

"GIVING"

I Chronicles 29:1-20

How many of you have or have had little children? If you have not had a child or children is it fair to say that all of us have been around little children? Good. Maybe you have witnessed this scene a time or two. The older child gets a toy, maybe it is a special little truck that he loves to play with. As a matter of fact, that child plays with it to the point that the paint begins to wear off. And one day while his little truck is sitting in the corner of the room minding its own business, and no one is playing with it, along comes little sister and.... You know exactly what I am going to say next, don't you? His little sister goes right to the little truck and picks it up, only to have it snatched away by the gorilla in the family. "It's my truck!" He doesn't want to part with something so special. Now let me stop right here-

How many of us parents have looked at the older child and said something like, "Let her play with it," and if the older child had said, "Oh, by all means,

here sis.” We would have stood there with our mouth hanging open and dumbfounded. Are you kidding? Instead he cries out, “MINE! MINE!” And you lunge for the little truck and have to practically break his arm to pry it out of his hands. It’s his and he doesn’t want to part with it. And the more you fight him for it, the stronger his death grip holds on to that little truck. Get the picture? You see, this is an illustration of giving “grudgingly.” And yet the way most churches conduct their stewardship campaigns or other institutions or organizations raise money, people come away feeling forced to give. And so what happens? Compulsion results in reluctance, because when a person is compelled to do something, that person is more reluctant to give it up. Can you relate to what I am saying?

We continue in our series on the Spiritual Disciplines and today, as my sermon title indicates, we focus on “Giving.”

In the Bible Study booklet that we have been using on Wednesdays to study the Spiritual Disciplines it asks the question: (Quote) "Think about the variety of things in your possession—money, housing, clothes, books, technical equipment, even time and energy. To what extent do you think of these possessions as your own? To what extent are they God's? Pray that God would give you His perspective on ownership and giving." (End quote)

You see, it is my humble opinion that when it comes to giving and the things we have, we compartmentalize and think something like this: I believe that I need to return to God a portion of what He has blessed me with so I will return, let's say 10% of my income, that is, if we believe in tithing, or whatever percentage we return to Him. But when it comes to my house, my car, my lawn or living room furniture or these, let's call them, the "Other Things," we see them as MINE, and no one else's.

So when it comes time to buy something we see this portion of money that we will use to purchase this "other thing" as mine, and this portion of money that I have decided to return to God as God's money and they don't mix, they are not one and the same but separate. Instead of it ALL being God's, in the beginning, we see it as being Mine and His, not ALL His, even though God just happens to entrust me with my portion.

This morning we are looking at I Chronicles 29 where King David has called for a national assembly to give them his final charge and to do something significant for God's house. But to put our passage in the proper context turn to the previous chapter, chapter 28:1-4, 6 where David has assembled at Jerusalem some pretty high power people and then he says in verses 2 and following, "Then King David rose to his feet and said: 'Here me, my brothers and my people.

I had planned to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, for the footstool of our God; and I made preparations for building.

But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for my name, for you are a warrior and have shed blood.' Verse 6, "He [God] said to me [David], 'It is your son Solomon who shall build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be a son to me, and I will be a father to him.'" David explains that his own character as a warrior precluded him from building the Temple but his son Solomon has been divinely appointed to carry out the task.

So now in our chapter 29 David has called a national assembly and he is saying his goodbyes to the people as his life is coming to an end. But he also knows that the Temple needs to be built and so he, himself makes a sizeable contribution of his own resources for this to take place, which is outlined in verses 2-5. And so at the end of verse 5 he looks at the assembly and asks the question, "Who then will offer willingly, consecrating

themselves today to the Lord?" David solicits contributions to defray the cost of building after he himself had, verse 2 "provided" or as another translation puts it, "made provision." It was very appropriate that he do this since he was the human author of the temple project, and his son, Solomon is to be its finisher. I would like us to look at this passage and address a few questions as we think of how we approach our giving back to God.

First, **Why Give to God?** At this time when things are tight everywhere, when gas keeps going up and the cost of food keeps rising, and my bills and your bills keep mounting and the list can go on and on we might be compelled to ask this legitimate question, why give to God?

So to the answer the question **Why Give?-** my answer is BECAUSE-
because 1) I must, so that I can remain faithful to God.

God gave me the gift of life- He is the one who created me; He is the one who sustains me; He is the one who saved me through His Son Jesus Christ.

It might sound simple- but it is out of my love and respect, my sense of duty to the God of all creation and **because 2) everything belongs to God.**

David makes it very clear in verse 11 when he says, "Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth are yours." This very verse is really counter to the way many people feel today- what is mine is mine is mine, this is the mindset today. So if we are going to be Biblical Christians then we have to come to terms with the fact that "it," whatever "it" is that we are talking about as it relates to our possessions, doesn't belong to us from the get-go. It belongs to whom? To God.

Why Give? **3) because everything comes from God.**

It only makes sense that if everything belongs to God then it comes from Him- and if it is then given to us and in our possession, then it comes to us from Him as a GIFT. Verse 12 says, "Riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might; and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all." And David continued in the second part of verse 14 when he said, "For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you."

A second question that needs to be answered is, **How should we give? Cheerfully!** David stepped up to the plate and then he asked if there was anyone else who would willingly give. You see no leader should ask his or her followers to do what he or she is not ready to do personally. And David was willing to take the lead and give, not public money but his own, and thereby set an example of generosity.

And we read that the people gave not only cheerfully but, verse 17

tells us freely and joyously. It has been said that a consumer

experiences self-gratification in his or her spending, and so does a miser in

his or her savings; but a contributor knows a deeper joy and a greater gain.

Do you experience that deeper joy and greater gain because of your giving?

On his gravestone in Tiverton, Devon, England, an early Earl of

Devonshire had these words engraved as his epitaph: "What we gave, we

have; what we spent, we had; what we kept, we lost."

King David did not have to coerce the people or demand that the

people pay up. He did not have to go door to door and force the people to

give. The people gave freely and joyously.

And the third and final question is, **What shall we give?** And the

answer is **what we are able.**

Verse 6 tells us that the leaders of the ancestral houses gave a freewill offering of money, and verse 8 tells us that others gave precious stones. Giving what we can, as we are able is a good place to start. That is why it is so crucial for you parents to start your children in the habit of giving back to God so that this good habit becomes a part of their lives so that as they grow older it just becomes natural to do. But our giving to God is not only about the giving of our money, for when the Temple was built there were those who gave of their talent- there were craftsmen who shared their abilities in the building and in the filling of the Temple with all the decorations. And they not only shared their talents but they also shared their time. Next to our money our time is our most precious commodity.

The beautiful thing about this giving of money to the building of the Temple is that it was a special offering and was not intended to replace the support of the sanctuary and its personnel by means of the tithes and

offerings. This was given over and above the regular commitments. It all goes back to verse 9 where it says that the people gave willingly or another word is voluntarily.

Wouldn't you agree, that the work of God is worth the investment of his people's resources? In the Old Testament book of Malachi, chapter 3, verse 8 a question is asked, "Will anyone rob God?" I would venture to say that there is probably no one in this sanctuary or in this congregation who would ever want to rob God.

I want to close by sharing something that Jesus said and by the way, it is not recorded in any of the Gospels but Paul said it in Acts 20:35, and that is, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And many years later it was Bishop Fulton Sheen who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive and besides, you don't have to write 'thank you' notes." Now that's a deal I like. Amen.

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I Chronicles 29:1-20

Introduction: Children, anyone?
Giving "grudgingly"

When it comes to giving and the things we have, we can
compartmentalize

I Chronicles 29

I Chronicles 28:1-4, 6

First, _____ **give to God?**

Because 1) I _____ so that I can remain faithful to God

And because 2) everything _____ to God vs. 11

And because 3) everything _____ from God vs. 12

Second, **how should we give?** _____!

Vs. 17 tells us that people gave _____ and _____

Third, **what shall we give?**

What we are _____ vs. 6, 8

Malachi 3:8—"Will anyone rob God?"

Conclusion: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Jesus- Acts 20:35)
and besides, you don't have to write "thank you" notes- Bishop Fulton Sheen