

## WHAT OUR GIVING SAYS ABOUT US

I Corinthians 16:2

March 9, 2008 Sunday a.m.

### INTRODUCTION

- A. Before Rick Warren started what would eventually become Saddleback Valley Church, a mega church of thousands, he surveyed the community and asked the question, “Why don’t you go to church?” He discovered there were four main reasons that he says are just as valid today as they were twenty years ago when he started the church. Why don’t people go to church?
  - 1. First, because church services are boring, especially the sermons.
  - 2. Second, church members are unfriendly.
  - 3. Third, we worry about the quality of the church’s childcare.
  - 4. Fourth, the church is more interested in my money than in me.
- B. Warren’s response to what he learned was to start a church that tried to address each of these four objections. Concerning money for example, Warren then and still today says before every offering taken that visitors are not expected to put anything in the offering plate. He says it’s unreasonable to ask unbelievers to give their money before they give their lives to the Lord.
- C. If you are a visitor here today please understand this message on giving is not for you. In fact, you don’t even have to put anything in the offering plate today. However, if you have visited before, an inadvertently gave an offering, I don’t think we can give you a refund.
- D. Would it surprise you to learn that Jesus taught more about money and possessions than He did about heaven or hell. In fact, the word “give” is used 1,500 times in the Bible, more than the words faith, hope, love or pray.
  - 1. Obviously God doesn’t need our money. He’s certainly not poor, so why all the talk about giving?
  - 2. The purpose is to teach us to become givers because God is a giver.
  - 3. In fact, God is the universe’s greatest giver, even to the point of giving us His Son—John 3:16.
  - 4. Everything we have is a gift from God.
  - 5. Today, let’s consider three things our giving says about us.

### I. FIRST, OUR GIVING EXPRESSES OUR GRATITUDE TO GOD.

- A. “Thanks” and “Giving” naturally go together.
- B. When we give back to God it’s an expression of our appreciation to God for all the ways He has blessed us—Eph. 1:3.
- C. That’s why we should never give under pressure.
- D. God wants our giving to be motivated by gratitude not guilt -2 Cor. 9:7 & 11.

### II. SECOND, OUR GIVING REVEALS OUR PRIORITIES.

- A. One day four employees from different departments rushed to use the copier at the same time. The person from accounts payable, said, “We have to get our bills paid, so I should go first.” Accounts receivables countered, “If we don’t get our receivables collected, you won’t have the money to pay the bills.” The product manager said, “Unless I sell something, there won’t be any receivables to collect to pay the bills, so I should go first.” The last person mentioned she was from payroll ----and everyone quickly cleared her a path to the copier. Their priorities were suddenly obvious.

- B. The purpose of giving or tithing is to teach us to always put God first in our lives, to give Him first priority.
  - 1. God knows that if you want to find out what a person really values, just look at their calendar and checkbook.
  - 2. The way we spend our time and money reveals what's really important to us.
  - 3. Its one thing to claim we love God, but the Bible says our giving tests the sincerity of our love—2 Cor. 8:8.
  - 4. There's a bumper sticker that says, "Tithe if you love Jesus, any fool can honk!".
- C. When we give the first part of our income to God, on the first day of the week, its evidence that God holds first place in our hearts—Matt. 6:21.

### **III. THIRD, OUR GIVING DEMONSTRATES OUR FAITH.**

- A. Giving is a test of our faith—Malachi 3:10.
  - 1. This is a challenge from God.
  - 2. He is saying, "I dare you to trust me."
  - 3. It's amazing that so many people who trust God for their salvation won't trust Him enough to tithe.
  - 4. According to Crown Financial Ministries, 37% of adults who attend church weekly give nothing and only a third believes in tithing.
- B. How can we accept God's challenge and put our faith to the test? First Corinthians 16:2 gives us three steps to faithful giving.
  - 1. First, we should give weekly—systematic not spasmodic giving. Why give on Sunday? Giving is an act of worship.
  - 2. Second, we should plan our giving—not thoughtless or impulsive giving.
  - 3. Third, we should give proportionally. Not equal giving but equal sacrifice.

### **CONCLUSION**

- A. At church one Sunday morning the Lord's Supper was being observed and a little girl reached for a piece of bread, but her parents told her she wasn't old enough. Later, when the offering was being taken the girl's parents gave her a quarter to put in the plate but she said in a loud voice, "If I can't eat, I'm not paying."
- B. Giving or tithing isn't about paying, its about....
  - 1. Expressing our gratitude to God.
  - 2. Revealing where our priorities are.
  - 3. Demonstrating our faith.
- C. Will you accept God's challenge and put Him to the test—Mal. 3:10?