

Sowing To The Spirit

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 January 2020

Preacher: Mike Salvati

[0:00] Well, the Salvadis just got back from a vacation, and it was great. So we're refreshed, refocused, and I'm raring to go.

But I had this privilege of coming back to preaching a sermon this morning on giving. And it's a really interesting situation because I started asking myself, when was the last time I preached on giving and I couldn't remember?

And so I just want to make sure you are all understanding why I'm preaching this sermon on giving. In fact, let me begin by saying why I'm not preaching this sermon on giving.

I'm not preaching this sermon on giving because we're behind in our giving. If you look at our budget, we've got this little kind of layout where our budgeted, projected giving should be and where our actual giving is, and we're a little bit behind right now.

We're aware of it, but we're not concerned about it. We've got some great godly people who are paying attention to these things. But that's not why I'm preaching this sermon. It may help. Nor am I preaching this sermon because I don't think I get paid enough.

[1:10] So start off the new year, hey, jingle, jingle, help us out a little bit more. No, Jenny and I, Billy and his family, Matt and his family, Mary, you take care of us so well. So I'm not preaching this because I think I need to get paid more.

So here's why I'm preaching this sermon. It's the next in line. We're committed here at Christ the King Church to preach expository sermons, to preach through books of the Bible as a whole.

And so we preach a section at a time, typically through the book of Galatians. And today I'm to preach Galatians 6, 6 through 10, which is about giving.

And so what this is about is the health of this particular body, that we exercise a spiritual grace of giving.

So this is about how we use our money and resources, which brings me to this point. Classically, there are two groups of people when it comes to money and the using of money.

[2:16] There are the spenders and then there are the savers. And so if you're familiar with the old Miller Lite commercials that say, taste great or less filling, when it comes to money, most people are like, spend more or save more.

That's kind of how it boils down to. But this morning, what I want you to see through this passage is, it's not so much whether you're a spender or a saver, it's if you're a sower of your money to the Spirit for the good of others.

And so this morning, the Spirit is going to be seeking to grow us in our giving. And speaking of the Holy Spirit, I'm not sure if you've been following the book of Galatians, but the beginning of the book of Galatians, chapters 1 through 4, it's primarily about the gospel.

Christ died on the cross. This offering of salvation to all people, and we receive this gift by faith alone in Christ alone. There's nothing we can add to that to earn our salvation.

And so chapters 1 through 4 of Galatians is primarily about the gospel, what God has done for us in Christ. And then we turn a corner into chapter 5 and 6. And so there's a big emphasis on the Holy Spirit in chapters 5 and 6.

[3:36] And so what we see here is what Christ has done for us, our freedom in the gospel, we live out by walking by the Spirit.

The Spirit of God has come to dwell in each of us so that we could live out the freedom accomplished by Christ. And if you're wondering where all this is coming from, this is actually prophesied in the Old Testament.

This is the age of the new covenant established by Jesus. Jeremiah 31 and 33 point to this. Ezekiel 36 point to this age of the Spirit. Joel 2 talked about this outpouring of the Spirit.

Pentecost and Acts 2. It's the fulfillment of what was predicted in Joel 2. We now, because of what Christ has done, we live in the power of the Spirit.

We live out the freedom accomplished by Christ in the power of the Spirit. And again, I just want to clarify something here.

[4:36] When we talk about the Holy Spirit, we're not talking about a what. We're talking about a who. Just as God the Father is a person, and just as God the Son is a person, God the Holy Spirit is a person.

So He's personally active in each of our lives as believers to bring about God's purposes. And when Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit in John 16, 14, He said of the Spirit, He will glorify me.

So we can be assured of this, that the person of the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in each one of us so that ultimately we would glorify Christ with our lives. Live out the freedom.

But I just want to make another observation for you too. Do you remember who inspired people to write the Scriptures? It was the Holy Spirit, 2 Peter 1.21.

The Holy Spirit moved men along to write down what God intended. So here's how to think about walking by the Holy Spirit. It's not some kind of mystical, kind of trance-like state we get into.

[5:43] It is rather being acted upon by the Holy Spirit, trusting in Him. The goal is to glorify Christ according to the very words the Holy Spirit inspired authors to write.

So when we walk by the Holy Spirit, when Galatians 5.16, we walk by the Spirit, or 5.18, we are led by the Spirit, or 5.26, we are to keep in step with the Spirit, or Romans chapter 8, we are to set our minds on the Spirit.

We are actually, in doing so, seeking to exalt Christ by living according to His Word, and it will be a blessing to all around us, because it will fulfill the command to love your neighbor as yourself.

And so when we get into the end of Galatians 5, we are told those who live by the Spirit, keep in step with the Spirit. If you've been born again by the Spirit, you will live in the power of the Spirit.

And then what we see in the early in chapter 6, are examples of keeping in step with the Spirit. Gently restoring a brother or sister caught in a trespass, it's keeping in step with the Spirit.

[7:01] Bearing one another's burdens and fulfilling the law of Christ, it's keeping in step with the Spirit. Soberly, accurately seeing yourself in relationship to others, you're not thinking of yourself more highly, you don't think of something when you're not, judgment's in coming, that's walking by the Spirit.

And so now, as we turn to chapter 6, verses 6 through 10, which is a passage about giving, it's a way we live out the Spirit. It's a way we live out our freedom in Christ.

The Spirit is at work in each of us, leading us to so generously for the good of others. Now, if you look at this passage, chapter 6, 6 through 10, there's no mention of money.

You don't see the word money. It's not in there. You might go, Jerry Maguire, show me the money. Show me the money. Here's what I can show you.

The word good. Let the one who's taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. Paul is not telling the congregation to compliment the pastor on a good sermon.

[8:21] I would welcome that. But he's saying something more significant than that. So that word good then shows up in verse 9 again.

And let us not grow weary in doing good. Look at verse 10. As we have opportunity to let us do good to everyone. This good is the good of loving people materially with your possessions and with your finances.

That's the good you're to share with those who teach God's Word. That's the good you're to do to everyone, especially the household of faith. Now if you've got a question about the sowing and reaping, which is in verse 7 and 8, that metaphor, sowing and reaping, is an agricultural metaphor, planting and harvesting.

It's used all throughout the Bible. But the only other place Paul uses it is in 2 Corinthians 9. And you know what that section is about? Giving.

A cheerful giver. So what I want to lay out at the beginning is this passage, 6, 6 through 10, is about giving generously of what we have to others.

[9:34] So if I were to boil it down to 11 words, it would be this. Sow your money to the Spirit for the good of others.

That's what God wants of us. To sow our money, sow our material possessions, to sow them to the Spirit for the good of others.

And so, let's unpack this. And the way we're going to unpack this, there are four moves in this passage. First, in verse 6, you see the command to give. Second, in verses 7 and 8, there's a warning related to giving.

And then in verse 9, there's some encouragement when it comes to giving because we can all get a little weary and want to give up. And then in verse 10, we have conclusion.

To give generously. Sow. Sow your money to the Spirit for the good of others. Now let's look at this command a little bit more in detail.

[10:39] Verse 6. Let the one who has taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. That word share is a command. In the original language, in the Greek language that this is written in, verse 6 starts emphatically with the word koinonia.

Share. It's emphatic. Now that word, we get the word koinonia from. If you're familiar with Greek, that means it can be translated fellowship or partnership.

If you flip over a couple books to your right to the book of Philippians, Paul uses that word quite a bit with the Philippian church. If you look at Philippians chapter 1, verses 3 through 5, we read this.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you, all making my prayer with joy because of your koinonia in the gospel from the first day until now.

Now if you flip over a couple more pages in the book of Philippians to chapter 4, in verse 14, he says, yet it was kind of you to koinonia my trouble, to share my trouble.

[11:48] And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into koinonia with me in giving and receiving, except you only.

this command to share is a command to partner, to work together to a particular end.

Notice who this command is to in Galatians 6. Let the one who's taught the word, the one who's taught the word, the one who receives God's word, they are to share all good things.

So all of you who regularly benefit from the preaching of the word on Sunday morning, this is specifically aimed at you. Share all good things.

Share of your financial resources. Share of your material possessions. Partner. With who? Well, it's right there in the text. Let the one who's taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.

[12:57] The preacher. The person proclaiming the word. And so what we have here is a very interesting relationship within the body of Christ. We have a congregation who is receiving and benefiting from the work, from the word that the preacher's preaching.

And corresponding to that, the congregation is sharing in all their good possessions to help that preacher keep preaching faithfully. Have you heard the phrase sharing is caring?

It has all kinds of nuances in this passage. Now it's a little awkward to talk about this. It's pretty awkward to preach about it. But we have nothing to be ashamed of because this is the way that God has designed it.

He's designed the body to work together for a reason. It's right here in Holy Rich. So if you want to get crass about it, make sure you're paying your pastor. Make sure you're freeing up his time so that he can be preaching the word.

In Christ the King Church, you do that faithfully. But I want to point to something else that may not be obvious. It's why. Now remember, back in the day, the Galatians, if you remember the history of what's going on here, Paul is writing this letter because there's been some false teachers that have gotten into the Galatian churches and they're preaching a false doctrine and it's resulting in great discord and confusion and hurt to the churches.

[14:37] And so the reason why Paul is saying this to these churches in Galatia, hey, make sure you're paying your pastor. It's for the health of the church because there's this threat of false doctrine.

And so when we read here, you make sure you must share all good things with the one who is teaching the word, those who receive the word. It's the word of the gospel revealed in the Bible. Ultimately, this is incredibly pragmatic. God is very concerned about the health of His church, the doctrinal health of His church. And so He wants churches to be freeing up their preachers to be able to invest the sweetest time of their weeks in order to providing faithful, wholesome sermons that feed the flock, inform the flock, so that the flock lives in freedom.

I have a nephew. His name is Benton. We call him Biebs. Biebs likes to pepper me with questions about what I do.

How long do you preach? 40 minutes. How long does it take you to prepare a 40-minute sermon? 15 to 20 hours? When I think about if I were holding down a 40 to 50-hour job, trying to prepare a faithful sermon for this congregation, I can't tell you the kind of gratitude I have to be able to have my sweetest hours of the week freed up to pour myself into preparing sermons to feed you all so that you can live in the good of the freedom of what Christ has done.

[16:31] Ultimately, behind this command to share and for us to partner is the health of the church. Sharing is caring. Not just for me, not just for the other pastors, not just for you, but for the health, the spiritual health of this congregation.

Sow your money to the Spirit for the good of others. Now let me point you to the warning in verses 7 and 8. We read, Do not be deceived.

God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that will he also reap. Now when you initially read that, you're kind of like, well this is coming out of nowhere. In fact, if you're reading out of the NIV, the NIV makes verse 6 its own paragraph and then 7 through 10 its own paragraph.

It kind of disconnects it to. But it's all related because remember in verse 6 we have this speaking of sharing in good things with the preacher. And then in verses 9 and 10 we come back to doing good to everyone, especially those of the household of faith.

And so the sowing and reaping, don't mock God, is in the middle of that. It's got everything to do with our giving. And we learn from verse 3 in Galatians 6 that it's already possible to deceive yourself as a Christian.

[17:49] To think of yourself more highly than you ought. Well, it's very possible to deceive yourself when it comes to your giving. Don't be deceived.

God is not mocked. Here's some ways that we can deceive ourselves when in terms of our giving. One way is to say this. It's to think, I just have so little to give.

It really doesn't matter. Nobody will notice you're deceiving yourself. Because God notices. another version of this is, I can't afford to give.

I don't have any money to give. I don't have anything to give. What we're about to read is that you can't afford not to give.

Another version of this kind of deception of ourselves is this idea, especially for younger folks, it's, hey, I'm just starting out. I just got out of school. I got all this debt.

[18:52] When I get into a better place of financial health, then I'll start giving. The question is, is that what God's word calls you to? And if you look at a passage like Proverbs 3, 9 and 10, we are to honor God with our wealth, to give him of the first fruits of what we receive.

Don't deceive. Don't deceive yourself. Even if it means starting little, start. Another deception is this. I'll give whatever is left at the end of the month. And again, Proverbs 3, 9, 10 talks about trusting the Lord, honoring him with our wealth, giving of our first fruit, not leftovers.

others. Another deception is thinking, hey, you know what? God will provide for this church. They don't need me.

But what we're seeing here is that God has actually called those who benefit from the word, the ministry of the word of a particular church, to commit to that particular church financially.

[20:03] God is not mocked. That word, mocked, in the original language, carries the sense of turning your nose up to somebody.

When we dismiss God in terms of our giving, we're turning our nose up to him. Another way to say it is, you're not taking God seriously.

You're not taking God seriously. We must be taking God seriously because he has built into this world an undeniable principle of sowing and reaping.

Don't be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

All throughout the Bible, when we read about reaping, read about harvesting, oftentimes, more often than not, it has to do with God's judgment.

[21:08] Now, if you don't know what sowing and reaping is, it's another way of talking about planting and harvesting. And what the principle is, is what you plant, you will harvest.

It's a cause and effect relationship. It's actions and consequences. And generally speaking, it's at work in all of our lives because if you sow gossip, you will reap discord.

If you sow junk food into your body, you will reap unhealth of your body. If you sow lies, you will reap mistrust.

If you sow laziness, you will reap being unreliable. So generally speaking, this law of sowing and reaping is a law of cause and effect relationship.

But what I've been trying to argue is this cause and effect relationship, Paul is specifically applying it to our giving, our generosity. God is not mocked.

[22:20] This principle of cause and effect, of sowing and reaping, is in effect right now in your life. If you are sowing your money to greed, you will reap Ebenezer Scroogeism.

the isolation, the misery of being a humbug. It's not what the Spirit is seeking to do.

God is not mocked. In verse 8, Paul develops this sowing and reaping even more fully. And he drills down on the motivational level.

Do you remember in Galatians 5, 16 and 17, Matt preached this a couple weeks ago. What essentially Paul says there is that your person, if you're a Christian, your person is an incarnate war zone between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit.

Because both simultaneously indwell you. The desires of the Spirit oppose the desires of the flesh and vice versa. The desires of the flesh are marked by selfishness.

[23:37] me. The desires of the flesh are relationally destructive. If you were to raise a banner over the desires of the flesh, it wouldn't be love your neighbor, it would be use your neighbor.

The desires of the Spirit are not self-oriented, but others-oriented. Love your neighbor as yourself.

The desires of the Spirit do not destroy relationships, they strengthen relationships.

I mean, if you look at the fruit of the Spirit, the majority of the fruit of the Spirit has to do with one another. Strengthening the body of Christ. If you were to raise a banner over the desires of the Spirit, it would be love your neighbor.

That's the picture in 5, 16, and 17. You are a war zone. But that's not the picture in verse 8. The picture that Paul paints is that you, Christian, are a living field waiting to be sowed and harvested.

And there are two furrows in that field. Do you know what a furrow is? You know when you're driving out of the county in May and you see those rows of corn but they're just rows of dirt?

[25:05] That's a furrow. And every Christian you have two furrows that every financial decision you are planting into one of those furrows.

A furrow of the flesh and a furrow of the Spirit. And when you put a financial choice into the furrow of the flesh, do you know what from that flesh you will reap?

Corruption. rotteness. How do you like that for a harvest? But if by faith you decide to sow your resources into the furrow of the Spirit, do you know what you reap from the Spirit?

You will reap eternal life. Fruit of the Spirit. It's future too. It's judgment. you will reap.

The one who sows to his own flesh will from his flesh reap corruption but the one who sows to the Spirit who is walking by the Spirit when it comes to their finances.

[26:15] Who are being led by the Spirit when they come to their finances. Who are keeping in step with the Spirit in their finances. Who set their mind on the Spirit when it comes to their finances.

That person they're investing in the Spirit and doing good to others. That's what we're aiming at Christ the King Church.

Trusting in the Spirit sowing generously to Him for the good of others. what you do with your money reveals who you are ultimately trusting.

And if you've been freed by Christ you've been freed from living for cash. Freed to live for Christ. So if you are sowing to the Spirit if you're giving to the support of this church if you're giving to help everyone you come into contact and need especially the household of faith what that evidence is is that you belong to God.

You've been born again. You've been set free and eternity with God awaits. But it works both ways. If our sowing to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life then if we're sowing to the flesh from the flesh we will reap eternal corruption.

[27:43] it evidences who your ultimate trust is and whether you've been converted or not. So this warning is this don't deceive yourself God's not mocked hey he's going to judge someday.

This reaping is an illusion to judgment that's why God is not mocked. He sees where you're sowing. He knows who you're ultimately trusting.

That's why when you reap it will be just. Our giving matters to God. Martin Luther talked about it this way every Christian experiences three conversions the conversion of his heart the conversion of his mind and the conversion of his wallet.

it evidences who you trust. Who you're living for. So be warned. Sow your money to the spirit not to the flesh for the good of others not for your own gain.

Now let's look at some encouragement. Encouragement in our giving. We see this in verse 9 and let us not grow weary of doing good for in due season we will reap if we do not give up.

[29:11] Don't give up in your giving. Don't give up. Now sometimes giving faithfully and sacrificially gets wearying and discouraging.

Here's something that I'm not sure if you face. I know I am challenged by this from time to time. You're giving faithfully you're giving sacrificially and you start looking around and you realize that other people with the same kind of income as you have they're able to do all sorts of fun stuff but you're not able to do that fun stuff because you're giving sacrificially and so what happens as soon as you start looking around you start comparing yourself to others and the lifestyles people are living and you start to go fleshly.

comparison can quickly result in envy and covetousness and in gratitude and in discontent.

Weariness discouragement leads to giving up. I mean if you've started some kind of exercise regiment with a new year and you're not seeing the results you're going to get discouraged and you're going to be like forget about it.

If you're more aware of what you're giving up than what you're giving to you're going to be discouraged and you're going to want to give up. You know what you need a healthy dose of?

[30:53] Look where Paul goes. And let us not grow weary of doing good. Antidote for in due season we will reap judgment.

Paul's antidote to discouragement to encourage you is to say judgment's coming. Everybody's going to stand before God someday.

He's going to hold us accountable to what we do with our finances. He's going to hold us accountable to what we do with what he gives us. So Paul says don't grow weary in doing good. Don't give up on your giving because in due season we will reap. And what we've just talked about this reaping is this harvesting judgment.

You remember the parable of the talents in Matthew 25? A landowner entrusts servants, three of his servants with some money and he leaves and he comes back holds them accountable and two of them get a big return one of them just kind of throws it in the ground and doesn't get anything for it.

[32:05] And for those who invested their talents wisely do you remember what the master said to them? Well done good and faithful servant enter the joy of your master.

Could you imagine this someday? If you're growing weary in your giving imagine this someday. You're standing before the Lord and he says well done good and faithful giver.

Enter the joy of your master. That will help your weariness. That will help your discouragement. It will put strength in your heart to say I am not going to get sidetracked by the pleasures and joys everybody else is living with their extra money.

I'm going to keep giving it to what I know is most important. The advancement of God's word. This due season is God's judgment and it is the antidote for discouragement.

At the judgment God will reward us. We may see a return now but we'll definitely see a reward then. That's what we aim at. So don't give up in your giving.

[33:20] Be encouraged. God's not mocked. You're reward in due time. Keep giving. And now the conclusion.

Give generously. Verse 10. So then as we have opportunity let us do good to everyone especially to those who are of the household of heaven. There's the do-gooding again. When Paul uses the word so then in verse 10 he's kind of wrapping this up.

He's bringing it to a close. And as he says as we have opportunity that's very helpful because that informs us that we're just not to go give money to everybody everywhere as we have opportunity. As opportunities present themselves. Be generous. Now I just want to help you think about something right now. This as we have opportunity is actually a limited window.

It's in between where we're at right now and when we stand before our God to give an account. In this in-between time we have a window of opportunity to be generous.

[34:33] And Paul focuses our generosity on two groups of people. See in verse 10 he starts by saying as we have opportunity let us do good to everyone.

That's anyone. Anyone who comes to you in need. Especially non-Christians. It includes your extended family.

If people are coming to you and they're asking for some kind of help this passage compels us to help them materially. Now we've got to be wise and loving.

It's because sometimes the best thing for you to do for somebody is not to give them cash. So for example we have a policy here at the church. We don't hand cash to people.

If someone needs gas we bring them right over here to the station on the corner and fill them up. If somebody needs food we bring them to the grocery store. If someone needs clothes we bring them to a clothes store. We go with them and help them meet their material needs.

[35:38] So we need to exercise discretion because when you hand cash out that can be challenging for some people. But don't lose sight of the main point. Because we've been set free by Christ and we're walking by the Spirit we're to be generous with all people.

It's to mark us. So the first group of people here is everyone. The second group of people is a subset of the first. especially those of the household of faith.

In New Testament terms a household is a family. And that word especially think of that as prioritizing. Do good to everyone and give priority to your family of faith.

Help everybody but especially your brothers and sisters in Christ which includes your pastor. as Christians united together as a family walking by the Spirit means sowing to the Spirit for the good of one another.

We have a benevolence fund as a church. It literally means a do good fund to the members of our church. But you don't need to wait for the church to act for you to do good to others.

[37:00] I want you to notice that this is not an either or proposition. Either help non-Christians or help your brothers and sisters in Christ.

It's both and. Sow to the Spirit for the good of all others but prioritize your brothers and sisters in Christ.

That's how we're to live. The conclusion he draws is be generous to all. So we've seen the command.

We've seen the warning. We've seen some encouragement and now the conclusion. Sow your money to the Spirit for the good of others. Now some diagnostic questions.

Have you forgotten how generous God has been to you? have you forgotten that God is the giver of all things? He's the greatest of all givers and he's given the greatest gift at the greatest expense so that you could be in relationship with him.

[38:15] Never forget that. That is a tremendous source of joy in your giving. It's a source of gratitude. gratitude. God loves a cheerful giver.

Second question. How can you get these categories of sowing to the flesh and sowing to the Spirit on your mind when you're using your debit card?

So wouldn't it be good if you cruise over to some kind of store and you're like I got a hankering to buy something and you're about to kind of put your credit card through the swiper thing or the click thing and you're like hmm I wonder is what I'm about to do is this sowing to my flesh or sowing to the Spirit?

Now that's maturity. That's walking by the Spirit. That's growth. That's taking steps. That's health. One of the ways you can do that is by just simply memorizing Galatians 6, 7, and 8.

Get it on your mind so that the Spirit can use it in your mind. Directing your steps. Here's a third diagnostic question.

[39:44] Have you been presuming have you been presuming on others to be financially responsible for the gospel ministry of this church?

Have you been assuming other people will take care of it? What would you call that? If you have been what would be a wise and good next step?

of repentance and faith. For any change to take place, it starts with godly sorrow, godly repentance. Lasting change only happens when it begins with godly repentance.

And so that might just mean for you saying, all right, I haven't been giving as I ought, I'll take a step. Now, I was going to include some practical steps. If you'd like some practical steps, please, talk to me after the service.

But there's one more diagnostic question that I want to ask. Let's say that you have been faithfully giving and sacrificially giving here at Christ the King Church.

[41:00] And you're tempted to look around you and say, huh, I wonder if they're giving. Huh, I wonder what they're doing with their money.

if you're being tempted out of some kind of position of arrival of what other people are giving, let me just redirect your gaze to the first question.

Have you forgotten of what God has done for you? What he's given for you? we're all going to give an account someday.

So, let's sow to the Spirit. Sow what means we have to the Spirit for the good of others starting with this church and moving out.

God be praised and may God be exalted. Let's pray. God in heaven, we thank you so much for the money you've entrusted to us.

[42:09] You do say in your word that we're to be faithful with a little and then you will entrust us more. God, would you help us to be faithful, to walk by your Spirit in our generosity with others.

God, thank you so much that we as a people can do this together, walking together in the power of your Spirit, to be generous to all. God, thank you so much for the faithful givers in this congregation already.

Would you help us to excel still more? God, to give freely and sacrificially to what you are doing for the glory of your name and the good of others.

It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.