

GLENKIRK CHURCH



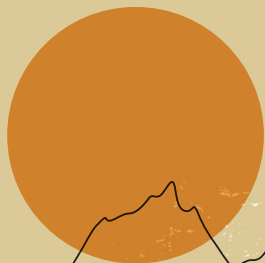
WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

OCTOBER 2 - 6, 2023

Re-Formed:

Sermon on the Mount



Sermon Series 9/3 - 11/26

MONDAY

Read **Matthew 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 6:7-10**

As we broach the subject of giving, let us take a look at what the Bible tells us even before Jesus taught about giving in the Sermon on the Mount. Scripture will do the talking throughout this devo. Pray for the Lord to plant the Scripture deep in your heart and encourage you in your in-most being.

This week, five questions about giving will be considered: Why? What? Where? How? and Who?

Why does God ask, even command, us to give?

Let us go back to the beginning. Ask yourself, “What has God given me?” Go ahead, make a list. God has given us everything! Creation, life, breath, Jesus, Holy Spirit, a way to redemption, promises, prophecies, covenants, His Word (Bible), prayer, forgiveness, redemption, families, relationships, spiritual gifts, ears to hear, eyes to see. This list goes on and on.

Genesis 1:1–2:2 gives the account of God creating everything in six days and resting on the seventh. In the first book of the Bible, God gave us the sun, moon, stars, oceans, mountains, streams, fish, birds, animals, relationship, and the Sabbath.

Later in Genesis 9:12, we read: “Then God said, ‘I am giving you a sign of My covenant (promise) with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come.’” God will not flood the earth again.

God gave us the Ten Commandments and the Law in order to live healthy, prosperous, loving lives. Prophets in the Old Testament pointed to the coming Messiah—the best Gift of all. Next time you are struggling with what or how or even if to give, think on these verses and your expanding list of gifts from God.

QUESTIONS

What are your motives in giving to the church and its efforts? Obedience? Recognition? How is God nurturing a more generous, grateful heart in you?

PRAYERS

For African Enterprise (AE)

AE Founder Michael Cassidy, age 87, recently had a fall with a head injury and needs prayer for recovery.

TUESDAY

Read **Matthew 6:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:20**

What to give? Tithes. Gifts. Offerings. Firstfruits.

Throughout Scripture God shows many ways to give AND how it benefits us to give.

Tithes: Deuteronomy 14 commands how to come to worship. God's directions to stay ceremonially clean and what to eat and not eat show the way to be holy and not defile yourself. In verses 22 and 23 we read: *"You must set aside a tithe of your crops—one-tenth (tithe) of all the crops you harvest each year. Bring this tithe to the designated place of worship—the place the LORD your God chooses for His name to be honored."*

The last verse in Deuteronomy 14 reads: *"Give it to the Levites, who will receive no allotment of land among you, as well as to the foreigners living among you, the orphans, and the widows in your towns, so they can eat and be satisfied. Then the LORD your God will bless you in all your work"* (v. 29). This is a promise from God.

Gifts, offerings: This type of giving is for over and above the tithe; it is to be used when you see a need. Even a Roman army officer, Cornelius, understood how to give gifts. He was visited by an angel in Acts 10:4: *"Cornelius stared at him (an angel) in terror. 'What is it, sir?' he asked the angel. And the angel replied, 'Your prayers and gifts to*

the poor have been received by God as an offering!" Also, Paul was blessed by many gifts from the churches he established. These gifts sustained him as a missionary.

Firstfruits: In Proverbs 3:9-10, we read: *"Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."* Firstfruits are the first harvest of the season. Giving to our Lord the full first harvest of the season shows you are trusting that the Lord will bless the rest of your harvest.

God gave us many gifts, and in return we have several ways to give. Seek where God may be challenging you to more closely follow His commands.

QUESTIONS

What "firstfruits" have you kept historically rather than offering these to the Lord? Is tithing an aspiration or ceiling for your giving?

PRAYERS

For African Enterprise (AE)

AE's evangelistic mission to Nairobi, Kenya, has just begun with hundreds of evangelists involved. Pray for many to accept Christ as Lord and Savior and to grow in their new faith.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Matthew 6:1-4; Luke 12:33**

Where to give? To the poor, widow, orphan, homeless, disciples, hungry, pastors, church, missionaries, enemies, creation.

In the following Scriptures, we can see the Lord's desire for our giving hearts and actions.

James 1:27: *"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."*

Matthew 25:31-40: *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on His left."*

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited Me in, I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you came to visit Me.'

"Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and invite You in, or needing clothes and clothe You? When did we see You sick or in prison and go to visit You?'

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for Me.'"

Proverbs 22:16: *"One who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and one who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty."*

Proverbs 28:27: *"Those who give to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to them receive many curses."*

Who are the poor you are giving to? Where are you giving money and time? To whom can you give extra money, effort, and love today?

QUESTIONS

Do you rely upon the church to serve the needy on your behalf, or do you also give to the needy on your own? How will you support the poor, the widows, the orphans, and the homeless in the weeks ahead?

PRAYERS

For African Enterprise (AE)

AE's Australia office has had a drastic downturn in income. Pray for increased funding to come through for AE in the U.S. and Canada.

THURSDAY

Read **Matthew 6:1-4; 7:9-11**

How to give? Eagerly. In private. Cheerfully. In abundance. In want. Without expectations.

Eagerly. In private: In Matthew 6:1-4: *“Watch out! Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. But when you give to someone in need, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.”*

Cheerfully. Paul wrote to encourage cheerful giving in 2 Corinthians 9:7: *“You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.”*

In abundance. Malachi 3:9-12 says—Don’t cheat! *“You have cheated Me of the tithes and offerings due to Me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating Me. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do, I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put Me to the*

test! Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe,’ says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. ‘Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight,’ says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.”

God does not want to withhold blessings! However, God cannot tolerate cheating, lying, or arrogance and these will be cursed, not blessed. Where are you in regard to giving? Eager? Reluctant? Public? Private? Cheerfully? Grudgingly? Stingy? Giving your best?

QUESTIONS

Do you know anyone who is proud of their “generosity”? Do you ever give in hopes that God will reward you further or solve a problem that you face?

PRAYERS

For African Enterprise (AE)

Pray for the 14-year-old daughter (Ella) of AE’s International Missions Director, Emmanuel Kwizera, who has had two recent open-heart surgeries and is in need of a heart transplant.

FRIDAY

Read **Matthew 6:1-4; Galatians 6:2**

Who should give? Everyone!

Genesis 12:2: *“I [God] will make you into a great nation [Israel]. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others.”*
The nation of Israel was a blessing and a help to nations around them. Other nations were in awe of God through the blessings of Israel. Jesus came from the nation of Abraham and He is the ultimate gift to receive.

King Solomon wrote in Proverbs 11:24-25 MSG: *“The world of the generous gets larger and larger; the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller. The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed; those who help others are helped.”*

In Luke 21:3-4, Jesus tells the disciples: *“Truly I tell you ... this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”*

In Acts 20:35, Paul says, *“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*

Paul and his ministry were blessed by the giving of others. In his letter to the Corinthians he said, *“So two good things will result*

from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God” (2 Corinthians 9:12). Paul then wrote in Ephesians 2:10: *“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (give).”*

James 1:18 tells us we should give because Jesus was the “firstfruit” of God who was given to save us: *“He [God] chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created.”*

In Spiderman lore, Peter Parker/Spiderman received these words from his uncle right before he died: *“With great power comes great responsibility.”* Christians have been given a great responsibility with the Spirit’s power.

We have been given an awesome opportunity to participate in the work of God’s kingdom through giving. God created each of us to give out of love to the lonely, hurting, depressed, down on-their-luck, believers, non-believers, and, yes, even our enemies.

QUESTIONS

Do you know anyone who appears to be “possessed by their possessions”? Where is God calling you to greater generosity?

PRAYERS

For African Enterprise (AE)

Pray for AE’s Community Transformation Groups which meet weekly in groups of 15-20 to pray and help one another grow their small businesses.



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