

We Will... Give (Luke 12:13-21)

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- [0 : 0 0] Thank you, Brendan and team. Good morning, church. Good morning, church.
- All right. I want to welcome you this morning if you're with us here in person or via online. Thank you for joining us this morning.
- We are continuing a series this morning around our membership covenant and we will be looking at our commitment this morning to we will give and go ahead and turn open to Luke 12.
- We'll get there eventually. I've got some introductory thoughts and verses I want to look at before we get to the actual text this morning. Let me pray for us and then we'll dive in.
- Father, it's good to be here this morning. It's good to be with your people. It's good to lift our voices. Lord, you are our greatest treasure. We need to be reminded of that.
- [1 : 0 4] As we sing the words to these songs, as we hear your word taught and proclaimed and we fellowship build up one another.
- Lord, I pray that great ministry would occur this morning amongst your people. We ask now that you would speak to us. Thank you for giving us your word.
- Ask Holy Spirit that you would empower me and clear my mind and give me unctored spirit and Lord, we'll give you thanks for what you accomplished in each of us.
- We love you, Jesus, privileged to worship you in this way. In your name we pray. Amen. So, from our membership covenant, this is what this particular commitment reads like.
- It says, we will give cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.
- [2 : 0 9] We will give cheerfully. We know that all of life is to be worshiped. We consider the words of Paul in Romans 12, one that our lives are like a living sacrifice, that all of us is to be offered unto the Lord, even how we view and we utilize our pocket books.
- And I think the way that we handle our finances actually exposes a lot in terms of where our heart is at. I think it often will expose the degree and depth of worship in each of us.
- We spend our money. We use our resources on that which we deem valuable. So all of life is to be worshiped. And maybe you heard the commitment that I just read and you're just thinking, great, Jay, a sermon on tithing.
- Do you not know? I can't afford gas. Do you not know that we aid out this week and we went to the food court in Costco? Because it's all we could afford.
- And I have some good news. We're not actually going to be talking about tithing, per se, this morning. That's the good news. In fact, as New Testament believers, we're not actually required to give a tithe.
- [3 : 2 9] Tithe. In the Hebrew, Maser, it actually is translated in a number of places as simply a tenth, where we get that idea from.
- And to give a tithe, it was required for God's ancient people under the Mosaic law. It was actually a concept present before it was written into the Mosaic law.

Of course, we see a first instance of this in Genesis 14, where Abraham gives a tithe to the tenth of his resources to the king of Salem.

He has this really interesting interaction with this sort of enigmatic character, Melchizedek. And Melchizedek is described in Genesis 14 as the king of righteousness or the priest of the most high God.

Who is the king of righteousness? Well, that's Jesus. And I would actually propose that Melchizedek is an Old Testament. You call it a Christophany, an appearance of Jesus in the Old Testament.

[4 : 35] So we have that in Genesis 14. In Genesis 28, we see Jacob has a dream and experience with God. God reiterates a promise to him of the land that he's going to give to Jacob.

And then Jacob commits a tenth of all that he has unto the Lord. And we see evidence of tithing already present. And then within the Mosaic law, it was written in that the 10% of what you earned or you grew was given to the tabernacle or to the temple.

It was used, much of it was used to compensate the priests and the Levites who served in these places. But as New Testament believers, we're not under this obligation anymore.

Rather, we are encouraged to set aside a portion of our income and give it as a free will offering.

It is an act of worship unto the Lord. Paul says it this way in 1 Corinthians 16, 2. He says, on the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside.

[5 : 41] And that money, it funds ministry that's done here at fourth and beyond, both locally and globally.

And so maybe you're asking yourself, well, how much should I give? Well, we have a New Testament principle, right, that we give freely, but we give commensurate to our means.

And we see this in a few instances. In 2 Corinthians 8, verses two and three, Paul is speaking about and commending actually the churches in Macedonia.

He says, for a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part, for they gave according to their means as I can testify and beyond their means of their own accord.

We also have an instance in Acts 11, verse 29, speaking about the church at Antioch. He says, so the disciples determined everyone according to his ability to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.

[7 : 02] They're assisting there, the famine in that region at that time. And so we see instances of believers being generous with the resources the Lord has entrusted to them.

And maybe that is 10%, maybe that is less, maybe that is more. We have sort of adopted a 10% pattern from Old Testament tithing.

And actually if we were to take the Old Testament pattern, if you were to put together all of the different offerings and the festivals and all that you gave, you're actually closer to probably 23, 24%.

But I think 10% is certainly a great place to start. So that is the principle, the New Testament principle. We give freely commensurate to our means, but we also give with a particular attitude.

We give cheerfully as our commitment is, we will give cheerfully as an act of worship unto the Lord. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9, verses 6 and 7, he says, the point is this, whoever so sparingly will also reap sparingly.

[8 : 12] Whoever so is bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver.

So that is the attitude that should accompany giving. It's not under compulsion. We never lock the doors and pass the plate. And then if we don't get enough, we pass it again.

We never do that here. It's between you and the Lord, something that you need to know whatever you give. The pastoral staff, we don't know. We just assume you guys are all putting like Benjamins, you know, in the boxes every time you gather.

We have no idea. We haven't, and that's purposeful because actually it is, we take it seriously. It is between you and the Lord. And I love this attitude that we're to give cheerfully, right?

Cheerfully. Did you imagine setting up a date night with, let's say it's a husband with a wife and you take her out and yeah, it's the Costco food court, granted we have, right, we're all there.

[9 : 16] And you're just like, man, I can't believe I got to go out and you're just sort of like, you know, kind of like, yeah, just kind of doing it. It's not, and you kind of grumble the whole time and you're not really good conversationalists and how, how, how would your wife respond, men?

Okay, granted, you took her to the food court. So it's not great, all right? You didn't start out strong, but she'd probably be like, she wouldn't receive it.

It wouldn't bless her. And so I think the same should be true in terms of how we give. It's not begrudgingly. It's not under compulsion. We do it as an act of worship unto the Lord.

And noticing that passage from 2 Corinthians 9 says, whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly. Whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully, right?

Based upon what we give, what we sow, it will determine the harvest yield. It will determine the impact for the gospel that we have in this life.

[10 : 20] And God actually wants to use all of us in this regard. God loves to use ordinary people. So as we give, we're investing in gospel ministry, and there's joy in participating.

And this is simply the law of the harvest. This is God's law of the harvest. And it's actually true in every area of life, right? If you study, you're disciplined to study, you sow like hard work into your studies, and you, you could become something.

You could become a doctor, or you could become an engineer, or you could grow, grow a business, right? So sparingly in your studies, the law of the harvest, you're probably going to be a courtesy clerk for a very long time.

I was one for a couple years, but I aspired to something more. We sow sparingly, and we'll see the fruit of.

You do that in relationships. You know that it will cause a relationship to wither if you don't pour into it. You give little of yourself, and it'll affect the law of the harvest.

[11 : 28] It will, it will diminish the joy in that relationship at the very least. Now, Jesus actually tells us a story to his followers to digest this call for us to be a giving people, a generous people that sow into his work.

And he tells us a story related to this in Luke chapter 12, and that's where we're going to focus our time this morning, looking at this story, this story of a rich fool that Jesus tells.

And so it begins in verse 13. We'll read the first couple, few verses 13 to 15. Luke writes, someone in the crowd said to him, teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

But he said to him, man, who made me a judge or arbiter over you? And he said to them, take care and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

So we meet a central character in this story. He's just introduced to us as, as a face in the crowd, someone in the crowd.

[12 : 45] And so this could be any of us. And I sort of want to take that posture this morning that this easily could have been us, right? This man on this particular afternoon in the crowd listening to Jesus.

And what we find out about this individual is he's having a hard time listening to Jesus. And it's not because Jesus is not engaging. Jesus is a great teacher.

He's a great storyteller. He's very engaging. But this man's having a hard time listening because he is distracted.

There is something that has gotten under his skin. He was present while not being present. And I would say he was passively listening because there's something in his spirit that he is ready to share.

He is, he has chambered that round and he is, he's ready to share this word. He's not really engaging in the things that Jesus is talking about. He's distracted.

[13 : 48] And he's distracted by a real or a perceived injustice. And so he comes to Jesus, teacher, rabbi, with a question or typical to come to a rabbi asking to render a judgment on something.

And he comes in really the wrong time. But he makes a request of Jesus. He says, teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

So what is this man's big concern that has occupied so much of his imagination for perhaps too long?

Because Jesus has been teaching, he doesn't come to him and say, Jesus, how can I receive eternal life? Right? Jesus, how can I be forgiven?

This man is completely tone deaf to the content of what Jesus is speaking about to the crowd. Because Jesus is saying, don't fear man.

[14 : 53] Fear the individual that can actually send you to hell. Fear God. Acknowledge me before others. And so Jesus is actually with this crowd sharing gospel words.

This man doesn't even hear. The thing that's stirring in his head is, you know, Jesus, my brother is ripping me off. And then he says those words that we have never uttered, but we have heard others uttered.

That's not fair. See, you've never uttered them yourself. Have a hard time coming up with them. That's not fair.

Jesus is speaking about eternal realities. And this guy is complaining about his sibling getting more than him, like a little kid after Halloween.

My sibling got more candy. They got better candy. They got the big size candy bars and I got the fun size and it's not fair. It's not fair.

[15 : 58] It's not fair. This man has, think about it, he has a chance of a lifetime, right? He gets to speak to Jesus.

And it was remarkable that he even got the chance to have an interaction with Jesus because if we were to go back actually in verse one of this chapter, there's a ton of people present.

In verse one it says, many thousands of people had gathered. It's a massive crowd. And this guy gets an audience with Jesus and he has one shot to talk to the Son of God in his lifetime and he blows it.

He blows it. It is now November so I can use Christmas illustrations for the duration of the year. But this so reminds me of that film, a Christmas story where the kid wants a BB gun and he gets to go talk to Santa at the mall and he gets up there and he's waiting.

He's got it. He wants the red rider BB gun and it doesn't come out. Santa's like, what do you want? And he just, it frees nothing. It's blank. And I think that's, that's this guy.

[17 : 07] You get to talk to Jesus and this is the thing that you bring up. How hard does a person work for an inheritance?

It's not a wage. You know, the one thing we do know is our words expose our hearts.

Amen. Jesus even says that. Matthew 12 he says, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

And so this man's words were completely actually out of context to the topic, to the Gospel words that Jesus was speaking.

And I think it sheds priorities. It sheds light on the priorities of his life. And I would conjecture that this man has probably been complaining, brooding about money for a very long time.

[18 : 12] Here's a man who loves his possessions and might I add the possessions of others more than he loves God, at least at this stage in his life.

Not to throw any of my children under the bus. But we had a report when our 19 year old was three years old.

Maggie, sorry Maggie, I didn't clear this with you. I usually do church, but on occasion I don't. But we got word as a three year old, one of the older siblings, and I don't recall who, but I'm sure they're in the room.

They came and they were just worked up and they're like, dad, Maggie doesn't love God. And we're just like, what? What? What are you talking about?

Yeah, we asked her. We said, you know, she said she didn't love God. And I'm like, like, Maggie, she's three years old. She doesn't love God. So I had to do a little bit of like parents sleuth and I'm like, what specifically did you ask her?

[19 : 23] They said, well, we said, Maggie, do you love God or do you love American girl dolls?

They were confronting her idolatry at three, right? It's kind of a cute story. But it's not so cute when you're an adult, you're a man and you should know better.

And yet this is the status of his heart. This is what, you know, Jesus reads this man like a book and actually he calls out his idolatry because he says to him, be on your guard against all covetousness.

Right? You need to guard against a greedy heart, guard against it. Guard against always wanting more. Jesus knows what's in this man's heart.

He gets this man and he's concerned. And so he says very difficult words. Be on guard. He knows that one can aspire to gain the world.

[20 : 33] Says that in Matthew 16 and four feet one soul in the process. Now for those of us in Christ, we can't lose our salvation. Okay. We can't forfeit our soul once in Christ, always in Christ.

But we can forfeit something else. We can forfeit our joy. We can forfeit our usefulness.

We are just as susceptible. In fact, we are not only susceptible, we're conditioned by our flesh.

I think by our culture to want more. We are conditioned by the bounty around us to want to always want.

That is the cultural imperative of the day. And we hear it in the messaging all the time and all of the commercials because they're all suggesting that we're not complete without the thing that they're trying to sell us.

[21 : 39] Right? Your life will be complete if you get this, whatever this is. It could be a blender. It could be a vehicle, right?

Could be it could be a piece of clothing. It could be an experience. Gee, I don't struggle with stuff.

Well, experiences are possessions. I live in a tiny house. I just traveled to Iceland six times a year to look at the Northern Lights.

I don't have anything. Well, those are possessions. Those are possessions. We're conditioned.

We're our vocabulary, right? That's a good first car. Oh, it's a starter home. Like what other cultures even understand these concepts?

[22 : 39] We are conditioned to want bigger, to want better. Now, church, there is nothing wrong with wealth. Paul says it clearly in 1 Timothy 6, right?

He says, hey, but the rich and the aged be humble and joy, right? What you have from the Lord, but be generous. There's godly, rich folks in the Bible, like Abraham was flush with cash.

Job, a wealthy man. And it's wonderful because then Paul says, use that to be generous, right? Use that for ministry, right?

Lydia, successful entrepreneur. She housed the first church in Europe in her home. It's able to be a blessing because she possessed resources.

Joseph of Arimathea paid for the burial site for Jesus. So it's wonderful to have resources, utilize for gospel purposes, but money has potential to steal one's life if it becomes their God.

[23 : 52] That's not a life. Jesus always tells the church truth, amen. Jesus always tells the truth, amen. Okay.

This man, he gets a response that he was not prepared for because Jesus says, hey, one's life does not consist in the abundance of your possessions.

Jesus is telling the truth. Jesus essentially saying here, hey, he who dies with the most toys simply dies.

You don't win anything. You still die. Your life does not consist in the abundance of your possessions.

Church, wealth is not to be worshiped. It's not to be treasured above God. It's not even to be that which where we find our security.

[24 : 51] In fact, Paul in 1st Timothy 6:17 talks about the uncertainty of riches. The Proverbs puts it this way, Proverbs 18, 10, 11, the name of the Lord is a strong tower.

The righteous man runs into it and is safe. A rich man's wealth is his strong city like a high wall in his imagination.

That's a little poetry. Now for those of you in the Hermonudes class, you should have seen right there, you're like the light bulb just went on. You're like antithetical parallelism. Oh yeah, I see it.

Jay, that's so good. You're such a good teacher. I know that's what you were thinking. Wealth it says it's like a high wall in his imagination.

There's no protection. Wealth is a placebo. It's like the TSA point, the checkpoint in the airport.

[25 : 51] That's just security theater. Like if you're trusting your well being to some guy in a vest and a beeper wand and not the sovereignty of God, you need to adjust.

Okay. Wealth is a placebo. Jesus is calling this man out essentially saying, hey, don't worship it.

Don't trust in it. That's not a life. And then he goes on to tell a story to emphasize this warning. And it's really a pretty depressing story.

So it's so very postmodern. It's going to be great this morning. All right. Let's look at verse 16 to the end of it 21. And he told them a parable saying, the land of a rich man produced plenty of food.

Beautiful. Plenty of food. And he thought to himself, what shall I do? For I have nowhere to store my crops. And he said, I will do this.

[26 : 52] I will tear down my barns and I will build larger ones. And there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years.

Relax, eat, drink, be merry. For God said to him, but God said to him, fool, this night your soul is required of you and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?

So it is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God.

So the main character here. He's a self made individual. Lord working individual, very successful individual.

He owns land. Production is up. Business has been incredibly good. In fact, it says in verse 16, he produced plentifully.

[27 : 53] Right? So no doubt he is feeling very accomplished. Right? And there's nothing wrong with that. That's a gift from the Lord.

When you work hard, when you grow in your competence to do something there and you feel good, that's from the Lord. That's a gift.

But as this story goes, we find him at a crossroads in his life. Okay, there is a fork in the road that stands before him. And I will suggest that the entire trajectory of his life is based upon this one critical decision that he makes between verses 17 and verses 18.

Because in verse 17, he's climbed the ladder, he's reached success, and he says, I have nowhere to store my crops.

So in verse 17, he has all that he could ever want. He possesses more than he will ever use. And I will suggest that his choice boils down to this. It's the difference between living for the temporary, living for the now versus living for eternity.

[29 : 13] And there is a pause between these verses. And I'm not sure if he understands the ripple effect that will follow this decision. Most of us, we don't.

But he is at least in the place where he's asking the right question. He says, what shall I do? I possess all the stuff.

Now what? It's interesting because I've read this story a number of times this week over and over and over and I'm hoping that it will read differently between verse 17 and verse 18.

Like I'm rooting for this guy. Like make a better choice. Make the right decision. And almost internally as I read this, I'm yelling.

I'm not like Scott didn't come in this week and I'm in my office just yelling at the Bible. Like it wasn't audible. But internally I'm like give it away.

[30 : 14] Give it, do ministry with it. Live for eternity. Fight for joy. But this guy doesn't listen. It reminds me of Scrooge, Christmas illustrations, two months.

Just going to keep coming. And I think of like the scene in the Disney's rendition where Scrooge is there and he's at his counting desk and this gal that he's betrothed to is there and she's wonderful.

And he's like, I love my coins, not. And he's watching as like now an old man and it's killing him because he's like go after the girl.

She's wonderful. And he won't. And that's this guy here. He's not listening. This man makes his choice and it's this tight, fisted, selfish, tragic choice.

And we read about his decision in verse 18 because he says to himself, I'm going to tear down barns and build larger ones. I'm going to prepare to retire into oblivion clutching my possessions.

[31 : 30] So this man has climbed the ladder. All right, only to reach the top and discover. I'm leaning against the wrong building and God has a word for him.

And he says this fool. Fool. I don't know if you've ever been called a fool.

Maybe for some of you, it kind of energizes you. You got that fighter, not fight flight. You're like, you don't flight anything. You fight everything. And you're just like, they call me a fool.

I'm going to show them, right? And that competitive spirit comes out and you're thinking, man, I'm going to turn this thing around. But see this accusation, this man can't blow off.

This time it would sting perhaps for the first time. Why consider the source? This is a word from God and his estimation of us church, it's everything.

[32 : 30] And his assessment of this man is perfect. There's no rebuttal. There's no factors to measure in seen or unseen.

Because word towards this man, it will resound forever. Fool. This night, your soul is required of you.

So all the plans for his life, his savings, his possessions.

Other folks are going to use your stuff, not you. And it's tragic because this man possessed so much.

Nothing wrong with that. Only he, verse 21 says, laid up treasure for himself and wasn't what?

[33 : 32] Rich towards God. Is this story embodies this call to give unto the Lord from our resources to be rich towards God?

Generous towards God with what we possess. And I say it falls into three categories. This isn't just monetary. It's your time.

It's your talent. It is, yes, also your treasure. Why would we not live this way? Because this is who our God is.

Amen. He's so generous. He has been so generous. We're going to celebrate communion to be reminded of how generous he has been that he would not just bring a ransom.

He would become the ransom. Why would we not be generous towards God? Because it's who he is, but also everything's already his.

[34 : 44] The psalmist says it this way in Psalm 24-1, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.

Therefore, our church is healthier if it's comprised of 40 generous participants versus 400 stingy observers.

We will just be a more healthy church. And the more that grows, the healthier we become. And so I think the question for us this morning is where are we in that?

Who do we embody? Had a conversation with a gentleman, I would just say a couple of years ago, but I'm sure it's been, I mean, there's a lot of gray here.

I'm sure it's been many years, but I still remember it like it was yesterday because it was an individual who chronically came to church, often was critical, never gave of himself to anyone.

[35 : 47] I don't know monetarily what he was committed to in terms of worship to the Lord, but there was a Sunday he came and he said this and it was shocking. And that's why I remembered he says, Jay, I've been at this church a long time and I have been acting like a mosquito the whole time, just sucking life from the body.

I mean, apparently the man had an experience with the Lord that week. And I was just like, that's so illustrative, but yes, that's really well said.

That person got it, right? That maybe for the first time he realized church isn't for me. It's for me to be present, but it's not about me, right?

That we're a city on a hill, we're here to influence for God's glory, for the joy of others that have never heard good news. We're here to advance the gospel, proclaim the gospel here to edify and build up the body.

We come to give and we do it generously. We're here to give of our time. We're here to give of our talents. We're here to give of our treasures.

[37 : 02] And by the way, as we grow in this posture of being people that give generously, that give cheerfully as we participate in the work that God is doing through this particular local body, guess what?

It will curb in any of us and all of us a critical spirit. It's very hard to complain when you're serving. You're serving others.

You're seeing them built up, blessed. You begin to forget some of the things, some of the grievances, some of the stuff that maybe you kind of lost sleep over or been bothering you for a while.

But I love that image that that man had. I've been a mosquito. It wasn't in this church, by the way. No mosquitoes here. But kids, what do you do with mosquitoes?

What do you do with them? Right? I don't know why I did that. I'm not suggesting you do that to people. I'm not advocating violence this morning, right?

[38 : 07] But I do think there's probably a better insect that we could emulate, right? I think Proverbs says in Proverbs 6, the ant, right? That's a good one.

Not a slugger, right? Observe the ant. I'm going to suggest another insect. So clever. We're like, little insect parallel going on here this morning.

How about the honeybee? That's a great insect. Kids, you want to be a healthy member of fourth, be a honeybee, right? Hard working.

Honeybees are little miniature aircrafts built to carry out good works. That's pretty cool, right? They help flowers grow.

Fruit trees make fruit. Make delicious honey. I mean, amazing creatures. Do you know that honeybees, like, their wings beat 250 beats a second?

[39 : 04] 250? Like, no wonder they buzz. And then they communicate to one another, hey, ministry's happening over here.

Follow me. I'll show you where the nectar is. Come follow me. And then they do like a little dance. Like, what was that dance you showed? No. Scott doesn't dance. What they do, like, and they communicate, hey, there's some good work over here.

Let's do this. Great, great insect to observe. And I love that. Like, let's be generous participants, right? Let's be a church of honeybees.

Not the other insect. I'm done. How are we doing church in these areas with our time, right?

The 2080 rule is unbiblical, right? 20% labor, 80% of the church just kind of observes. You know, that will kill a church no matter how long it's been around.

[40 : 16] We all want to be participants. We all want to give generously. And it's more than the monetary. It's our time, perhaps our more precious commodity of the three.

It's our talent, understanding you have gifts to edify the body, that when we come on a Sunday that we're here to try to be a blessing to at least one person, just one, each and every time we gather to be present, to listen, to hear, to enter in, to pray, to encourage, to direct towards God's Word in some way, perhaps something they're going through, to speak into that, to love them, maybe to spend some time with them outside of our gathering.

And then our treasure, right? There is joy that you're missing by not partnering financially. And it really is a partnership church. We're partnering in the advance of the gospel.

We got to do that as a church when we sent off LGC. All of the work, all of the hard, the folks that come to me, Jesus as a result of that work, we're invested in, we're partnered in.

Like that's joy inducing. We have a stake in that. We have a share in that. It really is partnership. In fact, Paul says it in Philippians 4.15. He says, and you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership.

[41 : 40] He's talking about giving financially with me and giving and receiving except you only. We're partnering. And maybe you're here this morning, hey, it's hard.

I know. But the economy, I know. Think about the church staff, pastors, the staff. Like how bizarre if you were to go to your work and you got your paycheck and then you were just like, wow, thanks, I work at this company, but I think you just give me a little too much.

I want to give you back some of that. You guys are like, that's insane. I would never do that. But that's kind of what you do when you work at a church. Not really because we're giving it unto the Lord, but I just want you to understand like we're all vested here.

We're all invested here. Fourth, we will live or die based upon taking daily steps towards becoming this generous participating type of people as we give of our resources.

And it's a delight to participate. It's a joy. There's no joy in giving Jesus the minimum. In Leviticus five, there was a provision for sin offerings for God's ancient people.

[43 : 01] When you came, you could give lambs or you could give birds or you could even give flower based upon your position in life and your means.

But don't come with the minimum, right? If you can afford lambs, don't bring birds. And if you can afford birds, don't bring flower. And if you can afford flower, don't just give nothing, right?

And maybe you're here this morning, you're like, you can barely afford anything, but you've offered the widow's mite. And I would just say to you this morning, that's beautiful worship unto the Lord.

It's beautiful. And He receives that and He delights in that. And that will be the strength of our church as we stay centered on the gospel and as we all participate with our time, with our talent, with our treasure.

Church we serve a generous God. Amen? So let's respond accordingly. Father we thank you for the opportunity to hear your word this morning.

[44 : 09] Lord, we want a people that see life as you describe it. We think of Psalm 39. What are the measure of my days?

Let me know how fleeting I am. Behold, you've made my days a few hand breaths. My lifetime is nothing before you. Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath.

Surely man goes about as a shadow. Surely for nothing they are in turmoil. Man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather.

Lord help us to number our days, to recognize that we have a set amount of days to be present, to be about your work, to engage and partner in your ministry.

So Lord, whatever you need to do in each of us, we ask that you would communicate that to us by your spirit.

[45 : 12] Lord, we want to continue to grow as a generous people. Lord, thank you for the generosity that is present here. So that we in this last season got to participate and see a new church birthed.

That is a gift from you. And Lord, we look forward to the summer breaking ground and advancing the project to see the ministry set at the fire station underway.

Lord, we want to see the gospel transform lives. And so Lord, grow us each in generosity, whether that be time, whether that be our talent, or Lord, maybe even our treasure.

Thank you that you're a generous God. You have set a worthy pace for us. It's in your name we pray Jesus. Amen.