

Six Reasons why we can be MORE BLESSED

Lesson for January 28, 2024

Introduction:

- ⇒ Last week we introduced the theme of this year's Stewardship Emphasis based on Acts 20:35.
- ⇒ The phrase in the last part of the verse, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" has been called the most unbelievably beatitude. This can't be right! The giver is more blessed/happy than the recipient?!? This goes against our natural instinct and the teachings of our culture.
- ⇒ What Jesus taught is often countercultural. By believing and following this principle we will live a life that is more blessed.
- ⇒ In this lesson we will reinforce the principle we learned last week with six reasons why "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

Outline:

1. Giving models the Lord.
 - a. James teaches in 1:17 that God is the Giver of every good thing. We are His image-bearers. When we give, we are like Jesus.
 - b. John 3:16 reminds that that God so loved the world that He...Gave!
 - c. If our heavenly Father is a Giver, then giving ought to be a quality we are seeking to develop.
 - d. Paul encouraged the Corinthians in their giving by exhorting them to follow Jesus's example and challenged them to prove their love by their giving. Read 2 Corinthians 8:8-9 and ask the following questions.
 - i. According to verse 8, what does my giving prove? *The sincerity of my love...*
 - ii. According to verse 9, what did Jesus give up? *His heavenly position...*
 - iii. What did Jesus do for us in the Incarnation? *Vs. 9 – became poor...*
 - e. APPLY: When your name come to the mind of others would they say that you are a GIVER or a TAKER? Remember, we don't build statues and memorials for givers.
2. Giving is part of submission to God's Lordship.
 - a. Luke 6:46 asks a convicting question, "Why do we call Jesus, Lord, yet don't do what He says"?
 - b. Every act of obedience recognizes that there is a higher authority in our lives.
 - i. ILL: Consider the speed limit. Why should we obey it?
 - ii. We obey because the law and law enforcement have a higher authority.
 - c. APPLY: Submitting our wallet to the Lord is often one of the final areas in which we yield. If you are disobedient in this area, ask yourself why this is so. What keeps you from being obedient in the area of tithing and giving?
 - i. NOTE: This would be a good place for your brief stewardship testimony.
 - d. Choose today to yield to God's Lordship. You will come to know that what you may have perceived as a threat to your financial security is actually a place of great safety!
3. Giving clarifies who your Master is.
 - a. The first part of Matthew 6:24 states something that is impossible. Many have tried to serve two masters but it is impossible. You cannot serve God and money.
 - i. Love of money attaches us to this world and creates a hoarding mentality.
 - ii. Love of God attaches us to the next world and creates a trusting and giving mentality.
 - b. The Christian must recognize that money is a wonderful servant but a terrible master. Money is simply a tool that God has given us to glorify Him with and to see His will accomplished. Money is not the end in and of itself.

- c. APPLY: Who do you serve more faithfully – the Lord or money? How much is spent on yourself vs how much is given? How much thought to you give to God’s will for your expenditures?
4. Giving trusts God’s provision.
 - a. Continue in Matthew 6 by reading verses 25-28.
 - i. Note the “therefore” in vs. 25. If you have chosen that the Lord is going to be your Master and not money then everything changes!
 - ii. Do you have the faith to trust God with your money?
 - b. The Bible clearly teaches that we don’t have to worry about our daily provisions. God will take care of us. Everything you need will be provided for you when you are obedient to the Lord.
 - c. Make sure to contrast this with our wants. It is important to know the difference! The Lord did not promise to meet all our “wants” but He will provide all our “needs.”
 - d. ILL: Consider the birds (vs. 26). They don’t store up for the future, they don’t plant crops in the spring, but God provides for them. How much more will He provide for you!
5. Giving advances God’s work on earth.
 - a. You can’t teach on stewardship and avoid Malachi 3:10.
 - b. Many of us regularly advance many businesses. How much did you spend at Wal-Mart in 2023? How about Chick-fil-a? The money that we give these business advances their cause.
 - c. QUESTION: How is God’s work on earth to be advanced?
 - i. Many churches come up with creative efforts that are not taught in Scripture – car washes, bake sales, pumpkin sales, raffles, etc.
 - ii. The Lord wants us to trust Him and follow His simple plan for funding His work.
 - d. God’s Word is clear that His work of the local church is to be funded by His people obediently giving. When we give, amazing things happen!
 - i. DISCUSS: What amazing things happen regularly because of the giving of people through FBT?
 - ii. There is a vibrant gospel witness in Florence through FBT because people give.
 - iii. There are missionaries all over the world because people give.
 - iv. There are resources for evangelism, worship, ministry and discipleship that take place because people give!
6. Giving allows me to praise and glorify God in a tangible way.
 - a. Read Psalm 116:12. Brainstorm the many benefits that we have received from the Lord.
 - b. After receiving all these wonderful benefits the LEAST I can do is give a portion back to Him.
 - c. Giving in a right spirit and a spirit of gratitude is an act of worship.
 - d. It is acknowledging in a small but consistent way that everything I have has come from God. It is only through His power that I have the ability to earn wealth (see also Deuteronomy 8:18).

Conclusion: Take a minute and explain the Chest of Joash to your class members. Emphasize that this is a commitment between them and the Lord. No one will know what you did (no signature required).