

Worship: Offering Up Our Gifts

God has not left us empty-handed, shall we approach Him empty-handed?

Deuteronomy 16.16

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • August 20, In the year of our Lord, 2017

Scripture Reader and Reading: Tim Braden – Psalm 116.12–14

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – Songs on giving or giving of self

Prelude:

I. How often do you hear me speak on the subject of giving?

- A. I hardly ever address the subject of giving, and
- B. I mean giving our money upon the first day of every week.
 - 1. Today, I will address it.
 - 2. This is not an apology for speaking on it, but
 - a) an explanation to our guests.
 - b) We do not harp on giving.

II. However, the Bible addresses this topic.

- A. Therefore, I must address it.
- B. I am addressing it now, because
 - 1. you have probably noticed that I am doing a series on worship.
 - 2. Thus far, I have spoken on
 - a) Singing as worship,
 - b) Praying as worship,
 - c) Remembering the Lord's death as worship, and
 - (1) today, offering up our gifts as worship.
 - (2) Lord willing, next week my sermon will be:
 - (a) "Worship: Offering Up Our Ears,"
 - (b) which will look at listening to God's word as worship.

III. Why would we want to offer up to God our gifts, such as our money?

Persuasion:

I. God Does Not Leave Us Empty-Handed

A. Has God left us empty-handed?

1. Most Christians would affirm quickly
2. that He has blessed us beyond our wildest imaginations.
 - a) Thinking on that, consider what happened with Israel.
 - b) See what He did with them and then what He wanted in return.

B. Exodus 3 shows the Lord preparing Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt.

1. When Moses offered excuses for not leading Israel,
2. such as what he should say to Israel if they challenged him,
 - a) asking what God's name is,
 - b) God explained that Moses
 - (1) would tell Israel God's name, and
 - (2) give God's promise of what they would carry out of Egypt,

21 "And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed. 22 But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians" (Exo 3.21–22).

C. Exodus 11 revealed when they finally could do this,

1. that prior to the tenth plague,
2. the Lord told them what to do, which fulfilled His promise through Moses,

2 "Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold" (Exo 11.2).

D. Exodus 12 shows that when the exodus finally happened, the Bible says,

35 Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses,

and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. 36 And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians (Exo 12.35–36).

1. Now you know why or how Israel was able to make that magnificent
 2. tabernacle in the wilderness where they did not buy the material!
- E. The Lord sustained Israel in Egypt.
1. Then when He delivered them,
 2. He did not let them go out empty-handed
 - a) as might be expected for slaves leaving the land of their captivity, but
 - b) they went out enriched.
- F. Are we empty-handed?

1. Paul told Timothy that we should be content with having two things,
7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content (1Ti 6.7–8).
2. Yet, everyone has food and covering.
 - a) In fact, we have enough food
 - (1) that most of us are overweight, and
 - (2) if we are not overweight, it is because
 - (a) we made the choice to keep the weight down, for
 - (b) we have been super blessed when it comes to food.
 - b) Most of us have enough clothes that one closet is not enough.
 - (1) We have to pack away seasonal clothes.
 - (2) We give away clothes in good shape!
 - (a) This is true of much of the world, but

(b) it is especially true in the United States of America.

G. And I am only talking about food and clothing.

1. Anyone in America who lives without a car, usually does so by choice.

2. One translator that I used often in Russia, Sasha Agafonov,

a) came to America, flying into San Francisco.

b) When we took him back to the airport,

(1) we drove by an older woman driving a car down the Interstate.

(2) He just stared and then started laughing.

(a) I asked what was so funny.

(b) He said that hardly anyone owns a car back home, and

i) those who do only have one car, and

ii) the man does the driving, just like here.

(1) Which I then remembered from when I was there.

(2) Seeing an old woman he found incomprehensible.

3. American Christians are doubly blessed.

a) We have cars, several cars, food, clothing, and much more.

b) Even greater, we have the blessings of the Spirit!

H. Even those who do not live in the rich United States,

1. God has not left empty-handed.

2. Do you realize how much God blesses the world

a) that He provides for 7 billion people daily!

b) Our cup overflows.

I. How then can we go before Him empty-handed?

II. We Shall Not Appear Before Him Empty-Handed

A. Israel did not leave Egypt empty-handed, and

1. in Exodus 34 the Lord told Israel

2. that they were not to approach Him empty-handed,

20b “And none shall appear before Me empty-handed” (Exo 34.20b).

B. Deuteronomy 16 shows that three times annually

1. all male Israelites would have to travel to Jerusalem for three feasts.
2. When they went, they were not to go empty-handed,

16 “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed” (Deu 16.16).

C. Mark 12 shows an incident during the ministry of Jesus

1. that I think shows a poor widow understood this and
2. although she gave a small amount,
 - a) she did not appear before the Lord empty-handed, and
 - b) He blessed her for it,

41 Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. 42 Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans [Among the lowest value of Roman coins, DR]. 43 So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; 44 for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood” (Mark 12.41–44).

3. Does that sound extreme?

- a) Do we want God to be extreme with us?
 - (1) Do you want Him to give to you when you ask for something?
 - (2) Do you want Him to be there when you need Him?
 - (a) I want Him to save me from hell and save me for heaven.

(b) He went to an extreme to make sure that happens.

b) If we want Him to be extreme with us,

(1) we have to be extreme with Him.

(2) How can we expect Him to be extreme with us, if we are not extreme with Him?

III. Do We Lose by Offering Up Our Gifts as Worship?

A. Some people fear to worship the God of heaven and earth

1. by means of giving their money or whatever, because

2. they fear that they shall lose.

a) They believe that they cannot afford it.

b) In their minds, they get nothing in return.

B. Second Chronicles 25 shows a conversation between

1. a king of Judah and a prophet.

2. At great cost, the king hired Israel, Ephraim specifically, to fight in a war.

a) However, God was not with the tribe of Ephraim.

b) Prophet warned the king not to let them go with him into the war.

(1) However, the king saw that he would lost the money,

(2) knowing that Ephraim would not give it back,

9 Then Amaziah said to the man of God, "But what shall we do about the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?" And the man of God answered, "The LORD is able to give you much more than this" (2Ch 25.9).

C. Malachi 3 records a challenge from God, because

1. the Jews had stopped giving,

2. believing that they would do without if they gave,

**8 "Will a man rob God?
Yet you have robbed Me!**

- But you say,
'In what way have we robbed You?
In tithes and offerings.**
- 9 You are cursed with a curse,
For you have robbed Me,
Even this whole nation.**
- 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to receive it.**
- 11 "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,
So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,
Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,"
Says the LORD of hosts;**
- 12 And all nations will call you blessed,
For you will be a delightful land,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
(Mal 3.8–12)**

- a) Try Him.
- b) See whether He will do it or not.
- D. In Luke 6, Jesus promises to use the same measure toward us
1. that we use toward Him.
 2. He will fill up that measure more than we have filled it, but
 - a) He will take our measuring cup, so to speak, and
 - b) use it to bless us.

38 "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6.38).

- (1) What size is your measuring cup?
- (2) Do not expect Him to use a larger cup.

E. Second Corinthians 9 shows this same line of reasoning.

1. Of course, the thing that He looks for
2. is what we want to do with what He gives us,

6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. 9 As it is written:

**“He has dispersed abroad,
He has given to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever.”**

10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God (2Co 9.6–11).

Exhortation:

I. Therefore, let us offer up our gifts to Him every first day of the week,

A. as it is written,

2 On the first day of [Newer translations have, “every”] week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come (1Co 16.2).

B. When I am gone,

1. I leave my contribution here, but
2. I still give a small amount where I am, because
 - a) I do not want to appear before the Lord empty-handed.

II. Psalm 116 asks a question and then

A. answers it,

B. providing motivation for going to the Lord with something in hand,

- 12 What shall I render to the LORD
For all His benefits toward me?**
- 13 I will take up the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of the LORD.**
- 14 I will pay my vows to the LORD
Now in the presence of all His people.
(Psa 116.12–14)**

1. Ask the same question of yourself?
2. How has He blessed you and
 - a) then render to Him what is appropriate.
 - b) Remember that someday
 - (1) you will see Him and talk with Him, and
 - (2) He will want to know about your giving.

III. However, if you do not give yourself,

- A. worshiping God by offering your gifts
- B. will be frustrating and painful.