

Greater Reward 4 Greater Giving

Greater Reward Bumper

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving! We are Redemption Church of Plano Tx! I am Chris Fluit, and I appreciate everyone worshipping with us in person and everyone joining us online.

Greater Reward

We are in the last week of our series Greater Reward. We want you to know that no matter the season, no matter what your calendar says, no matter the situation of life, you can decide to achieve greater. The pursuit of greater is not just relegated to January 1

resolutions. I believe it is God's will for us to pursue greater every day of our lives.

In week 1 we told you that greater is possible and promised.

In week 2 we taught you that we must live greater. Greater does not come through lip-service but discipline.

In week 3 we discovered that an internal power is greater than an external power. Jesus wants to be a power inside you, and not a super-suit that you can put on or take off.

Today in this last week of the series I want to talk to you about greater giving.

Greater Giving

Now a title like this can cause people to grab their wallet and run out of the room.

So I want to make some promises to you today. We are not going to take up a special offering after this sermon. We are not shaking you down for donations into the church's building fund. We are not going to post sad pictures of missions and play Sarah McLachlan's "in the arms of an angel" to manipulate you emotionally into writing a check.

My promise to you today is that I am not going to ask you for anything.

What we are talking about today has everything to do with our hearts and our treasure.

We just celebrated Thanksgiving, and before we could even get through the day, businesses and stores were opening for early black Friday shopping. In a

matter of moments, we went from a celebration of thanksgiving to God for family, home, and nation to a materialistic mob hitting the mall.

We have these 2 beautiful holidays, Thanksgiving & Christmas. Thanksgiving has everything to do with contentment and gratitude. Christmas has everything to do with receiving God's gift of grace and in turn learning to give grace.

Yet these holidays with their beautiful and Godly sentiment are overrun with a sense of greed, taking, and purchasing. In this most wonderful time of the year, we will spend less time reflecting on being thankful and receiving the gift of God's grace, and spend more time & effort

worrying about gift lists, stressful crowds, and going deeper into debt.

There has got to be a greater way.

Please turn with me in your Bible and Bible app to Acts 20:32. Acts is the history of the early New Testament Church.

There are some bold moments in Acts that we preach on often. We preach on these moments that seem larger than life, where the gospel is put on display for entire cities, people are healed, thousands are saved... but today I want to preach from a small, private, and intimate setting with the Apostle Paul.

Paul had been working in Ephesus for 3 years, but now he must leave. He tells the elders, the inner part of the church... the church that Paul helped found, the very

people in front of him are perhaps some of the first people he met when he came to Ephesus and preached about Jesus. For 3 years Paul had given these people and this community all his strength, prayer, and tears. He looks to them and says that they will never see his face again. (Acts 20:25) Paul gives them one final gift in these closing moments...

Acts 20:32-37(NIV) 32 “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. 34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my

companions. 35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

36 When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. 37 They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. 38 What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

I wanted to read this passage to you. Often we preachers do a "smash & grab" when it comes to scripture. We just

break into a chapter and snatch the verse we want and then run off to make our point. We often miss out on the context, and there is a beautiful loving moment in the context of this passage.

Paul takes all the 3 years of his effort, struggle, and service and preaches a final message to them. He doesn't just preach words, but he lived this message for 3 years.

Acts 20:32(NIV) 32 “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

These are not just words that Paul is giving. For 3 years Paul had embodied this message. For 3 years Paul had faced

uncertainty and attack from the enemies of the gospel, and Paul had lived by God and the Word of His grace. And it is by God and His grace Paul had received an inheritance among the sanctified.

What kind of inheritance? Was Paul rolling in Benjamin Franklin dollar bills? Was Paul “living large?” Can any of us picture Paul taking Instagram selfies in impressive luxury? What inheritance is Paul talking about...?

The inheritance is the very people Paul is talking to. Paul’s reason to brag is not materialistic gain... his reason to boast of God & His Word are the sanctified people standing in front of Him. And Paul tells them that God & His Word will also give them an inheritance.

Not a church building... Not an impressive influential church staff... not a large national following... not a book deal... not a notoriety on social media... The inheritance is people. Sanctified People.

Acts 20:33(NIV) 33 I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing.

Paul's motivation was not about money or fine clothing. Paul did not covet the receiving a materialistic gain.

Acts 20:34(NIV) 34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.

Paul's hands where not looking for a hand-out. Instead, Paul's hands supplied.

He supplied his own needs and also the needs of his friends.

Acts 20:35(NIV) In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' ”

“In everything I did, I showed you...”

These 7 words could preach you a sermon today. If you want a great life, you must narrow everything you do down to showing one thing.

We do a lot of stuff for a lot of reasons and achieve mediocre results. Greatness is doing everything for 1 reason.

“In everything I did, I showed you... that by this kind of HARD WORK...”

Paul calls it hard work. Listen to my Child of God, somewhere along the way someone told us it was supposed to be easy. Someone told us that God was going to do the hard work and it would be easy for us. Paul tells us that is not true.

Dad & Mom, raising children in this deceitful, evil, violent world is not easy work. It is supposed to be hard...

Husband & Wife clinging to each other in a seductive culture that preaches to us that it is ok to give into every lust that we may desire IS NOT EASY WORK. Walking with each other in forgiveness is hard work.

Trying to balance moral purity & success on the job while it seems that dishonesty is the only real way to get ahead IS NOT EASY WORK. Doing what is right is hard.

Planting a church IS NOT EASY WORK.

Being a light in darkness is not easy.

Standing up for your faith is not easy. In a world that seems to not only run away from God, but to demonize everything associated with God, IT IS NOT EASY WORK to say I believe in Jesus... I believe His Word... I believe His promises.... I believe in Heaven... I believe in the resurrection... Jesus himself taught us that it would be hard, not easy.

When the whole world is running towards sin, greed, pride... it is hard work to say to your family “we are not going that

direction. We are going to go a different direction.”

“In everything I did, I showed you... that by this kind of HARD WORK... we must help the weak...

Despise the weak? Judge the weak?
Ridicule the weak? Ignore the weak? NO!
HELP THE WEAK.

Who is that weak person you are supposed to do hard work in order to help?

WARNING THE FOLLOWING TEACHING POINT MIGHT CAUSE ANGER

What if the person who is causing you grief is the weak person?

What if the reason they cussed you out was not because they were strong, but

because they were weak?

What if the reason they betrayed you was not because they were strong, but because they were weak?

What if the reason the addict keeps taking the drug is not because they are strong but because they are weak?

What if you stopped viewing your enemy as someone strong and to be feared, but as someone who is weak and to be pitied and given grace?

“In everything I did, I showed you... that by this kind of HARD WORK... we must help the weak...

Redemption Church, what if everything we did was by hard work, to help the weak? What would that look like for our Church to live in such a way?

What would it look like for your family to do everything by hard work to help the weak?

What does that look like for you personally?

Acts 20:35(NIV) In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' ”

“...remembering the words, the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'”

In everything we do... all the hard work... all the help we give to the weak...

remembering. Constantly remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said. Paul quotes Jesus “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Now this quote is not actually found in any of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Paul gives us a quote from Jesus that no one else gives us. Some people are bothered by this. Did Paul make up a quote of Jesus?

This should not bother you, because we know that Jesus spoke to Paul. In Acts 9, in the middle of a desert a blinded Paul looks up and says “Who are you Lord?” And in your Bible you will see these red letters – “I am Jesus whom you persecute.”

Paul received the Word of Jesus. A Jesus who had been crucified, resurrected, and

ascended, spoke to Paul. This same Jesus may have told Paul, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

This same Jesus still speaks. Do you want Jesus to speak to you? Lord Jesus we want you to speak. Speak audibly. Speak in our hearts, our minds, our souls, our spirits. Speak by the Word. Speak by the Spirit. Speak however you want Lord.

When Jesus would speak to Paul, Paul would give that message to others. And so, we have this quote of Jesus “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

This message is the opposite of everything this culture preaches. The message of materialism, greed, and corruption is that it is more blessed **to receive** than to give.

The Greater Reward of Giving

Jesus tells us that there is a greater reward in giving than in receiving.

On Christmas morning when the kids are opening those gifts it can be quite the site. I actually have to tell my kids to calm down because they get so excited... they may even froth at the mouth.

That excitement over the toy just beyond the wrapping paper is short lived. The joy of receiving the gift is short lived. Too often, the toy itself is short lived. Toys break and parts are lost. Receiving the gift is short lived... but just watch the parents who gave the gift.

The parents make sure to not miss the moment where the gift is opened. The

parents have a camera out. The parents have smiles on their faces.

Parents I know you can remember giving a gift. You can even remember giving gifts that your children can no longer remember receiving. This is because giving is a greater reward than receiving.

Jesus teaches us about giving. The one who gave everything. The one who still gives us grace today. The one who gives us forgiveness today. The one who gives us His Spirit today.

Jesus teaches us about giving in the Gospels.

Luke 6:38(NIV) 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 to you.”

Give and it shall be given to you... This scripture has caused many to say, “you can’t outgive the Lord.” Because when you give, Jesus makes sure that it will be given back to you.

This is yet another reason why it is more blessed to give, than to receive. The supernatural law of sowing and reaping comes into play here... You reap what you sow, and when you sow giving, God causes others to give to you so that you reap blessing.

In the natural, giving would cause you to lose, to have less in your supply. But Giving unlocks God’s supply.

Giving Unlocks God's Supply

When you give a dollar, you have one less dollar in your wallet. That is a net loss of \$1. But when you give, it opens up God's wallet, and His supernatural law says that it will not ever be a net loss for you. There is a greater blessing in giving.

We want greater. There is nothing wrong with wanting greater in your life. BUT WHAT IF the way for us to receive greater is through giving? What if God not only wants us to receive, receive, receive, but to also give.

There is a body of water called the Dead Sea. In scripture it is called the "salt sea." In Israel there is a great depressed spot. The only spot deeper on the planet is the Marianas Trench. This depressed area in

Israel, the 2nd deepest place on the planet, collects water. All the water that flows into the Jordan River ends up flowing into this deep spot and forms the dead sea.

The dead sea receives all this water, but no water flows from the dead sea. All this sea does is receive; it never gives.

Because the dead sea only receives it has collected so much salt that nothing can live in it. Plants can't survive in it. Fish can't survive in it. It is a DEAD SEA.

God teaches us through the dead sea that if we only receive, we die. It is through the act of receiving and giving that we become fresh water, conducive for life.

What if the greater life you desire is not waiting on you to receive a promotion, or

a new car, or good news? What if the greater life you desire is waiting on you to give, thereby allowing blessing to flow through you?

Luke 6:38(NIV) 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 to you."

Not just money... Give time. Give affection. Give effort. Give a listening ear. Give your heart. Give your friendship.

Give and it will be given. And the measure you use in giving will be measured back to you. It is a promise from God's word.

musician

Acts 20:32-37(NIV) 32 “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. 34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. 35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

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his face again. Then they
accompanied him to the ship.

Paul had 3 years in Ephesus. Ephesus was changed by how Paul gave of himself.

Redemption Church do not tell me you want to change this Metroplex, if you are not willing to give.

Do not tell me you want to change this Metroplex, if you only seek to receive.

Paul's gift impacted Ephesus so much... They knelt and prayed together for the last time. They gave their prayers. They all wept and gave their tears. They did not even withhold the affection of a kiss.

The grieved over not seeing his face again and then they accompanied him to the ship.

Ultimately the Church in Ephesus had to give Paul back to God. They did not lose Paul... they gave Paul.

I am speaking to people who have lost people. Within the last few years, you have experienced the loss of a loved one...

What if you stopped viewing it as losing a loved one? What if we viewed it as giving them to God?

When you give, God's supernatural law declares it is not a net loss, but a net gain.

Oh, the gain of surrendering a sanctified person into the hands of Jesus.

Maybe you need to give that loved one to the Lord today. You have been walking in loss for too long. You received that loved one; can you give them?

*Matthew 10:8(NIV) Freely you have received; freely give.

What if you stopped worrying about the net loss and gain and allowed God to worry about that? What if you just

focused on having the proper motivation of receiving freely and giving freely?

These alters are open right now. I am going to close my eyes and pray. I want everyone online to reach out to the Lord right now. Begin to talk to God. Give something to the Lord today.

For everyone in the room right now, when I open my eyes from prayer, I am hoping to see an altar filled with people coming to give God all they have.