

10 for 10

TEN WEEKS OF ENHANCED GIVING: WEEK 10

From the Pulpit

What Will We Offer Jesus?

Every Sunday, there's a lot going on during the collection of offerings that is cloaked in mystery. We really don't know how *many* people give. We don't know how *much* everyone gives. But one thing that is NOT a mystery is this: our *motive* is as clear as the light of Christ shining into our hearts (1 John 1:5). Giving an offering to Jesus fills us with joy!

What will we offer Jesus? How about our best! Sure, we could hastily grab a buck or two out of our pockets and purses. But carefully read these two stanzas from a well-known hymn:

“We give Thee but thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is thine alone, a
trust, O Lord, from thee.

May we thy bounties thus As
stewards true receive
And gladly, as thou blessest us, To
thee our firstfruits give.”

(CW 485, st. 1-2)

God's gift to us is ... us. “All that we have” includes everything: our bodies and souls, eyes, ears and all our members, our minds and all our abilities, our time and treasures. It's simply an acknowledgment that “all that we have is thine alone!”

What will we offer Jesus who offered his all? Shall I offer Jesus my heart? YES! Instead of worrying how much is just enough to give to Jesus, perhaps it

would be best if we stop, listen, and simply receive, through faith, the gifts of Jesus. God—here, now—:

- announces his good news to you: your scarlet sins will be white as snow!
- proclaims peace between you and God, in spite of you!
- brings your good tidings through his body and blood for your forgiveness.
- proclaims his salvation to you: The Lord has given us his Son. The Lord has given us forgiveness. He gives us his heaven!

What will we offer Jesus? How about this: “gladly as thou blessest us, too thee our firstfruits give.” May our dear Lord Jesus bless and give you a gladness in giving! And may his blessing go with you as you share the Light of the World with those in the darkness all around you!

Learning from the mistakes of others

How Not To Give

The Situation

Jim is a successful businessman who wants his dollars “to make a real difference.” Part of his tithe goes to a TV ministry, part to the area Lutheran high school where his grandchildren attend, and part to a seminary in Asia. “I believe in giving where it matters. Too much of my church's money goes to salaries, buildings, and maintenance.

Reflections on 10 for 10

Q: How have I been blessed through my 10 for 10 giving?

Q: What is my current financial situation after increasing my giving to God for the last ten weeks?

Q: Has God kept his promises to bless me as I have prayerfully given to him?

Q: What do I want to do as I continue in my life of giving?

Q: How can I encourage my brothers and sisters to give generously and joyfully?

Q: How has God blessed me through my church family?

Q: What are important ministries that we need to get going in our church? How can I personally become an agent in supporting those ministries?

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“He who governed the world before I was born shall take care of it likewise when I am dead. My part is to improve the present moment.” - John Wesley

Evangelism

You know God dearly loves all people, including your unchurched friends and neighbors. You want to share the good news of Jesus, so they can experience the joy of knowing their Savior. But how?

The Commission on Evangelism encourages and equips members, like you, to proclaim the good news. This is another way your Congregation Mission Offerings support the spread of the gospel.

How exciting it is to think that God would use our gifts to assist in saving souls!



I don't want my money to go toward mowing lawns and fixing leaks. I'll give more to church when it gets more on the ball!”

The Problem

The causes that “make a difference” in Jim’s mind are all good. Jim fails to see, however, the blessings that come through his local congregation. His local church proclaimed the gospel to his grandparents who took him to church when he was young, taught his children for nine years before high school, etc. He expects his pastors and teachers to meet his needs, but is less than enthusiastic in meeting their living needs. The local church will get more on the ball as Jim gets more on the ball.

(Freely adapted from Alcorn, p. 193-194)

I wasn't expecting that!

The Tither's Surprises

The Christian who begins to tithe will be surprised:

- At the amount of money he has for the Lord's work.
- At the extent to which his own spiritual life deepens.
- At the ease with which the nine-tenths that remains meets his own financial obligations.
- At the ease with which he can give even more than one-tenth.
- At the way in which tithing prepares him to be a faithful and wise steward over all his possessions.
- At himself for not beginning to tithe sooner!

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Stewardship Emphasis

Deuteronomy 8:10-18

God's Turn to Teach

¹⁰ When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. ¹¹ Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. ¹² Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹⁵ He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. ¹⁶ He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. ¹⁷ You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” ¹⁸ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.