

Sermon Illustration 3

Title: The Blessing Boomerang

Key Text: Luke 6:38 [NRSV]

Have you ever tried to throw a boomerang?

The boomerang is an L-shaped wooden device used by the native Aborigine population in Australia. It returns to the one who throws it – when he or she throws it correctly.

Perhaps as child, you tried to throw a foam boomerang, one that wouldn't hurt so much if you threw it the wrong way and accidentally hit someone, or if it did come back and hit you.

We use other expressions for the same idea: we say that we *do a good deed or pay it forward*, expecting that it will *come back to us tenfold*. That sounds like a dream, doesn't it?

But God's promise is real. When we give generously, we can expect to receive generously. Jesus said:

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; **for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.**" (Luke 6:38)

When we give with the **right** motivation, we should expect God's blessings to come back in our direction, and we should be ready to catch them.

Sometimes we miss God's blessings simply because

we do not expect to see them return our way. We walk through life discouraged instead of looking up expectantly because we have given generously.

We will not just receive the equivalent of what we gave. To use the words of Jesus, even after our gifts have been "pressed down," they will still overflow abundantly upon us.

We struggle to imagine such kindness because the world in which we live seldom shows such lavish generosity.

God promises to blow us away – to exceed all of our expectations – if we will first give by faith, trusting God to shower us with blessings as God sees fit.

That is the key isn't it? The blessings God returns to us are not always financial. In fact, money has little to do with the best things in life – love, healing, forgiveness, friendship and grace. God's blessings always come back, though not always in the way we might expect.

The best part is that when we give generously to God, the blessings God gives in return will fall into our lap. We won't have to hunt for them. God's kindness will find us – like a blessing boomerang – when we give freely with a pure motive.





- Choose a way your local church is putting God's interests first and encourage your congregation to see it as an opportunity to grow their faith as God cares for them through their faithfulness.
- Connect this illustration with God's global interests by sharing one way your church's local giving multiplies through connectional giving with The United Methodist Church.

1. **Africa University Fund** – Africa University in Zimbabwe is the first fully accredited United Methodist-related educational institution on the African continent. The university offers bachelor and master's degree programs in six faculties of learning: agriculture and natural resources, education, health sciences, humanities and social sciences, management and administration and theology. The Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance offers postgraduate diplomas and master's programs. Our generous giving supports the general operating expenses of the university

<http://www.umciving.org/ministry-articles/the-africa-university-fund>

2. **Episcopal Fund** – Our generous giving supports our bishops as an integral part of the spiritual and administrative leadership of The United Methodist Church. They are elected and consecrated to speak to and from the church. The Episcopal Fund pays for bishops' salaries, office and travel expenses, and pension and health-benefit coverage so they can focus on their first priority of ministry.

<http://www.umciving.org/ministry-articles/the-episcopal-fund>

3. We celebrate **Human Relations Day** on the Sunday before the birthday observance of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Human Relations Day calls United Methodists to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with one another. The special offering benefits neighborhood ministries through Community Developers, community advocacy through United Methodist Voluntary Services and work with at-risk teens through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program.

<http://www.umciving.org/ministry-articles/human-relations-day>

4. **UMCOR Sunday** – Observed on the Fourth Sunday in Lent, this special Sunday calls United Methodists to share the goodness of life with those who hurt. Your gifts to UMCOR lay the foundation for the United Methodist Committee on Relief to share God's love with local communities everywhere. When you give to UMCOR, you underwrite UMCOR's "costs of doing business." This helps UMCOR keep the promise that 100 percent of any gift to a specific UMCOR project will go toward that project, not for administrative costs.

<http://www.umciving.org/ministry-articles/UMCOR>

