

MORE THAN ENOUGH – 1 of 4

Love Gives

November 3, 2024

INTRODUCTION How many of you believe it's more blessed to give than to receive? I hope you believe that, why? Because Jesus said it.

It's more blessed to give than it is to receive. But let's just be real for a minute. Can we do that?

Okay, it's also pretty blessed to receive too, right? Of course it is.

I mean it is really fun when someone gives you something. That's a good thing, right?

We all like to receive, but Jesus said it's actually better to give. Why is it more blessed to give? The answer is because we reflect the heart of God.

Scripture says in John 3:16, *For God so loved the world that he gave...*

God is love. What does God do? God-Gives.

So if God is love and God gives, then we would say that love gives.

What does love do? Love gives. So, if love gives, then I would suggest that you can't love without giving.

IF LOVE GIVES, YOU CAN'T LOVE WITHOUT GIVING.

ILLUSTRATION I love action movies. Laura loves romance movies. Because I love Laura more than I love action movies, we've watched "**Downton Abbey**" multiple times.

I even took her to Biltmore to see the Downton Abbey exhibit one year – 'cause that's just the kind of guy I am!

And what I know about you is because you love, you want to give. And because you love a lot, you want to give more. But many of you feel like you can't. And the reason you feel like you can't is because you believe you don't have enough.

So, my very real goal, is to build your faith, and I'm going to ask God to help change your mind set about giving and generosity.

MANY OF US DON'T HAVE A MONEY PROBLEM, WE HAVE A MINDSET PROBLEM.

God is calling every single one of us to give because love gives.

So, we are going to work the next couple of weeks through two chapters in the Bible. We're going to work through 2 Corinthians 8 and 9.

Paul is the one who wrote this letter to the Corinthians. Paul was a Jew, who when he got saved, God called him not just to take the gospel to the Jews, but to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

Now who are the Gentiles? They were the non-Jewish people. And this created some tension because Christianity was born out of the Jewish people. So, a lot of the Jewish people thought that Christianity was for Jewish people.

So, Paul recognized that the gospel was for everybody. Jesus came for the Jews and also for the Gentiles.

James, Peter, and John were seen as the church leaders and they actually blessed Paul to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

They said, "You can go to the Gentiles on one condition, you have to tell them to always be generous." They said, "Don't forget the poor." And he said, "That's what I want to do."

So, Paul went to the Macedonian churches and inspired them to give generously, and he was blown away, stunned, and shocked by their irrational generosity.

Here's what he writes to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 8:1, *¹And now brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.*

²In the midst of a very severe trial, they're overflowing joy and they're extreme poverty weld up in rich generosity.

So he is telling the Corinthians, these Macedonians are amazing. If you don't know much about the Macedonian churches, I'll tell you two things about them.

The **①first** thing we discover is **they were very poor, yet irrationally generous**. And when I say they were very poor, they're not like some of us are very poor by going, I can barely afford my streaming services.

ILLUSTRATION You know Hulu and Prime and Netflix are so expensive, I may have to cancel Disney plus. That's where some of us live today.

When the Bible says they lived in extreme poverty, in the Greek, what that means is, it was as deep as the ocean. That's literally in the Greek what it means, these people were hurting deeply financially.

So, they were very, very poor, and yet they were irrationally generous.

And the **②second** thing we see is that **they were enduring trials, yet overflowing with joy**.

They were in a really difficult time of life in poverty and suffering, and yet in their poverty they were still generous, and in their suffering they still had joy.

It's interesting because a lot of times whenever we feel like we're lacking, we might be depressed, anxious, or want to protect whatever we have.

But for the Macedonians, even though life was hard, they were generous, and they were joyful. Why? Because they were giving. And it's actually more blessed to give than it is to receive. Why? Because what does love do? Love gives.

Now that raises the question, they didn't have much and yet they were incredibly generous. Why were they so generous when they were incredibly poor? How did they give so big when they had so little?

And the answer is they had a very different mindset. Many of us don't have a money problem as much as we have a mindset problem.

And there are two mindsets I want to talk to you about today. I'm going to call one **①THE BAG MINDSET** and the other, **②THE BARN MINDSET**.

Let's start with **①the bag mindset**. The bag mindset believes **we don't have enough**. I'd like to give more, but I don't have enough.

And some of you may relate and feel this exact same way. You can relate to the words in the Old Testament in Haggai 1:6, when Haggai said,

“... You eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.”

No matter what comes in my bag's got a hole in it, and at the end of the month there's nothing left in the bag.

In other words, I want to give more, I genuinely do, but I don't have enough. And so, we think when I have more, then I'll give more. It's the bag mindset.

The second mindset is **②the barn mindset**. The barn says we don't have enough, the barn says **we have more than enough**.

In fact, Deuteronomy 28:8 promises that if you fully obey the Lord, what will God do?

⁸The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

It's the barn mindset that we have more than enough. And this is how the Macedonians lived. Even though they didn't have much, they didn't have the bag mindset, we don't have enough, they had the barn mindset believing that we do have enough to give.

We don't have to wait until later, we don't have to wait until we have more, we can actually give right now, they had the barn mindset.

Many of us we're the opposite. We don't have a money problem; we have a mindset problem.

What happens when you have the bag mindset? Let me show you the cycle.

ILLUSTRATION What happens is God gives you something, God supplies, you get paid, you get an increase, God supplies. And the first thing we do with the bag mindset is we consume, we spend it, we go out, we're on Amazon, click buy, click buy. We consume.

And because we consume, we lack, we spend everything that comes to us, and we don't feel like we have enough. And because we've consumed and because we lack, then we fear. We're afraid we don't have enough.

THE BAG MINDSET. ①God gives to us and ②we spend it, ③we consume it, and ④we don't have enough. And so ⑤we are afraid and the ⑥cycle goes on and on.

There is another mindset though, it's called **THE BARN MINDSET.** ①God supplies. Instead of consuming first, what do you think you do? ②You give. ③God multiplies. ④It builds our faith. ⑤And the cycle goes on and on.

Why do you give first? Because what does love do? Love gives. Gives.

You see this mindset, the barn mindset in Proverbs 3:9-10, *⁹Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;*

In the Old Testament, it was a farming metaphor with the first fruits, the first part of your harvest. With the first fruits of your crops, you honor the Lord.

And when you give to him first, when you put him first, what does scripture say? What's going to happen, then your what?

¹⁰then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

The first thing you do if you have the barn mindset is you give because love gives, you honor God with the very first of what he entrusts to you, and then your barns will be overflowing.

Giving first fruits is very similar, some preachers would say the same, some would say it slightly different, but it is very, very similar to what we call tithing.

Tithing was born before the law, it's in the Old Testament, it's in the New Testament. Tithing is returning to God 10% of what he trusts to us. When you give 10%, is it any 10% like the first, the middle or the last?

The answer is no, it's the first. You return the very first portion, the first 10% back to God as an act of worship, it's in the way that you honor God.

Malachi 3:10, probably the most famous verse, it says, 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.”

Test me. Bring your first and bring your best.

WE GIVE GOD OUR FIRST AND BEST AND TRUST HIM TO BLESS THE REST.

Now you may be thinking the bag mindset. If I gave the first 10%, I'd have to rearrange my whole life around God.

Oh, what did I just say? Did that just come out, like I'd have to rearrange my life around God to put him first. I'd have to prioritize God to put him first. In many ways that's the point.

Not with just your money but your time, heart, energy, and love. You rearrange your whole life around him because he wants to be first. You go, but that only leaves me 90%.

But you don't understand. 90% He says he blesses. And one day you wake up and realize, God's math is different because 90% with His blessings seems to go further than a hundred percent without.

Now this is a different mindset. It takes faith. You gotta trust God. I have practiced it for years because Jesus affirmed the tithe.

I'll show you very clearly, this is what Jesus said. Matthew 23, Jesus said, he was kind of railing on the hypocrites. He said,

²³“... Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.”

In other words, if Jesus says you should tithe, then I'm probably going to tithe. But don't neglect the more important things, like that's a baseline.

People who say, “**I don't have to tithe.**” What makes you immune to God's Word?

If Jesus says you should tithe, I am actually going to tithe. This is going to be a beginning point for me to return 10% back to God.

It's giving God our first and our best and trusting Him to bless the rest. When we do that, something can happen.

What does tithing do? **TITHING CAN BREAK THE CYCLE OF SCARCITY AND CREATE A NEW CYCLE OF SUPPLY.**

It breaks the old bag mindset. The bag mindset says, God supplies, and we consume, and we lack, and we fear.

But the barn mindset is different. Whenever God supplies, the very first thing we do now is we put God first. We honor the Lord with our wealth, with the first fruits of our harvest, we give back to him.

When we give to him, what does he do? God says, I'll multiply it. I will multiply it back. And what does that do to us?

That actually builds our faith, and rather than having a scarcity mindset, we have an abundant mindset reflecting the abundant goodness of a God who says, it is more blessed to give than it is to receive.

And that's why you want to be more generous.

So when I get more money I'm going to be more generous, right?

MORE MONEY WON'T MAKE YOU MORE GENEROUS, IT WILL MAKE YOU MORE OF WHAT YOU ALREADY ARE.

If you are generous now, more money's going to make you ridiculously generous. But if you're selfish now, more money's going to make you more selfish later.

More money doesn't change hearts, it just exposes what's in your heart. And if you're not generous now, chances are you won't be generous later.

But love gives. And the first thing we do is we honor God with what he gives to us. And the Macedonians didn't have much yet they gave big. They had the barn mindset. Many of us, we have the opposite.

Now here's what's crazy, some of us, have barn blessings, but the bag mindset. Some of us have so much, and yet we give so little. And studies show the higher the wealth goes, the lower the percentage of what they give on average.

And the reason is because they still don't believe they have enough. And that's why Jesus said, **"Watch out. Be on guard against greed."** Because money is a counterfeit God. When you think about it, what does money do?

MONEY PROMISES WHAT ONLY GOD CAN PROVIDE.

Money says, **"Hey, if you get enough money, you're finally going to be peaceful, feel secure. You're going to be significant."**

But only God can give true peace, because you can have a lot of money and no peace in your heart. Only God gives real security, because you can have a lot of money in a bank and get real sick real fast.

And the money doesn't heal your sickness. Only God can make you significant. A lot of people who have really big net worth still feel far from God and feel insignificant.

Money is a counterfeit God. It promises what only God can provide. So Paul was telling the Corinthians, you ought meet these Macedonians. They didn't have much, but they were so generous.

He said this in 2 Corinthians 8:3-5, *³For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.*

Entirely on their own, ⁴they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.

⁵And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

This is powerful. They begged Paul. They pleaded. It was an urgent pleading. Can we give? I know we don't have to, it's not expected, but we want to. Why did they do this?

Because love gives. Because they didn't have a bag mindset, they had a barn mindset. They understood the truth about God's provision.

We see it in 2 Corinthians 9:8, *⁸God can bless you with everything that you need.*

What do you need? Joy, he'll give it to you. Peace, he'll give it to you.

Financial provision, he is Jehovah Jireh, he is your provider. He can give you everything that you need, and watch this, *...and you'll always have more than enough to do good things for others.*

If you have the bag mindset, never enough. You are always going to be waiting, missing out, because it's more blessed to give than to receive.

But when you have the barn mindset, I put God first, I want to give, it's an honor to give. I'm not going to wait until later, I'm going to give now.

They urgently pleaded because God gives us more than enough. Many of us don't have a money problem, we have a mindset problem.

The scarcity mindset - I gotta keep what I have. This is going to make me secure.

But money can't provide everything, God can.

And the first time I heard about the tithe, I was in college.

A tithe is returning 10% back to God through the storehouse, which I believe is the church, and I gave my first tithe gift. And God provided in a very special way. God provided in a way that literally changed the course of my life. God provided.

And I'm going to tell you that when you give, you always get more. But when you honor God with a tithe, he will prove himself faithful. Because God rewards those who give generously.

A lot of times it's way better than money. It's friendship, a sense of purpose, community, a blessed, unified marriage, being a part of a great community, working together to lead people to become fully devoted followers of Christ.

These some crazy people, who rearrange their lives around the purposes of God.

Crazy people who say things like, we will lead the way with the irrational generosity because we truly believe that it is more blessed to give than is to receive.

CONCLUSION We've taken people out to restaurants to buy their dinner. It was expensive, but we were happy to do it.

Then when it was time to pay, someone we knew, who had seen us in the restaurant, paid our bill!

We wanted to do something for someone else, but someone else did something for us!

They said, **"We've been praying for a chance to bless you and this is our chance!"** And they were so blessed by giving!

Because if love gives, then you can't love without giving. And because God loved first, God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son.

So, the very least I can do is rearrange my whole life around him. And hey, not just put them first in the tithe, that's for beginners.

I can give so much more than that. My heart, my time, my finances, my life. Because what does love do? Love gives.

CLOSING PRAYER So Father, because You loved us first, help us love You back. Help us to love You with all of our hearts, our minds, our soul, our strength.

And help us to love Your people, to love others as we love ourselves. God, build our faith, change our mindset to not give later when we have more, but to give now, because love gives.

THE END