



SOUTHWOOD UNITED CHURCH

SUMMER DEVOTIONS 2022

WEEK 7 – AUGUST 8-14

Monday, August 8

Reading: 2 Corinthians 9:7 *Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

Thought: This week we will be looking at the practise of giving generously of our time, talents, and resources. What does it mean to give generously? Some would say it would mean to give a lot of whatever it is they are giving. For example, getting a generous slice of cake is getting a big one. However, if you look up the definition of generous, you might be surprised, because it is also defined as – showing kindness to others and as showing a readiness to give more of than what is strictly necessary or expected: To me, generosity also includes this concept of being a cheerful giver. It may be helpful to describe what generous people are NOT. Someone may give a large gift to the church, but if it is done reluctantly, or if they are forced to, or if they are trying to show they are better than others, or if they grumble, and complain about the giving, they are NOT generous. If someone chooses to cheerfully give time, talent, or other resources more than is necessary, or even simply to be kind they are generous – no matter how large the gift.

What have you decided in your heart to give generously and cheerfully?

Prayer: Holy Spirit – I want to be a cheerful giver. Help me to follow in the footsteps of Jesus to be kind, and to give generously to further God’s work.



Tuesday, August 9

Reading: Exodus 35:4-5 & 10 *Moses said to the whole Israelite community, "This is what the LORD has commanded: From what you have, take an offering for the LORD"....All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the LORD has commanded"*

Thought: Giving generously is not a new idea, nor is it something simply related to our church. The book of Exodus was written thousands of years ago and clearly documents that the Israelites were to take offerings to God and make everything God required them to make. The whole community was expected to contribute. Your offering was to come from what you had, and if you had a particular skill you were expected to use it in service to God. The same is true today. We as a community are called to work together, and to contribute to the furthering of God's kingdom.

What do you have that you offer to God? Do you have a skill that you could use to serve God?

Prayer: All powerful God – I want to honor your command to bring offerings to you and to use the skills you have given me to serve you. Help me to find those ways that best serve you.

Wednesday August 10

Reading: Hebrews 13:16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Thought: Giving generously of what we have, whether that be things, money, time, or skill is sharing. I never did read the book "All I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten" by Robert Fulghum, but I know that sharing is a skill and lesson we learn there. One book I did read was "Raising Good Children" by Dr. Thomas Lickona. The premise of his book is that we move through stages of moral reasoning from simply wanting to get our own way and being "good" just to avoid punishment, to being respectful of the rights and dignity of all simply because that is right and just. Dr. Lickona also says that we all experience times when we regress, and that we may even have times where we act like a prekindergarten child. If that happens, we may need to reread Hebrews 13:16 and remember to do good, and to share what we have cheerfully because in the eyes of God, that is what is right and just.



Have you ever (as an adult) felt like a fractious 3-year-old when asked to share or to give generously?

Prayer: Loving God, Friend Jesus – I want to please you and remember your ways, to be good and to share the blessings you have bestowed upon me.

Thursday, August 11

Reading: Luke 21:1-4 As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. “Truly I tell you, “He said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others”.

Thought: This is a famous passage, and one that gives me great comfort. Jesus is telling us that is not so much the amount of what we give, as the giving what I can. The small offering of the widow was just as important as the larger offerings from the rich. It is helpful to be reminded that it is more important to give at all, than it is to give the most of anyone. Any offering of our time, talent, or resources, is valuable.

Do you find comfort in this passage?

Prayer: Loving and kind Father – thank you for valuing my offerings, no matter how small.

Friday, August 12

Reading: Proverbs 11:25 *A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.*

Thought: Giving generously may be a difficult practise to embrace. I think in many cases this is not so much because we are selfish, but because we are worried about having enough. I also think that as with most anything, the key is balance. It is equally wrong to wastefully expend our time, talents, and resources as it is to hoard them. Giving so much of ourselves that we are left exhausted and burnt out or fraught with financial worry is just as much a mistake as not giving at all. Having said that, I have also learned that often my worries about having enough are unfounded and the rewards of generous giving are huge. It’s a sweet spot when I find the right balance between caring for others and caring for myself.

Are you more of a hoarder or a wastrel of your time, talents, and resources?

Prayer: Jesus – you lived a life of perfect balance. Help me to find that sweet spot too.

Saturday, August 13

Reading: Matthew 6:19-21 *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Thought: I have to admit I do have some treasured belongings. For the most part, they are not expensive but instead are sentimental things that have precious memories associated with them. It is actually the memories, rather than my possessions, that are dearest to me when I think more closely about it. Some of my most cherished memories involve gifts given or received, and these gifts are always personal and are part of a close and loving relationship. I do treasure those memories, and they are close to my heart, as are all who are involved in them. Most of all, I treasure the gift of life everlasting given to me by Jesus’ sacrifice. My heart is there too.

What is your greatest treasure?

Prayer: Heavenly Father – thank you for the gift of memory, the meaning of those special gifts given and received, and most of all the gift of my salvation.

Sunday, August 14

Reading: Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Thought: Here is another reason to be generous with our time, talent, and resources. Sadly, it is sometimes not enough to know that we have treasures in heaven. It is human nature to want rewards for good behaviour, and God provides even that. Jesus tells us our reward will be not just be a good measure, it will be full to overflowing! We will be rewarded with joy.

How does this promise make you feel about being a generous giver?

Prayer: Jesus – you are my saviour and the giver of life. Help me to be a generous giver and to realize the rewards you send.

