

Heart for the House | Week 1

Good morning and again welcome to City Hope. I'm super grateful you decided to be with us today. We hope and pray this church feels like your church.

I had a different message prepared and God had other plans. Friday afternoon I felt the Lord urging me to switch it up.

We are going to be looking at a topic that isn't always well received but is a crucial part of all of our lives.

Financial Generosity. (Hold on to your purse)

Some church leaders and Christian leaders have given the topic of money a bad name. There is almost an immediate negative when this topic comes up.

I want to switch things up in a way today...I want to redeem this topic and try to help you see that when this area of my life is healthy, it can affect everything else.

Here is a big shift in my heart for today...I want to talk to you as a fellow believer and not as a pastor of this church.

I want something for you, not something from you.

My desire is for you to experience the fullness of living for Christ.

Illustration: married in 2004. Made \$36k combined. We decided we would give 10%. \$3600 year - \$300 month.

Almost immediately we started noticing God blessing us.

\$500 month apartment from friend

\$1000 vehicle from church member

We made that decision in 2004, we have stood by it ever since.

A couple of Scriptures and reasons we decided this what God wanted for us.

Matthew 6.19-21, 24 | ¹⁹ "Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal.

²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

We didn't have an issue with storing anything up, because we didn't have enough to store. But verse 21 and 24 grabbed my attention.

The things I treasure have my heart.

The Bible also tells Christians...Love the lord with all of your heart.

I cant love my material possessions and give them my heart and at the same time love God with all of my heart.

I cannot serve 2 masters; it's not going to work. Your finances and your generosity are a heart issue, not a head issue.

So, Shira and I decided loving God and serving Him was more important to us.

We based our giving on a couple of things.

First....Honoring the Tithe

What is a tithe? - Tithe means 10th or 10%.

In the O.T. the tithe was a requirement of the Law in which the Israelites were to give 10 percent of the crops they grew and the livestock they raised to the tabernacle/temple (Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:26; Deuteronomy 14:24; 2 Chronicles 31:5).

Look at God's promise in **Malachi 3.10** | ¹⁰ **Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house. Test me in this way," says the LORD of Armies. "See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure.**

You may say well Bobby that OT...we don't live under the OT anymore.

You're correct. People did this bc it was law...We can do it out of love. There is nowhere in the Bible that says we can't honor an O.T principle today.

Truth that we found...**God will honor those who honor Him.**

We honored God....Second, we truly believed God would provide what we needed.

2 Corinthians 9.6-8 | ⁶ **The point is this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously.** ⁷ **Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not reluctantly or out of compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver.** ⁸ **And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.**

Continue story -- We moved to TN....Our new salary was \$56K combined. We were rich. I was warren buffet! This is what it feels like to be loaded. We bumped our tithe to \$5600 year. \$467 month. We were still honoring God with the tithe.

Our road then took some twists and turns. We had Emma and we felt we wanted Shira to stay home with her. That meant subtracting \$21k from our lifestyle. I was no longer Warren Buffet.

We did what we had to do to make it work....Babysitting, tutoring, lawn work, camps, etc. We were working hard but remaining faithful in our tithe. Marleigh starts getting sick...alot. Car gets stolen, house gets broken into, Smashed truck window.

We had some friends struggling at the same time....God told us to give them what they needed. We did. It was hard. A young lady who had a heart for missions was \$500 short for her missions trip...We paid it.

Cleaned the house and filled cabinets with food | \$10k check from Thomas' | Car from Pastor Ron | fixed window on truck.

This scripture came alive to us.

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 back to you.

God's lesson to us - When you are generous, generosity will be returned to you. If you are stingy, that's the standard that will be given back to you.

The motive for giving is not to receive. The motive for giving is to honor God.

He has always been faithful.

The third thing that helped us along the way was staying true to a Biblical worldview.

We all look at the world through a filter. Pessimistic, optimistic, realist, visionary, etc.

God is the owner of it all.

When we release a tenth of our income and give it over to the ministry and mission of Christ in the world, we honor the Creator rights of God who owns everything, including all our income.

Luke 24.1 | The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the LORD;

That is absolutely true. It's why when talking about finances and generosity its really not a focus on tithing, but to focus on lifestyle.

What you do with every cent says something about your view of God and what he means to you. And what your values are in this age.

Our consistency in giving represents our commitment to living as if everything we have is His and we are just the stewards.

***If you would allow to throw my Pastor hat back on for second.

Generous living is a heart issue, not a head issue.

Generosity has nothing to do with how much you have, but everything to do with how much you love.

As a Christian you can be poor, but you cant be stingy. You might not be rich, but you still cant be greedy.

The mark of a Christian is not someone who has a bank account loaded with money. Its someone who is loaded with generosity.

Living generously begins with recognizing that...**God is a generous God.**

He is our example. I want to give you a few scriptures. The person to your left probably isn't as sharp as you so you may need to help them.

Psalm 100.5 | For the LORD is good, and his faithful love endures forever, his faithfulness, through all generations.

Psalm 145.16 | Generous to a fault, you lavish your favor on all creatures. (MSG)

Because He is generous, I will be too.

Conclusion:

My obedience to the convictions in my life should never be based upon man. My convictions and the obedience should be based off of my relationship with Christ.

Man's response should never dictate my obedience.

In our giving we should press forward because it will prove and strengthen our faith in God promises.

There is an absolute correlation between faith in the promises of God and peace of mind in giving away what we may think we need but don't.

Hebrews 13.4 says it like this, **Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; [why? because of a promise] for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you."**

Every time you doubt that you can live on 90% of your income, let the glorious promise of God strengthen your faith:

Philippians 4.19 | My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

From CHC perspective....I believe it is my role as Pastor to teach you what the Bible says about this. To be a resource for you. To give you opportunities to obey.

I believe in giving because I've witnessed Gods faithfulness.

We believe in this so much that we want to help kick start this journey for you.

We want to offer you a 90-day challenge. For some it's not a kick start it's a re-start. Or maybe even you've been giving, and you feel God is telling you to go beyond the tithe.

Wherever you are on your generosity journey here is what we are going to do.

Beginning on Jan 28 (you have a few days to pray through this)

For 90 days we will keep a record of your giving and if you feel like God has held his end of the bargain, we'll return all of your money.

Obviously, there are some boundaries here...don't come to us in 90 days and tell me you put \$10k in cash in the bucket. You can sign up on our website or grab a card and fill it out.

This could be a huge step in your faith journey that truly helps you and the people around you experience the fullness of living for Christ.