

CHURCH AND MY TREASURE

Jason Willock

Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. (Romans 12:3-8)

What is treasure?

God promises that He will meet our material needs if we trust Him and put Him first in our lives. (Luke 12:33)

Why should we give?

We need to understand why giving is important. Giving is evidence of our obedience to God.

Reasons we should give:

- God ownership (James 1:17; Haggai 2:8)
- Lay up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-20)
- Giving is an act of worship (Proverbs 3:9)

Why is giving important?

As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked. "Only God is truly good. But to answer your question, you know the commandments: 'You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. You must not cheat anyone. Honor your father and mother.' " "Teacher," the man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young." Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him.

"There is still one thing you haven't done," he told him. "Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." At this the man's face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions. (Mark 10:17-22)

General principles for giving

1. Give ourselves (2 Corinthians 8:5)
2. Give in response to grace (2 Corinthians 8:7, 9)
3. Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:8)
4. Sacrifice over size

Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins. Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on." (Mark 12:41-44)

How should we give?

What, where, when, why, and how God's people give says something about the state of our commitment to Christ.

Tithing

Tithing comes from a Hebrew word meaning 'a tenth', where Israelites were required to bring 10% of their gross income to the Temple as an offering to God.

Tithing is an act of faith and obedience that shows we trust God with our finances, and it is the starting point of our systematic giving.

How is the tithe to be used?

The church has the responsibility of equipping believers to do God's work, and to do this effectively takes money. The Bible does not shy away from talking about it and neither should we. Tithes are used to facilitate the church's three-fold calling:

1. The equipping of believers
2. The work of God (ministry)
3. Building up the church

Where do we give?

The Bible makes it clear that our generosity and our giving should be based in the local church, not any charity or online ministry.

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. (Malachi 3:10-11)

5 P's to help with our giving

1. Pray (Philippians 4:6, 19)
2. Plan (Proverbs 21:5; 16:3)
3. Patience (Hebrews 12:11; 2 Timothy 1:7)
4. Progress (Philippians 2:3-5)
5. Prioritise (Matthew 6:33)

Conclusion

The question is: What is the one thing that is keeping you from giving everything to the kingdom of God?

Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life. (1 Timothy 6:18-19)

Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. (Matthew 6:21)