

Living for Giving: Gifted by God

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Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0 : 00] Good morning and welcome to our online service for Sunday, June 21st. Happy Father's Day. Happy Father's Day to everyone who's watching.

My name is Kent Dixon. I'm the lead pastor of Raymar Baptist Church here in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. And welcome this morning to people from our church who are tuning in this morning, as well as people from elsewhere. Friends, family, friends of friends, family of family, and just people in general who are tuning in. So welcome and happy Father's Day to you as well.

Please check out the summary information below this video. I want to remind everyone to like, please like and follow the Raymar Baptist Church Facebook page if you're watching because you'll get notifications of when we go live and you'll be connected with us better that way.

So if you're watching this morning and you're somebody who tunes in regularly, please do like and follow Raymar Baptist Church on Facebook. So there's lots of other helpful information, links and emails and things like that in the information included with this video.

So there are prayer requests, email addresses, and information about connecting with our church. So I encourage you to do that. Let's open in prayer this morning.

[1 : 20] Father God, thank you that you are a good, good Father. Thank you that while we have challenges either being fathers or in relationships with fathers, there are good times and there are bad times.

But Father, you are unshakable and you are consistent and you are good. And so Father, this morning we come before you to recognize your goodness, to recognize the fact that you have given us so many things and you provide for us and give us blessings.

And so we thank you for those things. And we continue to recognize those in our sermon series that we continue in this morning. So Father, may the words that you've given me to share have an impact on each one who's listening.

Father, I pray that we would celebrate Father's Day. We would celebrate the fathers in our lives. And we would also be eased of challenges that we have in relationships with fathers or other things like that.

Father, being human, being mortal is challenging at times. And yet you know it through your Son, Jesus Christ. You know what it is to be human. And so Father, you understand our challenges.

[2 : 29] And you love us and you are with us through them. And so Father, again, we thank you for the opportunity to come before you this morning in this way. Thank you that you're a good Father and we love you.

And we pray these things in your name. Amen. Well, let's join together in worship singing this morning. And we're going to sing Praise to the Lord, which will be familiar to many of you.

And the lyrics will be on the screen. So feel free to sing along. And then followed by Praise to the Lord, we'll be singing another great hymn, Leaning on the Everlasting Arms.

So we're talking about God as being the great God of the universe. And we're also talking about Him being our Father this morning. So how appropriate for Father's Day.

So let's begin by singing together Praise to the Lord. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, King of creation.

[3 : 35] Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, King of creation. Oh, my soul, praise Him for He is my health, salvation. All you hear, now to His temple draw near.

Praise Him in glad adoration. Praise to the Lord, O Lord, O all things so wondrously reigneth.

hashtag Dei Whom. Shelter thee under his wings, so gently sustain it. Has thou not seen how thy desires have been granted in what he ordained?

Praise to the Lord, let all that has given me adore him.

All that house, life and breath come now, praise is before him. Let the amen, sound from his people again.

[5 : 15] Gladly for I we adore him. What a fellowship, what a joy divine.

Leaning on the everlasting arms. What a blessedness, what a peace is my meaning.

Leaning on the everlasting arms. Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms.

Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms. Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way.

Leaning on the everlasting arms. Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day.

[6 : 51] Leaning on the everlasting arms. Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

Leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms. What have I to dread?

What have I to dread? What have I to dread? What have I to fear? Leaning on the everlasting arms. I have blessedness with my Lord.

Leaning on the everlasting arms. Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms.

[7 : 54] Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms.

How wonderful to worship God through singing this morning. Isn't it? It's absolutely a joy. And so the challenge for me, of course, is I don't get to hear your wonderful voices.

So I'm just encouraged by, I hope that this is meaningful to you and that you've been able to engage in praising the Lord with your voice and praising the Lord even if you don't feel confident in singing.

Even if you don't feel confident in sitting in front of your computer or looking on your phone as you sing. Even if you're able to reflect and engage that way and God touches your heart through the words and music of these songs.

That's important. Well, today, as I said, is Father's Day. And so I want to take a moment to recognize dads this morning. Maybe you didn't get breakfast in bed.

[9 : 11] That's not always a dad thing. But sometimes it is. Maybe you didn't get a lovely bouquet. Maybe you didn't get a box of chocolates or a handsome card. But maybe you did.

Maybe you got a tie, which is, I think, still a thing or not. And so if you got any of those things, if you connected with your kids already this morning, your children this morning, in some way or other or well throughout the day, consider yourself lucky.

Consider yourself blessed. And let's be honest, guys. Moms really have the truly challenging and painful job, literally, of bringing children into the world.

But dads play an important role, too. Dads share the responsibility of raising children, modeling good moral values, personal character, integrity.

Dads may take on the role of providing more of the household income to allow moms to raise children themselves. That's what we did in our family. And so if both parents work, dads hopefully share the work around the house to help create balance, to maintain harmony.

[10 : 25] And if you don't, you should, guys. It's part of our job. So speaking from experience, being a father is one of the greatest joys of my life, particularly now, as we watch our children grow more in their individuality, in their personalities, as they continue to grow into young adulthood.

Being a father has also given me a greater appreciation for my own father, who is one of the greatest mentors and friends I have ever had. And even in his absence, he still mentors me.

He is still a good friend that I miss very much. Even though he's gone now, though, the legacy that he created for me, the wisdom he passed along, the many ways that he shaped and influenced my life, those things live on.

And maybe that's your experience as well today. Maybe no matter where you are in the journey of fatherhood, maybe your experience has been a positive one.

Perhaps your experience with your own father was a positive one as well, that you learned from him, that he shaped your character in positive ways, that you've been able to pass along some of that knowledge and wisdom and experience and some dad jokes, perhaps, to your own children, even to your grandchildren as well.

[11 : 53] It's quite a legacy and an opportunity that we have. But this morning, we also recognize that being a father can be hard at times. It can be difficult.

As a father, for example, I have made bad decisions. I've said things that I regret. I've done and not done things that I wish I hadn't done or had done.

And as we talked about time in our sermon last week, time passes. Time moves on. Time is something that we can never regain. But don't be bogged down by regret because tomorrow is another day.

But sadly, in our broken world, we also recognize that broken families and divorce are more common than we would like. We recognize that men can become fathers in less than ideal circumstances without having received healthy models of fatherhood themselves.

For others, they deeply miss their fathers. They long for one last conversation, one last shared experience. And for other men, they may reflect on a father today that they never really knew.

[13 : 08] A father that was maybe never there for them. Or in fact, they're glad that person is no longer involved in their life. So this morning that we recognize that Father's Day can be a time of celebration for some.

It's not a great day for a barbecue here in Edmonton. It's quite rainy and drizzly, which I love, by the way. I know I'm weird that way. But this morning we recognize Father's Day can be a time of celebration, but also for others, a time of grief and longing.

A time of anger and frustration. And those are real and valid feelings as well. We also recognize that Father's Day can be challenging for women, too.

If they find themselves missing their own father, the father of their children, or any other challenging emotions that are associated with this day.

That's real and valid, too. So for anyone who's watching or listening today, Happy Father's Day. May it be a time of joy and reflection, if that's your situation.

[14 : 16] And may God bring peace and comfort and healing to you, if that's your circumstance today. Because we have a good God who is our Heavenly Father.

And He loves you just as you are. Happy Father's Day. So this morning we're continuing in our series titled, Living Forgiving.

Perspectives on Christian Stewardship. And each week we'll be looking at a different aspect of the idea of stewardship. Last week we considered the time that we've been given by God.

And how best to manage and invest that. And so over the course of this series, this is now part three. Next week is our final part and our wrap up.

But over the course of this series, as we explore this concept of stewardship in the various areas of our lives, my hope is that you will develop the perspective that what's yours is not actually yours, but God's.

[15 : 23] Something that God has given to you. I hope you're also developing the sense that from a biblical point of view, stewardship is all inclusive.

As I said at the beginning of our series, we tend to think of stewardship, that term, especially Christians in churches. We think that it's the pastor preaching one Sunday a year. I need to dig into my wallet a little deeper.

I need to give a little more. And that's part of it. But it's so much more than that. And so I hope you've gained an appreciation for that as well so far. Because stewardship touches every area of our lives.

It includes our time and our talent, as well as our treasure. Stewardship is faithfully using whatever God gives us. Opportunities, interests, skills, employment, family, talents, spiritual gifts, financial resources, everything.

All those things. For his glory. And so if biblical stewardship involves every aspect of life, it requires a basic commitment on our part.

[16 : 37] We must present ourselves to God as his servants with no strings attached. And so the real issue of stewardship is whether we're managing our affairs and our possessions and what God has given us as though they are ours or as though they are God's.

Our sermon this morning is titled, Gifted by God. It's fitting to me that this sermon lands on Father's Day. Because some of what we're considering this morning may well have been passed along to us by our fathers or our mothers.

Whether by modeled behavior or even by genetics. And so while our sermon is titled, Gifted by God, we're actually going to look at the concept of talents, skills, abilities and aptitudes and gifts.

And I want to recognize as well that we're looking at what we're looking at this morning is a much bigger concept than we can cover in one Sunday. And especially if you're already thinking about, I have dinner plans.

I'm going to fire up the barbecue and have a burger. I recognize that you're thinking of other things. So we'll do our best this morning. Stay with me. I want to begin by reading one of Jesus' parables and then we'll unpack some of the concepts from it together.

[18 : 10] I'm reading from Matthew 25, 14 to 30, and this will be familiar to some, if not all of you. The parable of the bags of gold or the talents, depending on your translation.

Again, it will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability.

Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also the one with two bags of gold gained two more.

But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money. After a long time, the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.

The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. Master, he said, you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.

[19 : 19] His master replied, well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness.

The man with two bags of gold also came. Then the man who had received one bag of gold came.

Master, he said, I knew that you were a hard man, harvesting you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground.

See, here is what belongs to you. His master replied, you wicked, lazy servant. So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed.

Well, then you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers so that when I returned, I would have received it back with interest. So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has 10 bags.

[20 : 38] For whoever has will be given more and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have even what they have will be taken from them and throw that worthless servant outside into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The parable we just heard often refers to the talents, as I said before I read it. It's the parable of the talents or in this case, the bags of gold.

And in the context of the story, it refers specifically to a measure of weight or value. And that's why some translations refer to not to talents, but to gold.

So how do we recognize the fact that that word talent has changed over time? Well, while talent used to refer to a unit of weight or currency that was used by the Romans and Greeks, the way we've come to define that word now is as a natural aptitude or skill.

Isn't that interesting? You know, I like language and that's interesting to me that that's developed over time. So while Jesus was referring to literal money in this parable, his deeper message was also about the faithfulness of the stewards who were entrusted with the treasure from their master.

[22 : 05] His message was about how the gifts were used, how they were put to work for the ultimate benefit of the one who gave them in the first place.

Do you see that? I find it fascinating that while the inherent value of what we consider to be our talents, that has its origin in being like gold, like money.

Talents have value. So identifying that our talents have literal value. Where do we go from there? Well, reflect on your life for a moment.

And you may come to realize that activities or tasks that give you joy. Some might say fill your bucket.

Come to you naturally. So perhaps you're able to use your natural talents in the work that you do. As my dad used to say to me, if you can find a job doing something that you love and you're naturally skilled at, you'll never work a day in your life.

[23 : 17] Isn't that great? Or perhaps your job is something that you do to pay your expenses. And then you use your talents somewhere else.

You love baking and cooking. You love writing, painting, drawing, acting, gardening, working with numbers and finances. Some people are good at that and love it.

Yuck. But it's important as well. Fixing cars. I have friends who are extremely gifted and skilled at fixing cars and maintaining cars.

So you see the depth and breadth of the talents that are available that God has given us in different ways. And there are so many unique combinations of the talents that God has given.

As many as there are unique individuals, there are unique combinations of talents. Imagine that. Your combination of talents, while they might be similar or compatible with someone else, are unique to you.

[24 : 28] If it's helpful, think of your talents as the abilities and aptitudes that naturally come to you, that come to you easily.

You may recognize that you share talents with parents or siblings or other family members. You know, great aunt Betty was good at that and so am I.

Isn't that interesting? I don't have a great aunt Betty, by the way. But I believe that there's a genetic connection here. There can be. And that you don't share these aptitudes or abilities or talents always just by chance.

For me, working with words and communicating. Nice emphasis. Working with words and communicating are hardwired into me. I see words and ideas like thread that can be woven and shaped into a tapestry.

Other people that I know think of writing a paragraph and say, yuck. I'd rather mow the lawn. I'd rather shave my legs, do anything but have to write something.

[25 : 40] So again, we see aptitudes and abilities. And as I see those hardwired talents in me, those abilities that God has given me, I recognize them in other members of my family.

And I recognize them in other people that I know, friends, people that I've worked with over the years. God has given talents in so many different ways to so many different people.

And God has given each of us talents so that we can use them in two ways. By blessing others and by furthering God's kingdom and his plan for humanity.

So just as talents are personal gifts that have been given to us intentionally and personally by God himself, we recognize that.

And just as I said last week, as we reflected on the stewardship of our time, that each of us have exact, the exact amount of time available to us to accomplish what God has intended for us to do here on earth.

[26 : 50] I'm going to suggest to you that we have exactly the combination of talents that can make a difference in the lives of others. They can make a difference in God's greater plan for humanity.

The Bible says in first Corinthians four, verse seven, for who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive?

And if you did not receive it, why do you boast as if you did not? So Paul is not suggesting here that we're all exactly the same and none of us is unique.

That's not what he's saying. He's drawing attention to the fact that the talents and aptitudes that we have come from God. And we need to give credit where it's due rather than taking the credit for ourselves.

Does that make sense? So where does the idea of skills fall into all of this? How do we distinguish skills from talents?

[27 : 59] I've found it helpful as I've reflected on this to think of talents as being given by God. And then think of skills as things that we grow and develop over time as a result of the opportunities God has given us.

Does that make sense? Does that distinction help? Talents are our natural God given abilities and skills are the things that we develop over time through opportunities God gives us.

Our skills may not necessarily be directly related to our natural talents. They might be, but they might not.

And skills might be passed on by a parent or another teacher or mentor. We might follow our talents or our natural abilities into an education or career path.

If you feel a leaning towards working with people and helping them understand things, you might become a communicator or a writer or a journalist or a teacher, for example.

[29 : 08] But as we follow that initial leading, as we follow a direction where our talents and our natural aptitudes lead us, we develop skills along the way as well.

So regardless of what the combination of talents or skills are that we possess, we need to constantly remind ourselves, I believe, that our purpose is not to use them to please ourselves.

Our purpose is to use these things that God has given us to bring glory to him and to serve others. And as God is our father, we have brothers and sisters in the family of God.

We're part of a larger family that's different from our family of origin. And speaking of that larger family of God and using the analogy of a body, you probably won't be surprised where I'm going.

But as we know, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12, verses 12 to 27, Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

[30 : 19] For we were all baptized by one spirit, so as to form one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free. And we were all given the one spirit to drink.

Even so, the body is not made up of one part, but many. Now, if the foot should say, because I'm not a hand, I don't belong to the body, it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact, God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, I don't need you.

The head cannot say to the feet, I don't need you. On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable. And the parts that we think are less honorable, we treat with special honor.

[31 : 41] And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty. While our presentable parts need no special treatment. Hear this now.

Now, you are the body of Christ.

Every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now, you are the body of Christ.

And each one of you is a part of it. So this morning, I haven't specifically addressed the subject of spiritual gifts.

The gifts that come when we accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord. When the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. And as I said at the beginning this morning, this morning's topic is a huge one.

[32 : 46] So I hope to cover the topic of spiritual gifts in a future sermon series. And for the record, my wife liked that idea. So if you don't like it, you can blame her.

And if you like it, you can thank her. So there you go. So I believe it would be valuable for us as a church body to go through this process of spiritual gift assessments in our church.

To affirm those gifts in individuals as we identify them. And to help people recognize their spiritual gifts and step into them. Engage them.

Be enriched in them. If they're not currently aware of what they are. And the Bible reminds us over and over of our talents.

That our abilities come from God. And that he's equipped us for a specific purpose. And he has a plan for us.

[33 : 48] So now when we reflect back on the parable of the talents. We recognize that regardless of how large our sphere of influence is.

How big an impact we may perceive we have. How many talents we may recognize that we have been given. Regardless of those things.

We are called to be faithful in managing and investing what we've been given. Paul adds a valuable perspective on the way we use our talents and gifts as well.

In Philippians 2 verses 3 and 4. Paul says. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather in humility value others above yourselves.

Not looking to your own interests. But each of you to the interests of the others. Our goal should always be therefore. Not to please ourselves.

[34 : 50] But to serve others. I don't know about you. But I've often found that the greatest sense of personal joy I get. Comes when I use my God given talents to draw attention to him.

Or to serve someone else. That's the time when I usually feel the greatest joy. And it can be easy at times to be discouraged by what we wish we had.

If only. Right? Or jealous of the talents someone else has that we don't. I look at Vern in our church. And how skilled a musician he is.

Or Leah or some of the others. Or I look at Sue. Or Marg. Or other people who are so great with cooking. And creative skills in that way.

Or I look at people who serve and serve and serve. Without ever being asked. And I'm deeply moved by those things. And I often think. Why don't I have those gifts God?

[35 : 52] But my friends recognize this morning. That God has uniquely gifted you. You. He's given you the talents that you need. To accomplish the plan that he has for you.

Take comfort in that. Have confidence in that. And as you reflect on. As you recognize. As you celebrate your God given talents.

Ask your heavenly father. To help you to be a wise steward. Of the talents he's given you. Of the skills that he's given you opportunities to develop.

Ask him to bring you more opportunities. To grow. To learn. But most importantly. To use your talents. To use your skills. To help.

To bless other people. And ultimately. To bring. Glory. To your heavenly father. As the good.

[36 : 54] As the giver. Of every good. And perfect gift. Amen. Let's pray. Father God. Thank you that every. Good and perfect gift comes from you.

The father of heavenly lights. But you are more than the creator of the universe. You are our creator. You are our father. And our friend. And so father.

On this father's day. May we be mindful of. The fact that. Our ultimate father. Our God. Watches over us. Gives us opportunities.

And skills. And talents. And so many more blessings. Than we can possibly ask. Or ever imagine. Father thank you for your provision for us. For us.

I pray a blessing on each one. I pray that you would bring. Encouragement. And care. And peace. Where it's needed today. And Lord. May fathers be encouraged.

[37 : 52] May they feel blessed. And may they feel your face shining upon them. When we pray all these things. In the name of your son. Jesus Christ. Amen. Our benediction this morning.

Reflects the message. That you might find familiar. From Luke 12. But it's paraphrased here a bit. Do not worry about anything in life.

What you'll eat. Or what you'll wear. Look at the birds of the air. Or the flowers in the field. If God takes such good care. Of such transient things. How much more can you depend on God.

To care for you. For you have a father who loves you. A father who knows all your needs. So don't be afraid.

Instead live lives of love and generosity. Sharing your talents and skills with everyone you meet. In doing that.

[38 : 50] You'll be storing up treasure in heaven. Instead of here on earth. My friends. Go in peace. And be blessed.

Happy Father's Day. And have a great week. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Go in peace.

Amen. Yahoo! ■glas Unidos Amen. Wayante. Amen. Sign Studios. Do you have it? Paschen■■ers.

Agacle. inan trouble. You know how many others. Do you know how many others are persevered. Probably be the most precious things. Did you know? So maybe. Yeah.