

SUNDAY, JUNE 23RD

Series Title: Serving God

Lesson Title: Serving God Through Giving

Key Scriptures: Luke 6:38, Malachi 3:8-12

INTRODUCTION

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. (**Luke 6:38**)

We all have heard this scripture at one time or another during the offering. But the question is *do you believe it?* Do you believe that if you give to God, He will give it back to you in good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, with men giving into your bosom? We are not asking if you *think* God would give back to you, but we are asking if you truly *believe* it. If you think in the natural, you will depend on your carnal understanding for the answer, but if you **believe God in your heart**, your actions will show it from your inner man - your soul. It will be evident in your Household, your Serving in the Ministry, your Reach Beyond our Four Walls, and your Giving. Let's explore God's word when it comes to **Serving God Through Giving**.

GIVE

Luke 6:38 starts by saying, "Give..." This giving is not contingent on God giving to you first. It is a test of your faith and love for Him. In essence, God says, 'You go first.' But we want God to go first. Then God says, 'But I did go first. I went first when I gave my Son to die on the cross for you.'

Malachi 3:8-12 asks us:

"8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Our obedience to giving in our tithes and offerings allows us to collectively do more than what we can do on our own through this local ‘storehouse’ – Harvest Life Church. Our tithes and offerings provide the provision to ensure the Christ-centered messages of hope, love, and empowerment that we receive from our Senior Pastors weekly through our Sunday Worship Services, Word Wednesdays, Life Groups, conferences, events, Youth programs/academies, and more reach not just us our family, but also our local community and world-wide. When we give to God we are lending our resources to Him for His use, which He promises to give back to us.

GOOD MEASURE

What is Good Measure? In order to understand, we must go to the end of the scripture to establish our basis. The end of Luke 6:38 says, “.... For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.” So how we give, we will receive. Therefore, we can see that ‘good measure’ is when you put God first and give Him the first fruits of all your increases.

Proverbs 3:9-10 says, “Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”

What is an increase? An increase is any time you receive money. Your paycheck from your job, your “side hustle”, settlement funds, birthday money...anything that “increases” the amount of money you have.

What is a tithe? A tithe is ten percent of your increase. Good Measure is giving not only a tithe but also an offering. Offerings are over and above your tithe. An extra “Thank you, Lord”.

We often look at people who give generously and think, “They must be rich.” But that is not necessarily so. Less fortunate people are often very generous, and rich [very fortunate] people can be very stingy. Let’s be clear: generosity has nothing to do with how much money you have but has everything to do with your obedience and view of God. You see, if God is big to you, you will be generous. If He is small to you, you will be stingy. If you struggle with giving, it may be because your God is too small. The bigger your God, the easier it will be for you to give.

We recognize that all blessings come from God, and honoring Him by returning such a small portion to Him grows our faith by giving away the thing we feel most attached to, *our money*, to maintain and build the Kingdom of God. Luke 6:38 tells us that God promises to repay us what we give to Him in good measure. Giving in tithing and offering forces the chains to break over our finances, our family, our health, and our career! It causes God to move on our behalf.

PRESSED DOWN, SHAKEN TOGETHER

When we give sacrificially to our New Worship Center, World Reach, Community Reach, and Youth Reach, this is over and above our Tithes and Offering and not ‘robbing Peter to pay Paul’ giving. We are taking God at His Word and believing that when we give to Him, we will get a lot more of the same in return because He will see our hearts. God wants to overtake you with his blessings for your sacrifice! When God blesses you in unexpected ways, He uses addition and multiplication! God works on your behalf to shake things loose for you in that job situation, that test, that application, that race, that promotion, that transportation issue, that health situation, that lost child, that lost family member! He blesses you exceedingly and abundantly above all you could ask or think. (**Ephesians 3:20**)

Think about it this way...When you plant an apple seed, you do not just get back an apple seed. In time, you get back a whole apple tree and on that tree will be many apples, and each apple will contain many seeds.

Likewise, in the Old Testament, farmers in Israel were to leave the grain in the corners of their fields for the poor. So, each year at harvest time, there were two sets of harvesters in the field: the primary harvesters in the middle of the field who were paid to bring in the crop, and the unfortunate people in the corners who were harvesting the crop to feed themselves and their families. The primary harvester would fill up a basket, carry it over to

the barn or wagon, then dump it out and go back to the field to begin filling the basket again. It did not matter to these workers how full their baskets were because they were being paid by the hour. They just needed to stay busy and keep working until all the grain was in the barn.

This was not the case for the unfortunate people working in the corner of the field. These people had walked several miles to get to the field and however much food they could get in their baskets would be the amount of food available to feed their families. If you were in this position, wouldn't you first ensure you had put in good measure – or, in other words, filled your basket completely? Then, wouldn't you press it down to create more room? Top off the basket again and shake it to eliminate any air spaces between the grains. Then, having done all that, wouldn't you pour in as much grain as you could, heaping it up above the rim until it began to spill over the sides? It is one thing to receive a basket of free grain. It is far better to receive a *good-measure, pressed-down, shaken-together, and running-over* basket of free grain! This is the increase **Ephesians 3:20** is talking about ...“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all that we ask of think...” when God blesses you in good-measure, pressed-down, shaken-together, and running-over!

RUNNING OVER

Do you want your blessings to run over?! Then bless your Spiritual Leaders. That is, sacrificially give over and above your tithe, offering, AND your sacrificial giving and bless your Spiritual Leaders.

Ezekiel 44:30 [from Henry's Complete Commentary on the Bible] says “Those that are kind to a prophet, to a priest, shall have a prophet's, a priest's reward: That he may cause the blessing to rest in thy house”.

God is so gracious! He tells us that if we also give to the priest [Pastor], He [God] will command a blessing to rest on your house. Also, the priest will command a blessing on your house by praying to God and asking God to bless your home and your family because you blessed the highest servant of God, your spiritual leaders - Bishop Dukes and Pastor Deborah.

Let's not get confused here. Our Senior Pastors, pray for us 24/7, in season and out of season! But God's word says He [God] pays special attention to those who also care for their priest because that is as close as we can get on earth to caring for Him [God] in the natural. Therefore, God

honors that display of pure, sincere love by blessing and providing for you and your whole family!

MEN SHALL GIVE INTO YOUR BOSOM

Have you ever gotten unexpected favor or blessings? Have you had someone do something for you and say, 'I don't know why I'm doing this, but you were just on my heart?' How about this one? 'I had too much of this, and you were the first person to come to my mind. I want to give this to you.' God uses *people* as His instruments to bless you on earth, as it is in Heaven. It is in His nature to give. He will always give us more than we give to Him. We cannot out-give God; once He has given, He will use the prophet to bless you and your household (**Ezekiel 44:30**), and then he will use man to bless you with uncommon favor. (**Luke 6:38**) God's blessings are often material. However, His *best* blessings cannot be added up on our pocket calculator, like joy unspeakable, answered prayers, new friendships, peace that surpasses all understanding, revelation of His power in our lives, a sound mind, and new mercies each morning!

HOW DO I START TITHING?

You may be reading this and saying I want to tithe but I do not know how to start – let's walk through some practical steps together.

1. PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Deuteronomy 15:10 (NIV) says, "Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to."

Before moving forward, we have to dump some weight that will only slow us down. Ask yourself, what is motivating you to want to give? Is it **Luke 6:28** "Give, and it shall be given unto you;..."? Is it a combination of **Malachi 3:8-12** that you don't want to "...rob God..."? Or is it simply **I Samuel 15:22** "... to obey is better than sacrifice..." Even though these motivations are great, we have to give because **WE LOVE GOD**.

So, let's leave our giving guilt behind and the bondage from thoughts, such as "I haven't been giving 10%," "...I haven't been faithful or consistent in this area," "...I didn't know all of this," ... Let's ask God to forgive us and give us the strength to walk in mustard-seed faith from

day to day in this area as we learn to grow and put our trust and dependency on Him. God will honor your *sincere* prayer of faith! Tithing, like all giving, is the ultimate form of Worship to God, and by giving we align ourselves more with the example set by Jesus Christ.

2. MAKE A BUDGET

Habakkuk 2:2 says ...“Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it.”

Step 1: List all gross earnings (before taxes), then multiply this amount by 10%. This will be your *tithe*.

Step 2: List all *net income* (after taxes)

Step 3: Deduct Step 1 (tithe) from Step 2 (net income)

- This equals your *starting income* for your monthly budget

Step 4: List all *monthly expenses*

- Offerings, (Sunday School, Worship Services, etc.), Mortgage/Rent, Electric, Water, Phone, Gas, Car Payment, Insurance, Retirement, Credit Cards, etc.

Step 5: Deduct Step 4 (monthly expenses) from Step 3 (starting income)

If the amount is negative, consider the following:

- Re-evaluate what is a necessity within Step 4 (monthly expenses)
- Call creditors/utilities and ask for payment/budget plans
We must be a good steward of the resources God has given us. Going to eat out five days a week may not be an action of a good steward - consider cooking / crock potting / couponing / etc.

If the amount is positive, consider:

- Savings
- Investments (i.e. Retirement, Stocks, Bonds)

3. SET UP RECURRING GIVING

Take the result from Step 1 above and set up your Recurring Giving! Being a recurring giver is a great way to automatically set up your consistent financial giving of your tithes, offerings, New Worship Center contributions, and love offerings to our Senior Pastors. Once

you do it, you will not notice it is gone. (**Malachi 3:10**) That is God's math in action! Use the Pushpay platform via Harvest Connect, the HarvestLife.org website, or the Givelify platform to set up your Recurring Giving today! Recurring Giving allows us to eliminate overthinking and encourages our obedience to God's Word before we can talk ourselves out of it.

4. PRAY YOUR DAY

Ask God to order your steps to ensure you make wise financial decisions throughout your day in every area of your life. You may want to have an accountability partner in your household, such as your spouse, children, sister, or brother, who will hold you accountable for being consistent and diligent in your *commitment* to giving.

5. PREPARE FOR DISTRACTIONS

Put at least 0.5% - 1% of your Net Income in Savings to lean on when those distractions come to tempt you into robbing God.

CONCLUSION

Giving is a response to God's goodness that we have already experienced—and a reminder that He is our hope and future, not the size of our savings account. Yes, in a practical sense, tithing is a faith-to-faith walk. It is a test of our will, stamina, and spiritual maturity. It pushes our dependency off of ourselves and onto God. It brings to light the multiple ways *all of us* use our resources in less-than-ideal ways. At the end of the day, the ultimate provider is *not* you but our Father in Heaven. We serve a BIG God! Serving God Through Giving is a tangible reminder of this truth.

Malachi 3:10: "...And prove [try] me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

HOMEWORK

Lesson: Serving God Through Giving

INTRODUCTION

1. Write out the scripture Luke 6:38.

GIVE

2. **Fill in the blanks:** Our obedience to giving in our _____ and _____ allows us to collectively _____ what we can do _____ through this local 'storehouse' – Harvest Life Church.

HOW DO I START TITHING?

3. List the five steps on how to start tithing:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

4. Write out the scripture Malachi 3:10

GOOD MEASURE

5. **True/False.** We recognize that all blessings come from God, and honoring Him by returning a small portion back to Him grows our faith by giving away the thing we feel most attached to – our money – for use in the upkeep and building of His Kingdom.
6. **Circle the correct answer.** A Tithe is _____ of our gross earnings.
- a. The best I can give.
 - b. 0 – God knows my heart.
 - c. A tenth
 - d. None of the above

PRESSED DOWN, SHAKEN TOGETHER

7. **Fill in the blank.** When God blesses you in unexpected ways, he uses _____ and _____!

RUNNING OVER

8. **Fill in the blank. Ezekiel 44:30** [from Henry's Complete Commentary on the Bible] says “Those that are kind to a _____, to a priest, shall have a _____, a priest's reward: That he may cause the _____ to rest in thy house”.

MEN SHALL GIVE INTO YOUR BOSOM

9. **True/False.** We cannot out-give God.

**** DO NOT TURN IN OR INCLUDE IN YOUR BINDER ****
BONUS: SAMPLE BUDGET TEMPLATE

Habakkuk 2:2 says ...“Write the vision And make it plain on tablets,
 That he may run who reads it.”

Personal budget			
Monthly income			
ITEM	AMOUNT	NOTES	
Income source 1			
Income source 2			
Other			
TOTAL INCOME		(A)	
Monthly expenses			
ITEM	DUE DATE	AMOUNT	NOTES
Tithes			Line A X 10%
Offering			
Sacrificial Offering			
Rent/mortgage			
Electric			
Gas			
Cell phone			
Groceries			
Car payment			
Auto expenses			
Student loans			
Credit cards			
Auto Insurance			
Personal care			
Entertainment			
Miscellaneous			
TOTAL EXPENSES		(B)	
Monthly savings			
DATE		AMOUNT	
TOTAL SAVINGS		(C)	
NET INCOME		= A - B - C	

<https://create.microsoft.com/en-us/template/personal-budget-478a9534-c918-435b-b497-1901978a1d09>