

GIVING FROM AND GIVING TO

(2 Corinthians 8:1-15)

Intro: #1 topic on the lips of Jesus in the gospels.
-Kingdom of heaven.

#2 topic on the lips of Jesus in the gospels.
-Money.

#We are certainly more comfortable talking about:

*Kingdom of heaven.

*Than about money.

+At least in the church.

When we had our Rekindle the Fire goal-setting ice cream social in July.

-There was not a single proposal relating to:

#Money.

#Congregational finances.

-When I pointed out this omission to our Church Council.

#There was no enthusiasm for adding another goal.

Yet when we resurrected our Stewardship Committee recently.

-For the first time in almost four years.

-They proposed a month-long stewardship emphasis.

#Beginning today.

*Oktoberfest Stewardfest luncheon.

#Concluding on November 13.

*Thanks for Giving luncheon.

-Their recommendation to me was very clear.

#Don't talk about Time and Talents.

#Just talk about money.

We seem to have this schizophrenic approach to money in the church.

-Love/hate relationship.

#We don't want to talk about it.

#But we can't not talk about it.

*Not when we continually run budget deficits year after year.

So I'm going to talk about money.

- Today.

- For the next month.

 - #Although:

 - *Next Sunday is Reformation Sunday.

 - *Sunday after that is All Saints' Sunday.

 - #I suppose I'll figure out a way to combine dual emphases.

How do we Lutherans talk about money?

- Without being legalistic.

 - #Demanding that everyone tithe.

 - *Give 10% of their income to the church.

 - +Realistically speaking.

 - =Too much for some (few).

 - =Not nearly enough for others.

- Without laying a guilt trip on you.

 - #Shaming you into increasing your pledges.

 - *So that we can:

 - +Pay down our debt.

 - +Balance our budget.

 - +Increase our benevolence.

I'm going to talk about two ways of giving.

- Giving from.

 - #What is our motivation for giving?

- Giving to.

 - #What do we hope to accomplish by our giving?

I. Giving From.

A. Grateful Heart.

1. Conference 3 Annual Meeting.

a. Last Sunday.

 - St. Andrew in Sand Springs.

 - Bonnie Peters and I attended.

b. Our devotion.

 - Led by Pastor Sally Houck.

 - #Salem Lutheran Church in Stillwater.

 - 2 Corinthians 9.

 - #Chapter after our Second Reading for today.

 - #Part of Paul's appeal.

 - *To the people in Corinth.

 - *To take up a collection for the poor in Jerusalem.

-2 Corinthians 9:7 says:
#“Each of you must give as you have made up your mind.”

-I commented.

#Greek word used there is not vous (nous).

*“Mind.”

#It’s καρδία (cardia).

*Cardiac.

*Heart.

-Ultimately.

#We don’t give from our minds.

#We give from our hearts.

*Grateful hearts.

2. Grateful for what?

a. That we have a lot of stuff?

-Wealth.

-Possessions.

#Ecclesiastes 5:10-20.

*Positive view:

+Wealth.

+Possessions.

=Recognizing:

-They come from God.

-They give joy to our hearts.

#Jesus.

*Matthew 6:19-21.

*Not so positive view:

+Wealth.

+Possessions.

=Recognizing:

-Treasures on earth.

-May get in the way of treasures in heaven.

#Both make reference to our hearts.

*Our hearts represent:

+Our center.

+What’s important to us.

+What we love.

*Is stuff all we are grateful for?

b. That we have Jesus in our hearts.

-“For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

“That though he was rich,”

“Yet for your sakes he became poor,”

“So that by his poverty you might become rich.”

#2 Corinthians 8:9.

*Paul is not talking about material wealth or possessions.

3. What's in our hearts?
 - a. What's at our center?
 - b. What is our treasure?
 - We give from grateful hearts.

B. Eager Spirit.

1. I've recently started doing something I haven't done in years.
 - a. Looking at toy catalogues.
 - b. I did that when I was a kid.
 - Getting ideas for my wish list.
 - c. I did that when my boys were small.
 - Getting ideas for what to give them.
 - d. Now I have a granddaughter.
 - I look at the toy circulars.
 - #With Sophia in mind.
2. Before Sophia's first birthday.
 - a. I asked my son Josh if he had any ideas on a birthday present for her.
 - b. He suggested a slide.
 - My boys had a slide when they were small.
 - I thought a slide was a great idea.
 - c. I checked out *Toys R Us*.
 - They had two models.
 - #One I liked better than the other.
 - One I didn't like as well.
 - #On sale.
 - One I did like.
 - #Not on sale.
 - #Kind of pricey.
 - I asked if the other model ever went on sale.
 - #I was advised to keep an eye on:
 - *Circulars in the Sunday paper.
 - **Toys R Us* website.
 - +I did.
 - +I had time before her birthday.
 - d. But the weeks went by.
 - Slide didn't go on sale.
 - Her birthday was approaching.
 - I had to get her something.
 - I bought her something else.
 - #*Fisher Price* barnyard set.
 - *Cow that moos.
 - *Horse that whinnies.
 - *Rooster that crows.
 - *Barn that plays Old McDonald.

- e. Two days before her birthday.
 - That slide went on sale.
 - #I bought it.
 - What to do?
 - #I had two gifts.
 - #Should I give her one?
 - *Save the other for another occasion.
 - #No way! Not this grandpa!
 - *I gave her both.
 - *I gave with:
 - +Enthusiasm.
 - +Eager spirit.
3. What if we gave to the church the way we give to our loved ones?
 - a. Giving from a grateful heart.
 - b. Giving with an eager spirit.
 - c. Giving with the spirit of the Holy Spirit.

C. Our Fair Share.

- 1. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to give proportionately.
 - a. Balancing.
 - Their abundance.
 - Need of the poor in Jerusalem.
 - b. Suggesting that one day the tables might be turned.
 - Folks in Jerusalem might be giving out of their abundance.
 - People in Corinth might be in need.
 - c. We've done that with Lutheran Disaster Response.
 - We've had several appeals this year.
 - #Tsunami.
 - #Tornadoes.
 - #Flooding.
 - After the ice storm of 2007.
 - #We had:
 - *Trees limbs down.
 - *Blown circuit board on one of our furnace units.
 - #We received a check.
 - *From Lutheran Disaster Response.
 - *For over \$600.
 - d. We give when we can.
 - We receive when we must.
- 2. We can always give something.
 - a. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to give.
 - Using the example of the Macedonians.

- b. Macedonians had had a hard time.
 - Affliction.
 - #Probably persecution.
 - Extreme poverty.
 - #2 Corinthians 8:2.
 - Did they use that as an excuse not to give?
 - #“We’re in the middle of a recession.”
 - #“Unemployment is up.”
 - #“Stock market is down.”
 - #“We can’t give now.”
 - *No.
 - *Instead they overflowed in a wealth of generosity.
 - c. We can always give something.
3. We can grow in our giving.
- a. Not everyone is a tither.
 - If we were a congregation of tithers.
 - #We would have no money problems.
 - *This is not a poor congregation.
 - +We just act like we are.
 - b. We can grow in our giving.
 - If you’re giving 2% of your income.
 - #You can grow to 3%.
 - If you’re giving 3%.
 - #You can grow to 4%.
 - If you’re giving 4%.
 - #You can grow to 5%.
 - If you’re giving 10%.
 - #You can grow to 11%.
 - c. It’s called proportionate giving.
 - We can all do it.
 - We can all grow.
 - #Because we are giving from:
 - *Generous heart.
 - *Eager spirit.
 - *Sense of fairness.
 - +In proportion.
 - =To what we have.
 - =To the need.

II. Giving To.

A. God.

1. "They gave themselves first to the Lord."
 - a. 2 Corinthians 8:5.
2. How do we give to God?
 - a. Not to a church budget.
 - b. But to God.
3. How do we give to God?
 - a. As though we have anything:
 - God needs.
 - God doesn't already have.
 - b. Last week I suggested:
 - All that we own.
 - All that we are.
 - #Already belongs to God.
 - #We are simply:
 - *Stewards.
 - *Caretakers.
 - c. At our 11:00 service we're going to sing:
 - We give thee but thine own,
 - Whate'er the gift may be;
 - All that we have is thine alone,
 - A trust, O Lord, from thee.
 - #ELW 686.
 - d. So how do we give to God?
4. We give the way Sophia gives to me.
 - a. When I gave Sophia her slide.
 - We had to:
 - #Set her on top.
 - #Hold her as she slid down.
 - *She couldn't do it on her own.
 - b. About 6-8 weeks ago.
 - Sophia figured out how to climb the steps on that slide.
 - #She's so proud of herself.
 - #She's so excited when she's on that slide.
 - *Her face lights up.
 - c. She's learned to trust me.
 - While she can climb the steps.
 - #She hasn't yet learned to catch herself at the bottom.
 - *Without:
 - +Having her feet slide out from under her.
 - +Hitting her head.
 - =On the bottom of the slide.
 - =On the floor.

- *So I have to catch her.
- At first.
 - #She wouldn't scoot off of the top.
 - *Unless I was holding onto her.
- Then.
 - #She would let herself go.
 - *But she would immediately grab my hands.
 - +Which made it hard for me to catch her.
- Now.
 - #She puts her arms out.
 - *Trusting that I'm going to catch her.
 - +Before she crashes at the bottom of the slide.
- d. She's learned to share.
 - When her little friends come over.
 - #She's happy to share that slide.
 - *Everybody gets a turn.
 - *It's great fun.
 - Or when her friends aren't there.
 - #Her doll gets a turn.
 - #Her stuffed monkey gets a turn.
 - #Her ball gets a turn.
 - *We have a ball with that slide.
- 5. Isn't that how we can give to God?
 - a. Enthusiastically enjoying the gifts that God has given us.
 - b. Trusting that God is always there to catch us.
 - #No matter how little we have.
 - #No matter how much.
 - c. Eager to share what we have.

B. Others.

1. Don't we give to God by giving to others?
 - a. "They gave themselves first to the Lord,"
"And, by the will of God, to us."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 8:5.
2. Isn't that why?
 - a. This congregation exists.
 - b. We can dare to ask for you to support it financially.
3. So that we can:
 - a. Feed the hungry.
 - b. Support ex-offenders in their transition back into the community.
 - c. Provide space for:
 - Young adults in recovery.
 - Youth in K-Life programs.
 - Center for Counseling and Education.
 - Music education.

- d. Assist victims of natural disasters
- e. Send medical missionaries to Tanzania.
- f. Help to provide:
 - Spiritual education.
 - Pastoral training.
 - #Through:
 - *Colleges.
 - *Seminaries.
- g. Proclaim the grace of our Lord Jesus.
 - Who though he was rich.
 - #With all the treasures of heaven
 - For our sake became poor.
 - #Human.
 - #Crucified.
 - #Dead.
 - #Buried.
 - *In a grave not his own.
 - So that we might become rich.
 - #Rich in faith.
 - #Rich in forgiveness.
 - #Rich in spirit.
 - #Rich in sharing.

Concl: Two ways of giving.

- Giving from.
- Giving to.