

Honoring God with Our Giving

¹² What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me? ¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD, ¹⁴ I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. [Psalm 116:12-14]

For the past few months, we have been exploring what our church membership means and some of the basics of belonging to the church. Have you considered the fact that God is constantly giving to us; life, breath, mercy, answers to prayers, protection, well-being, health, shelter, jobs, etc.? Moreover, God loves us so much that He gave His very best; His Son. Jesus loves us so much that He sacrificially gave His life for us. The sincerity, depth, intensity, and immenseness of God's love for a sinful, rebellious, and wayward world is incomprehensible.

Has it ever occurred to you that God's love and Jesus' sacrificial gift to us have eternal life-giving abundant value? Remarkably, this is the avenue to salvation, forgiveness, eternal life, the presence of God, His Word, access to God, communion with God, sanctification (set apart to God for holiness), justification (legally pardoned of our sins and declared righteous based upon the atoning work of Christ), the undeserved gift of grace, mercy – not getting what we deserve, and so much more! We have received so many gifts from the Lord. How shall we honor Him? God gave Himself for us, why not give ourselves completely to our great and loving God! Give Him a place in your life. Christ is the head of the church and is himself its Savior [Ephesians 5:23]. What shall we give? Giving is the fourth basic of belonging, according to Rainer, that we are focusing on this month (Sam Rainer, *7 Basics of Belonging*, pgs.45-53).

God expresses His great love for us through giving. He has been so extraordinarily good to us. Why shouldn't we give? The Psalmist raised a question; "What shall I render to God for all of His benefits to me [Psalm 116:12-14]? Many people want to know how we can embrace God's love. First and foremost, by accepting the Son, Jesus Christ, as your Savior. Sam Rainer stated that "One way to embrace God's love is through the act of giving" (pg. 46). Further, Rainer explained that "giving is one of the main ways of worshiping God" (pg. 46).

While there are numerous ways of giving, our service, expressions of love, and worship; monetary giving is just as important. The Bible says that whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward them for what they have done [Proverbs 19:17]. Jesus paid attention to giving one day in the temple. Luke records Jesus' observation of a poor widow who gave all that she had: two small coins [Luke 21:1-4]. At the same time, He regarded her giving as the most in comparison with others who gave from their surplus (Sam Rainer, pg. 47). This widows' sacrificial gift noted by the King of Glory has been recorded throughout history. Every gift is important to God. The issue is not wealth but, whether you are worshiping, pursuing, and obeying God out of a sincere heart. People have all kinds of motives for giving; to make amends for a wrong done, to make peace, to gain fame, seize control, to manipulate, to gain an advantage, or to show off. Some give to get. What is your motivation?

Give to keep the church going. Monetary gifts are needed to support ongoing ministries of the church, such as general maintenance, repairs, the cost of utilities, church personnel, new equipment, technology needs, Christian education, and more. Sometimes, the church has a need

for a special offering to fulfill a needed project. Don't forget to make a special effort to fulfill your pledge to the church. "Giving financially is a way to be part of God's work through the church. Give in proportion to your income." (John Koessler, *Today in the Word*, Nov. 2018, Vol. 21, Issue 11, pg. 36). In fact, God regarded a failure to bring the tithe and offerings as robbery [Malachi 3: 8]. The tithe is rightly God's. Our offerings are expressions of love and gratitude. He commanded us to bring the tithe and offering into the storehouse so that there would be food in His house [Malachi 3: 8 -12]. He said to put Him to the test to see if He would open the window of heaven and pour down a blessing so there would be no more need. God is faithful to keep His Word. Are you faithful and committed to give? Honor God with your first fruits versus your leftovers [Deut. 18:4]. Many people have testified of how God provided, met needs, blessed their 90% that remained, and even added increase in unexpected ways.

Paul gave practical directions to the church on how to give financially: to place their contribution into the offering of the church on the first day of the week [1 Cor. 16:2]. He suggested that their gift for the collection should be proportionate to their economic status; *as he may prosper* [ESV, 1 Cor. 16:2]. Given, our virtual and hybrid church services, our offerings can be given in person, mailed, or paid online. God has been faithful to keep Tabernacle for over 101 years. Are you faithful to do your part by honoring God today with your monetary gifts?