

“The Reasons for Sharing”

10-04-15

I just want you know, that I really don't like to talk about money! I know money makes the world go round and money many times can buy you at least a little happiness. But the problem in the church is that money can't be our focus! There's so much more to church than that!

This whole stewardship focus deals with more than money. It revolves around a number of things, and those things are part of your relationship to God! They're really between you and Him!

Just to ask, do these words sound familiar? *“Do you intend to continue in the confession of this Church, attend worship, make diligent use of the means of grace, and lead a righteous and godly life? Will you support the work our gracious Lord has given this congregation with your Prayers, Time, Treasure, and Talent?”* To all these words you answered, *“I will with the help of God”* twice! How's that going for you?

The first thing you need to realize is that God wants more from you than just your money. He wants your all! He's the One Who's set an example for you to follow. **God Did it First!** Go all the way back to Genesis. God created the entire universe and all life for us as mankind. He walked with His chosen and protected them no matter what.

As mankind was and is in sin, it's obvious that mankind needs saving, so **God Gave His Best.** He sent His One and Only Son to earth for you and me! Listen to Romans 8:32, *“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”*

God Has Given Us Everything! There is nothing we have or are that comes from us! Everything comes from God. Open to 1 Corinthians 12. Your intelligence, your compassion, your finances, your ability to care, your talents. The Holy Spirit is alive and active in you. Verses 4-7, *“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”*

God calls each and every one of us to use what He's given us. That takes us back to the promises we made as we came into membership. Every talent and ability you've been given by God is important here! Never think you can't do it because you're not talented. Each of us is talented in many different ways, and all are important!

God has Redeemed Us. We were born into sin and as we've gone through life, we continue this pattern each and every day! Left to ourselves, our reward for who we are and what we do would be hell! But thanks be to God Who loves us so much with a never-ending love that He bought us back. Look at Isaiah 44:21-22, *“Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant; I formed you; you are my servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me. I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.”*

But, **Sometimes we Rob God.** Open to Malachi 3. God gives you all things, but if you don't use your time, talents, or treasures for God and His Kingdom, in a way you're telling your Creator and Redeemer that you have a better idea. You're telling Him, *“No, I don't want to, there are some other things that need me more.”* Look at verses 7-10, *“From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.”*

Instead of just sitting there and not being involved or not seeing any reason why you should be involved, you need to realize how much God loves you, and provides for you beyond measure. You need

to **Respond in Faith**. We need to respond knowing that God is in control and He will guide you and help you give yourself to serve Him and His people in this place.

You need to **Respond in Joy**. I know there are things that are difficult for many of us, one of them is to be joyful. When we talk about money, and service, sometimes we complain and withdraw saying that someone else can do it! When you think about that, that response really doesn't sound joyful at all does it!

You need to **Respond in Trust**. God calls you as His own in the waters of Baptism. He willingly gave Himself and gave His body and shed His blood for you! We celebrate that each Sunday. Because of everything God has done, He wants you to trust Him in all things, knowing He will provide! When you trust, you're turning to God and realizing He's the One you can trust and it's not you!

You need to **Respond in Hope**. Our hope needs to be based on what it to come. As we realize how much God has done for us, our focus can look for something better, and working diligently to lead others to that eternal gift! Listen to Hebrews 11:16, *"But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city."*

All this leads you to one final point. **You Need to Share Everything. It's God's Anyway!** Listen to Hebrews 13:16, *"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, (your prayers, your talents, your abilities, your time, your treasures) for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."*

God has given you and continues to give you everything, and all He wants you to do is to praise Him and be willing to share Him with the congregation and with all the people around you.

Is it a risk? If you think you're the one in control, yes! But if you think you're in control, yes! But if you turn it over to God, and share freely, everything is possible!