

**NEW
BIRTH IN
GIVING
III**

NEW BIRTH IN GIVING – III

Dec. 8, 2013

Sermon in a sentence: Let us allow the Lord the opportunity to work in our hearts so we will give as He gives.

Scriptures: John 6:1-13; Luke 21:1-4; Luke 8:1-3

Illustration: Consider Bro. Yu Zhi Shun's foot massages. When he puts pressure on certain places, it really hurts. The reason is that there's a problem somewhere in your body needing attention. He continues applying pressure, (despite your tears!) until the pain goes away and the problem is fixed.

As we have focused our attention on giving the past few weeks and pressed hard in certain places, you may be feeling pain. The pain shows up when we speak about giving, but the problem is really in the heart. So let's keep working on our hearts until the pain goes away!

.....

As we considered the Macedonians who Paul praises in 2 Cor. 8, you may have felt a little overwhelmed. They were very much outside anything we would consider normal in our day and age. However, they are not the only examples we can follow.

John 6:1-13 NASB After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). ² A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. ³ Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. ⁵ Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to

Philip, **“Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?”** ⁶ This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. ⁷ Philip answered Him, “ Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little.” ⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, ⁹ “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?” ¹⁰ Jesus said, **“Have the people sit down.”** Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. ¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. ¹² When they were filled, He said to His disciples, **“Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost.”** ¹³ So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

This was an incredible incident that John recorded for us involving a hungry crowd of possibly 10,000 people that Jesus told his disciples to feed. Philip analyzed the situation and guesstimated that it would cost approx. 200 denarii to buy enough food to give everyone just a small meal. In today’s money, this would equate to about \$25,000, or \$2.50 a plate to feed them all. This would basically be enough to buy you a small pepperoni square at Pizza Pizza, but certainly not enough to add even a small drink to the order.

How was this problem dealt with? Peter found a young lad who was willing to give a freewill offering of five dinner rolls and a couple of fishes and place them in the hands of Jesus. Jesus broke the bread and fish and fed the crowd “as much as they wanted” (Jn. 6:11). They all ate until they were full and completely satisfied, and just to make the

point, Jesus had the disciples collect the leftovers: 12 baskets full.

The point is simple. Your small offering in the hands of God can do incredible things. It just demands a willing heart and faith in God. He is the provider. He is the multiplier.

.....

Luke 21:1-4 NASB And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. ² And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. ³ And He said, **“Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; ⁴ for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on.”**

The story of the widow in Luke 21 is another inspiring case study. As Jesus stood at the temple treasury watching people give, the widow came and deposited two small copper coins, worth almost nothing.

(Although nobody else may see or know, our Lord Jesus sees and knows exactly what we give, the heart with which we give and what portion of our wealth we are giving to Him.) In the case of the widow, Jesus saw that she had given everything she had, 100% of her “wealth”. He promptly declared that she had given more than everyone else that day.

So really, the Lord is not evaluating our giving in *dollar* terms, but in *percentage* terms. He is not as interested in what we give as He is about what we have left! What we feel we must keep is a good indicator of our level of faith in Him.

According to Statistics Canada, the average Canadian income in 2010 was \$38,000. The average given to religious organizations by weekly churchgoers was \$1,004, 2.6% of their income. Living in one of the richest countries of the world, this is what Canadians felt was appropriate. Those who were less frequent church attenders gave an average of \$313, 0.8% of total income.

90% of givers stated that they gave because they felt compassion for those less fortunate than themselves, but the numbers show that our compassion is rather limited! We need a new heart for giving.

You may feel your gift is so small and insignificant that it won't make a difference and will mean absolutely nothing to God. And you would be absolutely wrong. Your gift may be the greatest given today, although in monetary terms it may be the smallest by far.

.....

Luke 8:1-4 NASB Soon afterwards, He *began* going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with Him, ² and *also* some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³ and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means.

Another category of givers is mentioned in Luke 8: a group of women who had received great miracles in their lives from Jesus. Sicknesses had been healed and evil spirits had been cast out of them. Because of their great appreciation for what He had done in their lives, they became important financial supporters of His ministry.

.....

To summarize, there are five types of givers we have looked at:

- those who give themselves to God and deem Him to be master of all they own
- those who give all they have to Jesus, because there is a need to be met
- those who quietly give their 'widow's mite' to God, trusting Him to take care of their needs
- those who give out of a heart of appreciation for what the Lord has done in their lives
- those who give simply because they want to obey the Lord

Which category(ies) do you fall into? **Let us allow the Lord the opportunity to work in our hearts so we will give as He gives.**

APPENDIX:

"People who are more religiously active (i.e. those who attend religious meetings or services at least once a week) are more inclined to donate and, on average, they make larger donations. In 2010, 93% of them had given money to one or more charitable or non-profit organizations, and their average annual donation was \$1,004. In comparison, 83% of donors who attended less often or not at all had donated, and their average annual donation was \$313."¹

"... in 2010, people whose annual household income was \$120,000 or more donated an average amount of \$744,

¹ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2012001/article/11637-eng.htm#a6>, accessed Dec. 3, 2013

compared with \$427 for those whose income was between \$80,000 and \$99,999.”

Average Canadian incomes – 2011:²

Single female:	\$32,900
Single male:	\$38,100
Married, no children:	\$38,000
Married with children:	\$47,000

Total charitable donations: 10.6 billion

40% goes to religious organizations: 4.24 billion

² <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/famil21a-eng.htm>, accessed Dec. 3, 2013