

# Gospel Motivated Giving

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## Gospel-Motivated Generosity is a Mark of True Obedience

For the last two months, our church has thought about Jesus' words concerning giving. In Sunday School, we have considered Randy Alcorn's helpful little book called *The Treasure Principle*. You can [listen to the series here](#).

This Sunday we will again consider Jesus' words about giving in Matthew 6:1–4. And as we prepare it might be worth our time to consider what does and what should motivate our giving. To do that, let's go back to Exodus where we find—in the Old Testament, no less—one of the most generous displays of giving in the Bible. But one that has much to teach New Covenant Christians about their own generosity.

### Three Truths About Giving

It is important to realize: there is nothing uniquely Christian about generosity.

Some of the largest philanthropists in the world are unbelievers. Agnostics love to give to their alma maters and favorite charities. Just the same, the generosity of many Christians is often not a direct result of meditating on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, we should think carefully about why we give and where we give, and what Scripture teaches us about both.

And one of the most fundamental places for thinking about giving is in the book of Exodus, where we find the first "church offering." Indeed, Exodus teaches us to how to think about giving, and in Exodus 35 we discover at least three truths to help us in our giving.

#### 1. Generosity Depends on Worship

In Exodus 32, the people of Israel freely gave gold to make a golden calf. While they thought they were worshiping Yahweh, they simultaneously gave out of impure hearts desiring a god like the nations. *This shows us how easy false generosity can be.*

There is a principle in Scripture and in life, that we will give to those things we love. Even more, we will give to whom we worship. Thus, it is right to be generous towards family, friends in need, and organizations that aid people, but it is also possible that there are things in our life we are giving more to than we ought, because they have become idols.

Just consider, some people who love sports give exorbitant amounts to their team. Others who worship health will spend thousands on things that will make them well. Some who are living for leisure spare no expense on the best TV, electronics, vacations. Others who idolize their kids will skip giving to church before cutting back on all that they give their kids. All in all, then generosity is not explicitly Christian. Rather, it is the natural overflow of worship.

So what do you worship? Whatever you worship, you will be generous towards.

## 2. Generosity is motivate by God's Word

When Moses returned from the mountain with the renewed covenant, he calls all Israel together (35:1) and immediately begins to collect the materials for the tabernacle.

Verses 4–9 read,

<sup>4</sup> Moses said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "This is the thing that the Lord has commanded. <sup>5</sup> Take from among you a contribution to the Lord. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the Lord's contribution: gold, silver, and bronze; <sup>6</sup> blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen; goats' hair, <sup>7</sup> tanned rams' skins, and goatskins; acacia wood, <sup>8</sup> oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, <sup>9</sup> and onyx stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece.

With Moses present and the covenant repaired, the people returned to worshiping the true God, truly. Importantly, this worship is conducted through God's appointed mediator and is conducted according to God's Word.

Indeed, God doesn't call us to worship however we feel. He's not looking for creative expressions of praise, worship, and giving. He's looking for his people to worship, give, and serve according to his word.

This means that God's people should learn to worship God by the book. It also means that those who feed on God's word will learn how to give. Reading God's word, immersing ourselves in God's story, and living lives for his gospel will also motivate giving. In truth, generosity for disciples of Christ is directly connected to God's Word.

God's word both motivates our giving and teaches us how to give.

## 3. Christian Generosity comes from the heart.

Read Exodus 35:20–29. And notice all the "all's" and "every's."

**35:20-29.** *Then **all** the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, **everyone** whose heart stirred him, and **everyone** whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. So they came, **both men and women. All** who were of a willing heart brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and armlets, all sorts of gold objects, **every man** dedicating an offering of gold to the LORD. And **every one** who possessed blue or purple or scarlet yarns or fine linen or goats' hair or tanned rams' skins or goatskins brought them. **Everyone** who could make a contribution of silver or bronze brought it as the LORD's contribution. And **every one** who possessed acacia wood of any use in the work brought it. And **every skillful woman** spun with her hands, and they **all** brought what they had spun in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. **All the women** whose hearts stirred them to use their skill spun the goats' hair. And the **leaders** brought onyx stones and stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breastpiece, and spices and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. **All the men and women**, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the LORD had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the LORD.*

In these words, Moses notes that giving came from willing hearts and spirits. Importantly, Israel did not give out of duty, but out of joy. God called for a contribution, and they gave, but God also gave them hearts to give.

In these words, we find how God moved in Israel's heart leading them to give. The same gift of generosity occurred later when Solomon built the temple (1 Chronicles 29). And it occurs today in churches wherever God is at work. Indeed, God always accomplishes his work through the generous gifts of his people.

He did this when building the tabernacle and temple in Israel, and as the temple of the Holy Spirit continues to grow today, he continues to liberate hearts with his grace. And we can see this in Exodus in two ways.

First, Israel's generosity was not motivated by guilt. Moses did not badger, demand, or manipulate. He made the need known and Israel responded. Why? Because something had happened in the hearts of the people. Even in the OT God worked on his people's hearts and here their hearts/spirits moved them. The lesson here is: true giving is always a matter of a changed heart.

Second, if you want to grow in giving, outward means of coercion never work (for long). Sure, pep talks, testimonies, and logical reasons for giving can be produced. But in the long run, Christians will give in direct proportion to their heart-felt understanding of the gospel.

If you are born again and your mind is taken captive by the gospel, you will be quick to give to the work of the gospel. You will long to store up treasure in heaven and give to the works of God on earth. Indeed, the amount of giving will be dictated (in part) by your means, but it will be governed even more by your heart.

So, looking at Exodus we learn much about ourselves (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:5, 110). Grace, in the experienced of the Exodus, is what motivated Israel, not fear, guilt, threat, manipulation, or anything else. And gospel grace found in Jesus Christ—a grace even greater than that of Israel (see John 1:17)—should motivate you in your obedience, in your giving, and in everything else.

### **Grace-Motivated Giving**

Sadly, I think this is too often missed. Grace-motivated giving is missed by pastors, Christians, and others who call for Christians to give. But this is not missed by Moses, by Jesus, or by Paul, who teaches us to give because of God's great grace. Just read 2 Cor 9:6-15.

There the great gospel missionary, reminds the Corinthians of God's abundant grace, total sufficiency, and he spurs them on to give so that they might see greater gospel fruit—the lost being won to Christ and the gospel reaching new peoples.

So it is in Exodus and in our church today. Just as God gave hearts to give freely, so he does in his most effective churches. Importantly, this theme runs through Scripture; it's what we see in Jesus Sermon on the Mount; and by God's grace it will continue to be what we see in our church as well.

Today, let us consider the greatness of God's gospel grace and may we be open to how God uses that grace to motivate our giving.

For His Glory and your joy,

Pastor David