
Sermon Notes

January 7, 2018

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

The Gift of Giving

Matthew 2:1-11, 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Giving: An Act of Worship

- ❖ The Magi provide an example of how we are to give our gifts as an act of worship
 - sacrifice (costly gifts, travel, time, diligence)
 - the overflow of adoring and grateful hearts
 - their posture in worship is one of reverence, humility and submission
- ❖ The Magi's gifts are an expression of worship that springs from the overflow of their adoring, grateful hearts
- ❖ Even more than being costly gifts, these are royal gifts
 - gold: an indication of royalty
 - frankincense: Jesus' sinless purity
 - myrrh: anointing spice and perfume frequently used in preparing a body for burial

Giving: An Act of Grace

- ❖ Giving is enabled by God
 - Jesus created and already owns these gifts

- Jesus entrusts these gifts to the Magi so they will have the joy of offering them back to Christ
- these gifts do not add anything to Jesus
- ❖ In the same way, when we give Jesus the worship He is due, we are merely showcasing the authority, dignity, and majesty that already belong to Him (Acts 17:25)
- ❖ Offering God any expression of our love and worship is an action and an attitude that begins in the heart of God
 - giving to God is a work of God's grace
 - it is a work for which God must equip and empower us
- ❖ Giving our time, talent and/or treasure to God of is a means of intensifying our desire to enjoy Him more
 - my true joy does not come from a hope or a desire of getting rich with the things God can give me
 - my true joy comes from having the treasure of God Himself

Giving: The New Testament Pattern

- ❖ **Give to God**
 - all of our giving should be directed towards the Lord
 - *a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.* (Phil. 4:18)
- ❖ **Give Liberally**
 - *overflowed in a wealth of generosity*
 - the Macedonians giving was liberal even though they are described as being in extreme poverty

❖ Give Sacrificially

- NT believers sacrificed as they gave
- *beyond their means* (2 Cor 8:3-5)
- Christ's evaluation of our giving is not based upon the dollar amount, but on our available resources

❖ Give Voluntarily

- *not reluctantly or under compulsion* (2 Cor 9:7)
- *of their own accord* (2 Cor 8:3)
- really, no one should need to "shoot the locks" off your wallet!

❖ Give Enthusiastically

- *begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints* (2 Cor 8:4)
- the Macedonians couldn't help wanting to be a part of what God was doing
- *God loves a cheerful giver.* (2 Cor. 9:7)

❖ Give According to a Plan

- it's not a "what's in your wallet" approach
- *Each one must give as he has decided in his heart* (2 Cor 9:7)

❖ Give Systematically

- the opposite of giving every "once in a while"
- *On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.* (1 Cor. 16:2)

❖ Give Proportionately

- our giving should be in alignment with our personal prosperity
- 1 Cor 16:2 *as he may prosper = in keeping with your income*
- giving a percentage

❖ Give to What Lasts (Matthew 6:19-21)

- treasure in heaven
- *where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*

Personal Application

1. Think of an occasion(s) when you have experienced joy in giving a gift to someone. What made this different from times when you may have given a gift because you felt you had to or that it was the right thing to do?
2. Does your attitude toward giving change with changing circumstances? Why or why not?
3. Think of the great gift you have been given in Christ. How does thinking about the magnitude of that gift influence your attitude toward giving to His work and His church?
4. Review the NT pattern of giving. Evaluate your practice of giving according to each one of these principles. Based on this, what, if anything needs to change in either your attitude or practice of giving to the Lord?
5. Spend time praising and thanking God for His gifts to you and asking Him in prayer to enable you to follow through on any resolves you have made for the New Year about how you are going to give your gifts to Him.