

Sermon Notes
Good News Church
Series - "Growing in Faith"
Growing in Faith by Trusting God in our Time, Talents, and Treasure (part 3)
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SERIES OVERVIEW: Growing in Faith

The purpose of this series is to identify practices and give encouragement to help each of us grow in faith and relationship with Jesus.

THEME VERSE

*"Blessed is the one... whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is **like a tree planted by streams of water**, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers." - Psalms 1:1-3*

INGREDIENTS FOR GROWTH

1. Salvation
2. Submission
3. Spending time with God
4. **Spending time with God's people**
 - Giving of our time, talents, and treasure
5. Sharing God's love with others
6. Suffering

THIS WEEK: Growing in Faith by Trusting God in our Time, Talents, and Treasure (part 3)

Our Giving Experiences

Guilt or Pride vs. Gratitude and Faith

Our generosity must come from a *"perfect makes practice"* mindset.

Mark 10:17-27 The Rich Young Ruler

"As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said

to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words.

But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." - Mark 10:17-27

Our hearts are the same as the rich young ruler. When he asked how he could be saved, and that he had kept all of the commands, Jesus told him to go away and sell everything he had and give it to the poor. He went away sad, because he had great wealth and knew his own heart.

When the disciples asked, "Who can be saved?" Jesus answered by telling them that with man, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.

The Good News of Giving

The rich young ruler was trying to earn God's salvation by his own good works. When we operate in that mindset, we either experience guilt because we don't think we're giving enough or pride because we think so enamored with our own generosity. Basically, Jesus was saying, *"Good luck with that! It's impossible!"*

But the Good News is that, even though our hearts are greedy and selfish, we are covered in the righteousness of Christ, and our giving is a result of his generosity towards us, not an effort of our generosity towards him.

We cannot earn God's favor. We don't have enough to give to earn his favor. We give as a result of the favor of God that we already have.

Jesus sets us free from trying to earn his favor out of duty, such that we now can give with cheerful hearts out of delight.

We also know that we cannot out give God!

He will supply our every need.

"I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be a blessing."
- Psalms 37:25-26

He challenges us to test Him in this.

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it." - Malachi 3:10

How We Give

1. **Hearts** - It's important that, what matters most in our giving, is not so much what's "in the plate," but what's in our hearts.
 - *"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a **cheerful** giver." – 2 Corinthians 9:7*
2. **Hands**
 - *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. – Proverbs 3:9-10*
 - *"Bring the whole **tithe** into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it." - Malachi 3:10*

A few thoughts about tithing

One way to look at Tithing (i.e., standards for giving)

- Tipping 15%
- Tithing 10%
- **Is the 10% rule still in effect?** When Jesus came and sent His Holy Spirit out to dwell in the people, people's attitudes shifted from, "How much do I have to give?" to "How much can I give?" (see Acts 2).

You don't have to have a lot (or really anything) to be generous.

- The poor widow (Mark 12:44) did not give out of her wealth but *"gave out of her poverty."*

God grows our faith when we give.

Giving is a Response

Our generosity is a response to God's generosity towards us.

- *"He who did not spare his own Son, but **gave him up for us all**—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things." - Romans 8:32*

As we practice generosity, we open the door for God to provide in the gap of need that has been created by our giving, and as we experience God's provision, our faith and trust in God can't help but grow.

We're all in different places spiritually and financially.

- **FINANCIAL** - Some of us are going through financial hardships, struggling with no income, not enough income, or just barely getting by.

- SPIRITUAL - Others of us just aren't in a place spiritually where we feel like we can trust God enough to give.

No matter our situation, we can all find ways to express generosity, NOT out of guilt or shame, but out of gratitude. And... if we don't have the money, we can give our time, because *"time is money."*

Giving = Trust + Submission

- *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth 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."* – Matthew 6:19-21

Illustration

- Teddy Bear behind the back.

Start where you are.

When we give, we connect ourselves to the greatest cause this world has ever known, and we become conduits for the power of God and the love of God to flow through us in our time, talents, and our treasures.

- *"Every human being wants to have a significant part in a significant cause."* - R.C. Sproul

Closing Thoughts

It takes faith to receive. You being here this morning takes faith. The woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5) believed that Jesus could heal her if only she touched the hem of his garment. So she reached out, touched his robe, and was healed because she believed.

It also takes faith to give. Giving is harder, but Jesus said, *"It is more blessed to give them to receive."* (Acts 20:35) Why is that? I think partly because there is joy, knowing that you are being used of God to bless someone else.

Whether it's in receiving or in giving, our greatest obstacle to faith is often fear, to which Jesus said, *"Don't be afraid; just believe."* - Mark 5:36

When we cast off our fear and put on faith, we enter into a dimension of life, such that we encounter God in a very real way, both in our receiving, and in our giving. And when that happens, we find ourselves growing in faith.

And THAT's good news!