

# The Art of Giving

*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: 29 January 2017

Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[ 0:00 ] Let's pray.

Our gracious Heavenly Father, this morning as we come into Your presence, we come with a of our dependency upon You, with a thankfulness that You have made Your will and Your wisdom clear in the Scriptures, and that You have given to Your children the Holy Spirit who indwells every believer and is actively at work transforming the heart and mind of the believer to be more like Christ.

And this morning as we take up the matter of our faithfulness and stewardship and practical instruction from the Scriptures, we are thankful that You who abide in heaven care about this matter and are interested with the heart that we bring to this subject and interested in our faithful submission to Your authority.

I ask for the enabling of the Spirit of God. I ask for the faithful prayers of the people of God. And I ask that You are the one that is exalted in what we do as we take the Scripture in hand and explain it plainly and clearly.

To Christ be glory. Amen. I have to tell you that it was a distinct blessing for me to sit last week right over there and listen to Pastor Scheer, our senior pastor elect, preach his first sermon on stewardship here.

[ 2:13 ] I liked it. I really did. I took pleasure in listening to him handle Scriptures. I've enjoyed listening to him preach.

I remember three, four years ago, Pastor Saul, who has been a gospel companion to me throughout the ministry here, or most of it, he said, Pastor, it will be very hard for a man to succeed here if you don't enjoy listening to him preach.

And I don't ever intend to bother anybody with that, but I've got to tell you, I enjoyed listening to our pastor elect handle the Scriptures and preach on stewardship. By the way, I do think that that is a basic thing that a person who is a shepherd of God's people should teach on.

I've got to tell you, this will probably be the last message I preach on stewardship here. The reason being is that Pastor Scheer, you don't know this, but he's already more or less, fair to say, in charge of our preaching schedule, right?

Yeah. He's divided up John a lot differently than I would have done. I would have been on this subject for another three years, but we're going to get it done. He's whacking it off in mega chunks, and I am biting the bullet and trying to chew it and get it together.

[ 3:33 ] Next week, you'll see me preach on far more verses than I ever imagined. But when I say that it will be my last stewardship sermon, there is no sorrow in that.

There's joy. Not that I have any hesitancy on preaching on the subject of stewardship. But I think it is entirely appropriate that God's people, as they pray and look to the future, anticipate God bringing Pastor Scheer to be the principal agent of the Word here in our fellowship.

And I look forward with ambition to him being the one that continues to teach you lessons on the subject of your giving. And I have to tell you that knowing in advance that this will probably be my last sermon on stewardship, guess what it was like to prepare to say the last time, the last things that need to be said.

Very hard. And I made it easier on myself in part by having him go first, and then he kind of coached me a little bit. And so, now don't blame him on what I say, but I do want you to understand that this has been thought through together as a collaborative effort.

Now, I want you to listen because there's something here at the very beginning that's pretty important. Your stewardship is nothing other than a demonstration of what you really think about God.

[ 5 : 02 ] Let me say it slowly. Your stewardship is nothing other than a reflection of what you think about God. An illustration of that would be in 2 Samuel chapter 24, and I want you to go there just for a moment.

And I'm going to kind of press the story together because it's not my primary text. But it is a proof, and listen, listen, everybody. When a pastor says something, at the heart of what he says should be a Bible truth.

We agreed? I have opinions about how hot curry should be, but there's not a Bible text on that. Do you follow me? But when I stand up here and I speak as a messenger of the Lord of hosts, there should be a Bible passage that corroborates the statement.

And so when I say that your giving is a reflection of what you think about God, it's fair to say, and here's a passage that informs our thinking.

2 Samuel chapter 24, we have David who numbered the people, and God gave David choice A, choice B, choice C.

[ 6 : 16 ] And the choice that he actually decided upon as a punishment for his disobedience was a plague. It came upon the nation of Israel, and after a period of time, God says, that's enough.

And God said, I want David to go and offer a sacrifice at a particular place. There in verse 18, And Gad came that day to David and said to him, Go up, raise an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Arunah the Jebusite.

So David went up at Gad's word as the Lord commanded. And he goes to offer a sacrifice, and when he gets there, by the way, generally when you bring a sacrifice, what did you need to bring along with the sacrifice?

You needed to bring wood. If you're going to make a sacrifice, you had to have a sacrifice. You had to have wood. David goes to the threshing floor of Arunah, and when he gets there, he has neither sacrifice nor the fuel, the wood with which to make the sacrifice.

And to abbreviate the story, Arunah offers to David his oxen, and he offers the implements of threshing, the wood that was used in threshing the grain.

[ 7 : 30 ] And he says, Listen, you can have it for free. David says, No, no. Look at verse 24. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing.

The point that I make as we look at this passage is that what we think about God reflects in our giving. Here, David, instead of taking something someone else gave to him as a means of offering, he decided, I want, because of who I know my God to be, I want this to have an effect upon me and be a reflection of my own heart and giving.

And so when we come to the matter of stewardship, one of the things that I want you to think through very carefully is this, is your giving is a reflection of what you think about God.

With that said, I want you to turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 16. 1 Corinthians chapter 16.

And as we are making our way to that, I want to tell you that stewardship is not one of those topics that kind of is high on the radar screen for a pastor.

[ 8 : 55 ] It's not like most pastors at least sit in their office rubbing their hands thinking, Wow, if there's anything, I really get cold chills about preaching about its giving. I love doing that.

Actually, I like it. And I'll tell you why. Because I am interested in the spiritual well-being and growth of God's people. And if God has a hold of your heart, He also has a hold of your wallet.

Does that make sense? He's got a hold of your heart. He has a hold of your wallet. And there's no shame in bringing the matter to you from the Scriptures because the Bible has a lot to say about our giving.

And when we really think about our giving, I want you to understand that the way we handle money really sends a clear signal of where we are and where we take our directions from.

Do you understand that point? The Word of God should be the thing that informs the behavior of the believer. And so when we look at 1 Corinthians chapter 16, we find Paul towards the end of his letter to the church at Corinth, the first one, he has some very explicit statements about the matter of giving.

[ 10 : 01 ] Let me read just the verse 2, 1 and 2 here to you. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do.

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper so that there will be no collecting when I come. Now as we look at this passage, I want you to recognize the first point I would make about the matter of biblical giving is that it is part of body life.

It is part of body life. I want you to think about that just for a moment. And recognize that when you are listening to a sermon, one of the things that you should be able to determine very soon is where the authority comes in terms of the preaching.

What is it relying upon to make its points? When a pastor is engaged in expositional preaching, you should be able to follow along in the Bible and figure out, oh, I see where that came from.

There is the passage, and that's the way the passage instructs what is being said and frames it. So as we look at this passage, and I use it as an illustration to prove the point that that exposition of Scripture draws from the Scripture itself, you look here at the words in verse 1, it says, Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do.

[ 11 : 26 ] Here is Paul saying something to the church in Corinth, and he says, listen, I have something to say to you about collecting for the saints. And the words that he is engaged in are applicable or are of value to the church.

I wonder whether or not you think of yourself as part of a larger entity, or you just think about, well, Maranatha is a place I show up at. I mean, it doesn't make any difference where I show up at.

It's just I show up. No. In the thinking of the Scriptures and in the economy of God, he puts us together into family units. How many of you know your family unit?

Okay? How many shearers are there? Am I right? There are... Help me out. I lost track. There's so many. Eight of us! There we go.

Okay? Actually, I happen to know that there are six Kenoyers, and there are 13 grandchildren, right? Yes! You know, it's like, they're good. We know our family unit, and we are in a lasting relationship with that family unit.

[12:29] Am I right or wrong? How many of you admit that there are people in your family unit that every now and then kind of are a challenge? But they're your family. We are in a family of believers in Maranatha, and being part of the body of Christ means that you're linked together into a unit that God has ordained and put together for His glory.

And so I want you to recognize that here is Paul writing to the church, and he is speaking to the church as an entity, not as individuals, but he is speaking to the church as a larger gathering of people that are fit together for the significant purposes of the gospel.

I want you to recognize here is Paul writing under the instruction of the Holy Spirit, and as he writes these words, they end up being authoritative to us as Bible believers.

Verse, the reason behind a believer's actions should always be a passage of Scripture.

Why am I doing what I'm doing? How many of you go to work on an occasion, don't feel like it's the best thing to do and the most enjoyable thing of the moment? How many of you had that happen?

[13:49] And you think about Walt Disney, you know, and you think about the little song, Hi-ho, hi-ho, and you're thinking, that doesn't cut it. But then you think to yourself, hold it, the Scriptures tell me that I am to be a conscientious, hard-working individual, and that the way I work should bring glory to Christ.

So our behavior as a believer should really rise out of biblical truth. An illustration of that would be this. In the past, we prayed for President Obama.

I prayed for him on a regular basis. Now I pray for a different president. I pray for President Trump. And I will tell you, I don't think either of the men are less deserving or less needy of their prayer, of the matter of prayer.

They both equally need prayer from godly people. And it ought to be one of the things that you are engaged on in a regular basis. Why? Because the Scriptures command you to pray for those who are in authority over you.

And if you have any question about it, you go to 1 Timothy 2, verse 1 and 2, or you could go to 1 Peter 2, verse 17. We are to pray and to honor those that God puts over us.

[15:04] Another illustration of the fact that our behavior is informed or instructed by the Scripture would be that when we drive into the parking lot, how many of you have noticed that as a general rule, the parking spaces very, very close to the door are generally reserved and not taken?

Does anybody know why that is? We do not have handicap signs right out here by the main entrance because once you put a handicap sign there, you permanently lock it down for that use and nobody can park in it.

And when someone drives in here Monday and drives in here Tuesday, there's no need for it. But on Sunday morning, why are those parking slots open? Does anybody know? Leviticus chapter 17 says that you are to rise up and stand before the hoary head.

Hoary head means great. The Bible tells us that we are to give respect and honor to those who are elderly, and so near parking places are for older people.

The Bible tells us that. Now, the point that I'm making here is that when we, as God's people, look for instruction on the matter of giving, it's appropriate for us to seek out counsel from the Scriptures themselves.

[16:24] And I say that because we live in a day and age where there are lots of voices crying out for the subject of giving, and we have a tendency not to pay attention to what the Bible actually has to say on the matter.

Here. The believer's first giving should flow through the body God has linked them to. I'll say that slowly and let you think about it.

The believer's first giving, I didn't say only, first giving, should flow through the body that God has linked them to. And I say this on the basis of the following passages.

That's not going to be an exhaustive string of the passages, but one case would be Acts chapter 5. Does anybody know what happened in Acts chapter 5? It was one of the early consequences to poor stewardship.

Ananias and Sapphira brought their giving to the feet of the apostles, and they lied about it, and what was the consequence? They died. In Acts chapter 6, we find that there was another problem in the matter of stewardship, and we see that the illustration that you can glean from this is that giving flowed through the church and was distributed by the leadership of the church to meet the needs.

[17:42] 2 Thessalonians chapter 3, verse 6 through 12, we find that the early church had developed quite a habit in the matter of benevolence, so much so that it became kind of, it became, how many of you know what I mean when I use the word entitlement?

Do you know people that have kind of an entitlement mentality? Early church had problems with entitlement because people would show up for the church dinner, but they wouldn't go out to work.

They wouldn't do anything constructive. And do you know what Paul said to them? Does anybody know? He said, if a man won't work, neither should he eat. And I can tell you over the years, Pastor Saul probably remember this, we on a regular basis have people who call here and say, listen, I need help with my rent, or I need help with my air conditioning, not in January, but you know, I need help, I need help, I need help.

My standard statement to them is, I'm glad you called. We would be glad to help you if you show up here and work for us for four hours. We'll pay you. Guess what happens to takers for that benevolence?

Does anybody want to guess? We don't have many takers, but the Bible says if a man is unwilling to work, neither should he eat.

[19:01] The early church was the conduit for the matter of benevolence in the early New Testament era. In 1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 3 through 16, we find extended teaching by the apostle on the matter of how families are to care for their own.

And it is interesting when you read that passage that before the church is burdened with caring for a situation, the family should be burdened first.

Everybody said what? That was one of the most enthusiastic amens I've heard in a long, long line. It just blew me away. That was a Baptist amen to be amended in heaven.

Oh, well, I know. I understand. Don't go there, Tim. It's all right. Okay, so here is Paul saying to the church, hey guys, before you step in as a congregation to help in a needy situation, you need to light family members up to step into the deal.

And on more than one occasion, I've had people come to me and say, Pastor, the church is not doing this and not doing that. And I, I'm really sorry to hear that. Let me get on that. What they don't know is that by the instruction of the Word of God, I'm obligated to call family members and say, you may not know this, but...

[20:29] And when I explain that to the individuals who are commiserating about something being done, they decide, oh, maybe we ought to help. The Bible has a lot to say about the matter of giving through the local church.

2 Corinthians 8 and 9. Philippians 4. And I could work my way through other passages where it becomes very clear that the believer's giving is to flow through the body that Christ has linked them to.

I'm not saying that the local church should be the only place that I give, but it's to be the first. Let me put it this way. The local church is God's plan A.

Do you understand that? I want you to fix that in your mind. The local church is God's plan A. When Jesus said, I will build my church, He was thinking of the body of believers that would form in every local place and would gather under the teaching of the Word of God and be actively ministering one to another and one to the community around them for the testimony and glory of Christ.

When Luke wrote in Acts, and the Lord added daily to their number those that are being saved, that word daily to their number is talking about the local church. And in Ephesians chapter 1, verse 22 and 23, and I want you to look at that passage because it is so profound.

[ 21 : 59 ] Ephesians chapter 1, verse 22 and 23. In verse 22, he says this, And he put all things under his feet and gave him his head over all things to the church.

Now, what is the church? Which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Listen to me. The church is significant far beyond the thinking of many people today who profess to be believers.

The church is God's primary agent in this age. And one of the things that needs to be framed clearly in people's thinking is that the local church has preeminence and is significant.

It's so easy today to bypass the local church completely. And the pattern shows up in all different kinds of illustrations. I'll give you a couple practical illustrations.

I remember when a young man who grew up in our church here, I'll mention him. How's that? Rollin Moeller. Pastor, where is it?

[ 23 : 27 ] Pennsylvania? New Jersey? Pennsylvania? Where is it? Virginia. Thank you. Rollin called me one day, and he was just a little animated. He was fired up because he had had two missionaries, one from Awana and the other from Word of Life, who had gone out from his church to go to their training for being future missionaries.

Rollin was stirred. Rollin, if you're listening to this, I'm talking about you. Okay. Hi, Rollin. He was pretty agitated.

I said, what's bothering you? He says, I can't believe it. People are going to Word of Life, and they're going to Awana, and they're learning how to raise funds, and they're not at all instructed to call local churches.

Did anybody know that I was a little irritated or kind of fired up? I can't understand that. Rollin was upset.

He was a young man, and I said, back off. You can't fight city hall, something like that, really important, significant. Do you know why that's happening? Do you know why?

[ 24 : 43 ] It is the normal protocol for people to ask individuals rather than local churches to raise money. Of all the missionaries that I have had the privilege of working with, there's only one that stands at the other end of the fence.

It's Tom Wolfe. Tom Wolfe said to me, I will not ask individuals. Only one. Do I think it's wrong to ask individuals?

No. But I think it is wrong to not ask churches. Do I think it is wrong for people to go on missions trips without involving the local church in any way, shape, or form?

I'm beginning to wonder if that's wrong. Why? What does it say about the local church when you don't even bring them into the circle and ask them for an endorsement? I have people going on missions trips and nobody has ever asked me as a pastor, so what is this person like?

Huh? J.D. Greer says this. And by the way, J.D. Greer is not the only person I could recite on this, but here we go.

[ 25 : 57 ] J.D. Greer said, I don't believe Christians should give only to the local church, but I do believe that Christians should give first to the local church. Your local church should not be the only place you give, but it should be the first.

And by the way, I'm reminded of that little passage where Paul says this in Galatians. He says, Do good to all. How many of you know the remainder of the verse? Can you help me? Particularly to those who are of the household of faith.

God wants me to be a benevolent person. He wants my neighborhood to know me as a benevolent person. He wants people to enjoy the generosity of my heart.

The first place that that should be experienced should be in my home. The second place should be in the body of Christ and then around the circle outside of that.

Well, we look at the issue and I've got to say that I took a little more time on the matter of giving to the local church than I intended, but it's my last time. And it is far more important and if you're sitting here and your fur is going up, you ask yourself the question, What does the Bible say?

[ 27 : 14 ] Will you do that for me? What does the Bible say? You can be irritated at me because I don't have the right tone of voice or because I'm 68, but at the end of the question is this, is what does the Bible say?

Okay. Now, let's come to another little thing. Your giving should be planned. It should be directed through the local church. It should be planned. And you look there at verse 2, on the first day of every week.

I'm not going to belabor the point, but the issue here is that the statement on the first day of every week kind of presumes that people had a pattern of giving. How many of you do better with patterns? patterns. I mean, you know, when I feel like it, maybe.

I don't know. No. I mean, I really rely heavily on patterns. In fact, I found myself kind of reviewing some of my patterns the other day. I had backed up.

Do you know where I'm going with this one? I had backed up without showing adequate attention to all of my mirrors. And I came about a micro inch from hitting somebody else's car.

[ 28 : 25 ] And after that, it's like, oh, Tim, remember driver's ed? How many of you remember driver's ed? Check.

First thing you do when you get in. If you want to fail your driver's ed examination, when you get into the car and the other guy belts himself in, what's the first thing you should do? Adjust your mirrors.

I mean, go overboard with that thing. I mean, he thinks you're paying attention. So here I am, and I'm saying to myself a little litany. It's like, look both ways.

Look. I'm at the point where I pray now. Lord, help me be careful as I drive. Okay? Routine.

Plan. Have a pattern. And here we have God giving instruction to the saints. He says, at the first day of every week. Now, the implication behind that is that the people in the church of Corinth as a general rule got paid on a daily basis, but they gathered once a week in the congregation.

[ 29 : 33 ] And so when they gathered, they brought the proportion that God had blessed them with and they brought it in on a regular basis. There are some of you here that are paid every other week.

There are some of you that are paid bonuses at periodic times. And as God blesses and prospers you, it's appropriate during that time frame to then respond proportionally as God has blessed you.

Let me bring you to another point. Not only are we to give on a planned basis, what we're to give personally. Each of you, Paul is giving instruction that every individual in the local congregation was to give.

That instruction was to all who had received something through the week. Look forward a little bit and it says here, as he has prospered. So who is expected to be a regular giver in the congregation of God's people?

All those who are making some kind of income. That's who God is speaking to. You are involved in earning a living and you receive something as a result of your labor.

[ 30 : 43 ] As that award or that payment is made, a portion of that is to go back to the Lord on a regular basis. I do want you to understand that your giving is to be of your own free will and it is not to be manipulated or coerced.

Your giving is personal and it is not something that is to be manipulated or coerced. I am reminded of what we read in the book of Exodus. Towards the end of the book of Exodus when the offering was taken up for building the tabernacle, it said that God wanted the giving to come from all whose hearts were made willing.

I don't know what you give. I have never ever paid attention to what people in this congregation give.

If you want to see Tim Knoyer get just a little irritated when he is around fellow pastors, just let that fellow pastor talk about someone in his congregation that is a faithful tither.

That is like nails on the chalkboard to me. Do you follow me? Because I don't look at you in that context. You are not graded according to your stewardship.

[ 31 : 59 ] I don't know what it is. I want you to give freely. I want you to give because it is a reflection of what you think about God. End of discussion. And I will preach my heart out out here to see that you love God because I know this, when there's room in the heart, there's room in the wallet.

You guys awake today? The last little word that I was hoping for was if there's room in the heart, there's room in the wallet. This thing right back here. Okay? So I'm going to preach my heart out that you are faithful in your stewardship because you love God.

Now there's another thing. You're giving us to be proportionate. Proportionate. Everybody gets wrapped up in how much? Well here we go with statistics. statistics. The average person in America gives less than 4%.

Okay? Very interesting little statistic and some of you are Googling me already. It doesn't bother me in the least. Those who are not overly wealthy give far more than those that are proportionally.

That was not God's plan. As God prospers you the intention that God has in giving you that prosperity is not that you just up your standard of living but that you up your standard of generosity.

[ 33 : 30 ] And what Paul means when he says the statement that he makes there in 1 Corinthians chapter 16 verse 2 as he may prosper the indication is this is that proportionate to your prosperity is to be the generosity of your heart.

So I want to encourage you as God prospers you to grow in giving more than in spending more. Make that a point. There's some of you sitting out here this morning that are at an early stage in your life you still have those school bills hanging over your head and you're living in an apartment you're maybe even living with your parents or who knows but you're thinking to yourself oh I don't know how I'll ever be able to give more I've got to tell you the day will come you conscientiously serve God in the place that he has put you he's going to prosper you he's going to bring you up and as he prospers you the thing that should increase is your proportion of giving let me say one other thing people ask me about tithing and and I've got to tell you that tithing predates the Old Testament law Abraham tithed I think in the New Testament the standard exceeds the matter of tithing and I am not here remember I don't pay attention to who tithes and who doesn't right but I got to tell you

Judith and I will tell you without hesitation that as we have grown in the Lord our joy in giving has amplified itself we find pleasure in it does anybody wonder why I preach about giving right here in January I'll tell you why because right now is when there are people out in the lobby that are handing out what does anybody know what they're handing out pastor Saul what are you handing out pardon giving statements and the reason we hand out giving statements in January is does anybody have an idea why we do that because between now and April 15th Brian when do people have taxes that need to be done who yes and see what happens is there is this juxtaposition that's a big what it means is there's a blending of the giving statement that you get from the church with your tax statement and and we want you to have an opportunity to kind of evaluate hey how am I doing fair right nod your heads yes preach it preach it you know get on it

I need to be convicted of that okay one more point I'll let you go as you look at this passage I want you to understand that this is prescriptive what I mean by that is God is giving explicit instructions to believers who know him it's for every believer your stewardship your faithful giving to the Lord is part of a normal Christian life and it is an indicator of where you are in your journey if you are sitting here this morning and stewardship is something that as you listen to it you're thinking can he stop soon I got to tell you it may be that you don't know him or it may be that you've lost your first love or it may be that you have been sucked into the swamp of covetousness and I got to tell you it's hard to get out of there without giving but let me say one other thing this passage is only prescriptive for those who are believers the scripture makes no call on the unbeliever to be faithful in stewardship and if you're here this morning listening to the preaching of the word of

God that has to do particularly with the matter of faithfulness and giving and you're sitting there and don't know the Lord Jesus yet I got to tell you the first interest that I have and the first interest that Christ has is not in your wallet his desire is that you would come to recognize the dark bankruptcy of your own soul and to recognize that the day of accounting is coming when you will stand before a holy God and he will judge you for your sin and because of that fact of judgment coming someday he sent Jesus Christ into the world to be your savior I love what it says talk about giving 2nd Corinthians it says this though he were rich yet he was made poor for your sakes Paul takes two chapters in 2nd

[ 38 : 25 ] Corinthians to hammer the subject of giving and at the center of his argument is Christ who was willing to die for your sins he was willing to give it all for you and if you're sitting here this morning and you do not know Christ I gotta tell you let the matter of stewardship and giving kind of go away to the side and think about this where do I stand in my relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ don't walk out of here if you don't know Christ thinking that the primary focus of this message and its application to you is the matter of your wallet it's your heart Christ Jesus came to save you let's pray Father God this morning as we take up this subject of stewardship we are thankful that your word speaks clearly to believers and gives practical instructions and Father we ask that you would help us to be formed in our thinking and to be convicted by the authority of your word and to trust your wisdom rather than our own

I pray for those who are in our congregation this morning that are believers that know Christ but the truth of the matter is is their stewardship is frail and undeveloped that this morning they would walk out of here saying God you being my helper this is going to be something that changes this year I pray for those that are here that don't know Christ that this morning your spirit would bring them to conviction to see the bankruptcy of their soul and to recognize there is no salvation apart from the Lord Jesus that they would cry out and confess their sins and believe in Christ alone we ask this in Jesus name amen you