

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 35 (August 24-30, 2014)

Now that we have studied the principles for Christian giving, let us turn our attention to the wonderful promises of God to those who follow His precepts.

Sunday, August 24 (read Malachi 3:6-12)

“Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of Heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.” (Malachi 3:10:b)

Many worshippers frown when the sermon text comes from Malachi, because they anticipate that the emphasis will be on the following quote: “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house” (v. 10a). They tend to major on the **cost** of the gift instead of the wonderful **promise** from the Giver of all gifts. God never changes (v. 6), so He will always supply all the needs of the true worshipper (Philippians 4:19). You will never experience true revival in your life (v. 7) until you trust God with a portion of the amount He has allowed you to have. In the Old Testament, the tithe was a tax and was compulsory, but the New Testament teaches that we should give voluntarily and willingly. I was taught at a young age to give God 10% of my gross income. While I do not believe that this percentage is a **command** of God in the New Testament, can we afford to give back less than 1/10th of all that the Lord has entrusted to us?

Monday, August 25 (reread Malachi 3:6-12)

“Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty. (Malachi 3:12)

God promises to open the gates of Heaven to any person (or nation) who trusts Him enough to “bring the whole tithe into the storehouse” (v. 10). He is able to “prevent pests from devouring your crops” (v. 11) and to give you enough extra to supply the needs of others who are less fortunate (v. 12). God promises to bless all nations through the country that abides by His rules for giving (v. 12), but I find it quite odd that the very nations who receive aid from our country, sharply criticize America’s capitalistic system. We have been blessed as a nation, because we have been generous. I hope you can make the same statement about your personal giving!

Tuesday, August 26 (read Luke 6:37-38)

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. (Luke 6:38)

Jesus lumps two important concepts together in today’s text. First, He links our judgment, condemnation and forgiveness to our willingness to treat others in the same manner that God treats us (v. 37). Next He gives a wonderful result of giving with the right motive and attitude. We should never give to others in anticipation of blessings from God, but the Lord does promise to bless those who are willing to be generous to His people who are in need (v. 38). Could it be that you are missing God’s best in your life because of your attitude and actions in regard to giving? Examine your giving habits in light of God’s Word!

Wednesday, August 27 (read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:8)

The printed verse above is one of the great promises of God, but it comes with a condition. The condition is this: "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (v. 7). When we willingly open our hands to God, He "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20). The question becomes, "How much should we be willing to give?" As they say on Fox News, "We report, you decide," but v. 6 is a motivator for me because, "Whoever sows sparingly will also **reap sparingly**, and whoever sows generously will also **reap generously**." How much can you afford to keep for yourself in light of God's giving principle?

Thursday, August 28 (read 2 Corinthians 9:10-15)

*Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your **righteousness**. (2 Corinthians 9:10, emphasis mine)*

God supplies all our needs (Philippians 4:19) so you can trust Him to supply the seed to sow and the bread to eat, but that is not the most important gift (v. 10). Did you notice that He increases the "harvest of your **righteousness**" of those who are willing to trust him with their material resources? Since **He is our righteousness** (1 Corinthians 1:30), He gives generously to us so that we can give generously to others for His glory (v. 11). Read the rest of today's text and note the praise that God gets from your faithful giving to His people. Then, you too, can say, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"

Friday, August 29 (read 1 Timothy 6: 3-10; 17-19)

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (1 Timothy 6:10)

Many preachers, especially on TV, have turned the doctrine of giving into a means to obtain personal wealth (v. 3-5). Accepting what God has entrusted to us and giving praise to Him will keep us from focusing on the accumulation of **excess wealth**. This misplaced emphasis has caused many believers to wander from the faith (v. 6-10). Do not put your trust in wealth because it can disappear in an instant (v. 17). Instead, "be generous and willing to share" with other brothers and sisters in the faith who are struggling to have basic food and clothing (v. 18). God's promise is that those who live for others will store up treasures for themselves in the life to come. In Jesus' words, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40b)!

Saturday, August 30 (read Proverbs 3:9-10; 11:24-25 & 22:9)

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. (Proverbs 3:9-10)

Solomon puts the concept of giving and receiving into a very simple formula in today's printed verse. When we make giving to God and to His people our **first** priority, He will supply us with more than we need. Can you trust Him enough to follow this principle? My wife and I cannot explain how He has blessed us with so much other than the fact that we follow this principle. I could spend a long time testifying to His goodness that goes far beyond **my** financial ability. Let me summarize the teachings on giving with this reminder: Never give to God because you expect a great return (wrong motive); instead, trust Him with the **first part** of your wealth and enjoy the wonderful blessings of God both now and forevermore!