

18. The Book of Philippians 4:10-20

Joy in Giving-Part 1

a message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(10-1-23)

Find this weeks' sermon audio and video message [HERE](#).

We have been working our way through a study in Paul's letter to the Philippians—looking at its theme of 'joy' topically.

So far, we've looked at:

- I. Joy in Fellowship—1:3-6
- II. Joy in Proclaiming the Gospel—1:12-18
- III. Joy of Faith—1:25
- IV. Joy in Unity—1:27-2:2
- V. Joy in Service—2:12-18
- VI. Joy in the Lord—3:1; 4:4

And the 7th and final one in our series—"A Journey in Joy thru Philippians" (so pray about our next study!):

VII. Joy in Giving—4:10-20

Philippians 4:10–20 (NLT)

¹⁰ How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me. ¹¹ Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. ¹² I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. ¹³ For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. ¹⁴ Even so, you have done well to share with me in my present difficulty. ¹⁵ As you know, you Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on from Macedonia. No other church did this. ¹⁶ Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once. ¹⁷ I don't say this because I want a gift from you. Rather, I want you to receive a reward for your kindness. ¹⁸ At the moment I have all I need—and more! I am generously supplied with the gifts you sent me with Epaphroditus. They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever! Amen.

So here Paul is thanking them for the generous gifts of money they had given to him for his ministry.

Let me just say up front that giving to God is a subject that permeates the Bible from cover to cover and is tied to the blessings of God.

The Bible likens giving to God to the sowing of seeds in a field—if you sow sparingly, you will reap sparingly, and if you sow (give) generously, you will reap an abundant harvest in heaven someday.

So, it is good to give to God—but only when it's done out of the right heart.

Having said that, this morning I want to look at the subject of giving to God starting with *wrong* giving and then looking at what's involved in *right* giving to God (which brings great joy into our lives) - turn to **Matthew 6.**

In this section, which runs from v.1-18 of Matthew 6, Jesus gives three examples of hypocrisy in religious practices the Scribes and Pharisees were guilty of and then commands His disciples to practice these things—but not like them but rather out of a right heart.

The three areas of religious practices that Jesus' zeros in on are: **1. Giving; 2. Praying; and 3. Fasting.**

Now understand, it wasn't the act of giving or praying or fasting that the Lord was condemning it was **the wrong motives** behind them.

For our study this morning, let's just focus on **the spiritual practice of giving to God:**

Matthew 6:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. ² Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ³ But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

The word *hypocrite* comes from a Greek word that literally meant "mask wearer" and was used of an actor on stage playing a part.

And so, it came to mean: *"Putting on an act and pretending to be something you're not."*

In fact, when Jesus said in v.1, *"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them..."*

The Greek word for "**seen**" is a word we get the English word 'theater' and 'theatrical' from.

In other words, when you do your acts of piety - don't put on a show! Do them out of the right heart, out of the right motives!

It doesn't matter how well a person plays the part of a Christian, **God knows the heart** and when your heart isn't right then all your spiritual activities and charitable deeds are worthless in His eyes.

REFLECTION: When it comes to “giving” What does it mean to you to have a “right heart”?

Before we look at Matthew 6 - let me start with a general introduction:

I. The Various Motives Behind Giving

A. A desire for power and control

I have seen people give large sums of money to our church that I found out later they were doing because they were trying to buy positions of authority and power as a pastor/elder.

B. A sense of duty or obligation

Many people give to God, not because they really want to—but because they were *pressured* or *guilted* into giving.

And that’s why we don’t come to your house and ask for pledges. (Explain—“*God loves a cheerful giver*”)

C. A desire for personal recognition and glory

This seems to have been the chief motive of the Scribes and Pharisees when they gave.

It really wasn’t out of a heart of compassion to help the poor but rather out of a selfish desire to glorify themselves in the eyes of people—it’s what the Bible calls “*seeking the praise of men*”.

Jesus told the Pharisees, “*You receive glory from one another, yet you do not seek the glory that comes from God.*”

D. A heart of greed

When a person gives to God because they’ve been promised a ‘*hundred-fold return*’—this is giving that’s polluted by self-interest. In fact, it really isn’t giving to God at all—it’s investing! It’s investing in their ‘kingdom’ on earth and not God’s Kingdom!

In that regard, it’s greed and selfishness masquerading as kindness and generosity.

E. Out of genuine love for God and concern for others

This is the only motive for giving that God acknowledges and blesses.

Alright, let’s look at what Jesus said was the wrong and then the right ways to give.

REFLECTION: Outlined above are 5 “motives” behind giving which affect our “heart of giving” – Comment on each – What issues do you see?

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

II. The Wrong Way to Give - v.1-2

A. Giving to get

Matthew 6:1 (NKJV)

¹ "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds...

Back then charitable deeds often took the form of gifts of money given to the poor ('alms').

Some of the other translations translate this “*righteousness*” instead of “*charitable*”—“*Take heed that you do not do your righteous deeds before men...*”

This is because the Scribes and Pharisees and others believed that to help the poor by giving them money was tantamount to purchasing righteousness and earning their salvation. Because of it they believed that the rich had a better chance of entering into heaven than did the poor—because the rich had the resources to “*buy their way in!*”

Giving to God is wrong when you ‘*give to get.*’

Or in other words, when you give to God (by helping others) to get something from Him (like ‘*purchasing heaven*’ as in the case of the Scribes and Pharisees, or that big promotion, or some other blessing)—it’s called giving with ‘*strings attached*’ or giving to get.

B. Giving for **recognition**

Matthew 6:1 (NKJV)

¹ "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

Again, Jesus is not condemning the act of giving to the poor—He’s condemning the wrong motive behind it.

As I said earlier, helping the poor was not only a good thing to do—it was something God repeatedly encouraged His people in the Old Testament to do.

Proverbs 19:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, And He will pay back what he has given.

Proverbs 29:7 (NKJV)

⁷The righteous considers the cause of the poor, *But* the wicked does not understand *such* knowledge.

Psalms 41:1 (NKJV)

¹...Blessed *is* he who considers the poor; The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

But again, the problem that Jesus was condemning in these verses wasn't in the act of helping the poor but in the **hypocritical way** the Scribes and Pharisees were going about it.

As Jesus indicted their motive when He said, they did it - **"to be seen by men."**

C. Giving to receive glory

Matthew 6:2 (NKJV)

²Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

This statement by Jesus is based on something that was well known to every Jew living in or around Jerusalem.

Originally, there was an area at the side of the temple courtyard called the **'Chamber of the Silent'** where people could go and drop off gifts for the poor into a large metal trumpet shaped **chest called the 'Trumpet.'**

Later, the poor would come to the Chamber of the Silent and receive gifts *from* the Trumpet—it was all done very quietly, discreetly, and with humility and sincerity—it was not a show!

Unfortunately, **this practice started to be corrupted by those who began to "sound the trumpet"** when they put money into these trumpet shaped collection boxes (also located in the 'Court of the Women—Explain)

But as the years went on, **the Pharisees decided it wasn't practical** to go all the way to the temple to give alms to the poor so instead, they tied small brass or silver trumpets to their belts—then, **whenever they wanted to give to the poor, they stood up in the synagogues or on a street corner and blew their trumpets.**

Upon hearing this, the poor people in the area would gather around the **'generous' Pharisee** as he distributed his alms with great flourish, while everyone around said, *"My, look how righteous he is!"*

Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites because they gave, not out of concern for the poor, but so that they might be seen by men—to receive glory from them.

He went on to say, *"If that's your motive for giving to the poor you'd better relish that moment in the spotlight because—that's all the reward you're going to get—the praise of men!"*

The Greek word for 'reward' was a business or commercial term for receiving payment in full—in other words it was considered, in the eyes of God—a finished transaction, a **"done deal!"**

It's pretty easy to see the parallels today in the way some ministries encourage people to give to God *"How many tonight will give \$1000? Stand up!"* As people then say, *"Wow, look, he's giving \$1000 dollars to God!"*

Jesus is saying you'd better enjoy that "wow" because you'll get no reward from God for what you gave.

On the other hand, I have stepped up to the pulpit many times over the years and have found an anonymous envelope with the name of someone in the church on it that had a need, and I could tell there was money inside for me to give to that person...

REFLECTION: Outlined above are 3 wrong ways to give – Comment on each – What issues do you see?

1.

2.

3.

III. The Right Way to Give - v.3-4

Matthew 6:3-4 (NKJV)

³But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

Interesting statement by Jesus, that when you help someone in need—"do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."

Of course, in saying this He wasn't speaking literally—

John Stott

"There is no difficulty in grasping His meaning. Not only are we not to tell other people about our Christian giving—there is a sense in which we are not even to tell ourselves! We are not to be self-conscious in our giving, for our self-consciousness will readily deteriorate into self-righteousness. So subtle is the sinfulness of the heart that it is possible to take deliberate steps to keep our giving secret from men while simultaneously dwelling on it in our own minds in a spirit of self-congratulation."

Listen, the whole subject of giving has turned off a lot of people today and the reason is because it has been **so abused.**

You can't turn on Christian radio or television without constantly being bombarded by preachers who want to separate you from your money—**all in the name of 'helping God to do His work!'**

I've always maintained that if God is broke and needs my help to do His work—He isn't much of a God!

However, this is how many in ministry portray God today and then use manipulation, pressure and guilt to push people into giving to Him to the point that—it has turned off many to the whole idea of giving to God and even going to church.

I believe that where 'God guides He provides' so I never feel like I need to put pressure on people to give to the work of God—**He's a big enough God to take care of that without the help of man.**

REFLECTION: What does this statement by Jesus – “do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” mean to you?

1.

2.

3.

But countless high-powered TV preachers and celebrity pastors are giving people the impression that God needs their money so that the precious work of God can continue through their ministries around the world—“*So give it to our ministry and we’ll make sure it gets spent on God’s work’—Yea right!*”.

This has caused many elderly saints who are on a fixed income (and who trust this con-artist as a sincere man of God) to send in their last \$10 to the TV preacher’s ministry causing them to have to eat dog food to survive while this corrupt huckster lives in the lap of luxury and dines at fine restaurants **I wouldn’t want to be in their shoes on the day of judgment!**

Let me say it again, God doesn’t need our money—but we need to give it—not for His benefit but for ours!

Stop thinking of giving in terms of “helping God” and start thinking of it in terms of “growing me” as an opportunity to die to self and to grow in Christ.

Now, having said all of that—let me finish this morning by giving you some other principles that revolve around *right* giving—things that Jesus didn’t mention in Matthew 6 but are found in His Word:

IV. Principles of Right Giving

A. Giving has to be willing not coerced

2 Corinthians 8:3–4 (NLT)

³ For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. ⁴ They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.

In other words, Paul is basically saying—“*The churches north of you (Macedonia) were poor and couldn’t afford to give to those suffering famine in and around Jerusalem but they pleaded with us to take their money for those in need saying to us, ‘We want to help, we want to be part of God’s work...’*”

So first of all, if our giving is going to please the heart of God—it must be done willingly.

B. Generous giving is good - sacrificial giving is better

Mark 12:41–44 (NLT)

⁴¹ Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. ⁴² Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins. ⁴³ Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. ⁴⁴ For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on.”

Generosity in giving is good but sacrificial giving is better—and the reason its better is because sacrificial giving costs us something—we have to go without.

Sacrificial giving helps us to put others first and trust God more. (Explain)

C. **Giving must be seen as a gift of grace toward others**

2 Corinthians 8:6–7 (NLT)

⁶ So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of giving. ⁷ Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving.

Grace means *unmerited or undeserved blessing*.

God gives to us out of His grace (unmerited, undeserved blessing and favor) -we need to give to others out of grace.

This means when we give to others it must be without any strings attached—it must be given freely (grace) looking for nothing in return, giving to those who can't pay us back.

Giving to family in need is important - but families tend to help each other so that when we help family, we expect family to help us if and when we need it - that isn't the case with helping poor strangers. (Comment)

Our giving won't be accepted by God if it's an attempt to earn His love, favor, or to 'butter Him up' to do something nice for us now that we've done something 'nice' for Him.

D. **New Testament giving is not a matter of law but of love**

2 Corinthians 8:8 (NLT)

⁸ I am not commanding you to do this [NKJV—“*I speak not by commandment*”]. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches.

New Testament giving is voluntary not mandatory - that's why I don't believe in *tithing* for the New Covenant (giving God 10% and keeping the 90% for me).

Tithing was a law under the Old Covenant for free men who earned a living and owned property - under the New Covenant we are all slaves of our Master Jesus Christ.

All that we have has been given to us by Him and belongs to Him - that's why Paul calls us *stewards*—“*What do you have that hasn't been given to you by God? Now if He has given it to you why do you take credit for what you have?*” (1 Corinthians 4:7)

Besides, if we were still under the law when it came to our giving to God and it was *mandatory* - we probably wouldn't do it with joy—

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NKJV)

⁷ So let each one *give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful [hilarious] giver.

REFLECTION: Comment on each of the 4 principles of giving noted above:

A.

B.

C.

D.

We must stop seeing our money as our money and start looking at everything we own as belonging to Him - therefore, it's not *"here's your 10% God and the rest of the 90% is mine"*—it's *"all I have is Yours Lord, every penny belongs to You—how much do You want for Your Kingdom this paycheck and what can I keep for myself?"*

Giving when done out of the **right heart** is not only good - **it's a demonstration of God's love**, of His character in operation

REFLECTION: Ponder once again the first reflection question now that you and reviewed this sermon.

(see John 3:16) also:

1 John 3:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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