you are living your life like Jesus would live it, your faith needs to keep growing
- **Challenge** – What are you choosing to do that demands that your faith grow? Is there anything in your life that you are choosing to do that requires more faith than you have right now?
- Not those things that come against us – that we don’t desire
- Like going to the gym – you know you need to do – maybe even have a membership at Fitness 19 – useless until you go
- Your faith will not grow if you are not intentionally doing something to grow it
- Giving is one of those areas we can choose to grow in faith
- Let’s talk about this thing we do on Sundays
- We are called to be generous – to be giving people – because it glorifies God, blesses others, and grows our faith
- Giving encompasses our entire life – everything about you should be available to glorify God, bless others, and be used to grow your faith
- What we do on Sunday morning is only a small part of that
- Though I am guessing that for some of you, this is an area that God wants to grow your faith
- Every Sunday, one of the men comes up here and invites the congregation to give
- There are two terms that are often used that we need to understand: tithes and offerings
- Both terms are used throughout the Bible
- The word ‘tithe’ might be foreign to you
- It literally means ‘a tenth’
- The Jews were commanded by God to give a tenth of their increase to God **Leviticus 27:30**

And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land *or* of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD's. It *is* holy to the LORD.

- It was given to the priests and was for the maintenance of the Temple and to provide for the needs of the priests
- For modern Christians, this is your regular giving to the work of God
- It is used to provide this facility, and it also allows me to dedicate myself to the work of the church
- We also take a portion of it and use it for outreach and missions
- While the word tithe means a tenth, Christians are not limited to that amount, they can give as much as they want
- Kelly and I have given a percentage of our income for many years
- Offerings in the Old Testament were given sporadically based on need or the desire of the giver
- For us that would include things like giving occasionally to the orphanage in Soe or some other need that we come across
- Like when someone in the church is struggling
- People will get together and try to meet that need
- It is different than the tithe and should be kept separate
- Invariably, I am asked how much a Christian should be giving to the work of the church
- First, it is our strong conviction based on God's Word that anyone who is benefiting from the ministry of the church ought to be giving to the work of the church
- But how much? – that is a very personal question – it is a matter of faith
- But here are some questions you can reflect upon
- How much do you want God to be glorified? Your giving reflects how much you want God to be glorified
- How much do you want others to be blessed? Everything you give to the church is being used to glorify God, bless others, and help people to grow in their faith
- How much do you want your faith to grow? Does your giving give proof of your faith in God – that you trust Him?
- We're going to take the offering now – the ushers can start getting ready for that

- Before they start passing the bags, I want all of us to spend a little time reflecting upon this topic
- God is generous – He has been generous to you
- He calls all of us to be generous – it is the trait of a true disciple
- Your giving is an indication of your faith
- And to the degree that you are walking in faith in your giving – you are glorifying God, blessing others, and causing your faith to grow even more
- Take a moment to reflect upon that – then we will pray – then we will take the offering
- For those of you watching online – you can give online at ccfv.life – click the **Give** button to give one time or to set up recurring giving
- Take a moment and ask God to grow your faith in this area
- **Have Pastor Randy come up to pray for offering, and then to pray to close the service.**
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