



**Sermon on the Mount**  
**Wk.20 "Giving until it feels right!"**  
**By Pastor Jody May 01/05/2025**

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**[CALL TO HEAR]**

**Matthew 6:1-4 ESV**

**6** "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.<sup>2</sup>" Thus, when you **give** to the **needy**, sound no trumpet before you, as the **hypocrites** do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.<sup>3</sup> But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will **reward** you.

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**Pastor - "People of God, this is the Word of God."**  
**People - "Thanks be to God."**

**Pray**

**Introduction**

Last week we introduced the topic of how to live righteously, that is what do you do, with the imputed Righteousness that Jesus has given all of us? If you remember we said that Chapter 5, the whole 4 months we were studying it, that it was not a list of *what to do* to be a Christian but rather a description of *what it looks like* when someone is saved and then begins to take on characteristics of righteousness. Your spiritual DNA is changing therefore you are beginning to behave differently. These things in Chapter 5 are good to observe and ask yourself am I doing that yet, am I becoming like Christ, is the precious gift of His righteousness changing me yet?

If not, I want to save you a lot of stress and time, because chapter 5 is not a blueprint for you to copy BUT Jesus does give some specific things here in chapter 6, we are to practice using the righteousness we have been given. You practice those things as He is telling you and you will begin to conform into His image.



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**6 "Beware of practicing your righteousness** before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

Jesus said *beware*, look out this *will happen*, you will *practice what I have given you, your right standing with God*. But don't focus on doing a bunch of different acts in front of others so they see you, that's the focus of a **hypocrite**. Someone that does things to be seen by others for the purpose of self-justification. That gives you a false sense of spiritual security; it draws people away from being convicted of sin, it hardens a person's heart. The sensation of people watching you do good, approving of your life, that will lead you away from God all the time because you will build your spiritual worth based on the opinions of others and not on God's Word, being worked in your life through a HS conviction.

So, Jesus knowing this would be a sermon for the Church Universal for all time, wants to turn us away from the practices of the Pharisees and correct the aim of three major elements of religious life.

These three components every Jew participated in, and these were things that were passed down to Christianity, it was a way to practice the righteousness the was given to us: giving, praying, and fasting. The giving is the part of our practice that deals with *others*. The praying is the part of our practice that *deals with God*. The fasting is the part that *deals with self*, mortification of sin. These practices are used to conform us into our Lord's image, so the last thing you and I want to do is be caught up in the desire to do them so people would praise us.

**MP:**

**Obedient Giving protects us from using others to justify ourselves.**

When I used to pastor for a top 5 megachurch, we had a practice of not letting people give to specific ministries nor would we allow them to stroke checks for specific things. They had found that practice to be a hinderance to people's spiritual growth. You see when it was known who gave what and



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what it was given for, even if it was just the pastor, many times that person, the giver, seemed to think they were more important than others. Any time a church member starts thinking that, it means they were focused on building up reciprocal relationships here on earth which according to the scripture keeps you from the rewards of God.

### **Illustration**

I once got to pastor a gentleman about 20 years older than me, that I just got a kick being around. He professed a love for Christ, he was a great encourager, and God had blessed him with a good income to be generous to the church. The problem was he liked to find specific things a church needed and buy them. He had a history of doing that for things he was involved in. When it came time one day to talk to him about having a heart of love towards a brother, he decided he would rather leave than reconcile. A few years later this older man with grandchildren divorced from his wife, tearing his family apart, negating a large part of his testimony.

I believe that tying connections to his giving hindered the ability for him to be convicted of sin. You see if everyone loves you for what you give then when you have a marriage problem it can't be you because everyone thinks you're so great! That affirms what it says in v. 2, "*you have received your reward*" if you have been giving to be "*praised by others*". Received<sup>1</sup> in the Greek means in full, there is nothing else to obtain, you got what you wanted, there is nothing else to receive from God.

We want to build a healthy lifestyle of giving so we can stay away from using others to build a sense of false justification in what we do, so when the time comes to be corrected and molded by the word, we can see the truth of the Gospel...

I have three ways that we are going to work on practicing this righteous giving that stays away from the approval of others. We are going to talk about what it looks like to **Commit to Obedient Giving**; that's the nuts and bolts for our topic today, the general principles of giving. Then we are going to **Commit to**

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<sup>1</sup> ἀπέχω **apéchō**, ap-ekh'-o; from [G575](#) and [G2192](#); (actively) to have out, i.e. receive in full; (intransitively) to keep (oneself) away, i.e. be distant (literally or figuratively):—be, have, receive.



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**Giving Quietly**, and learn what is the reward in that? Then we will close with **Commit to giving for the approval of God alone**, and some best practices in our call to obedience. Three different commitments all to help us not be hypocritical in our giving.

**1. Commit to Obedient Giving.**

<sup>2</sup>"Thus, when you **give** to the **needy**, sound no trumpet before you, as the **hypocrites** do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

Alright first up, Jesus is like *beware* you will be practicing this form of righteousness and that is **giving**. Now you may be thinking PJ you are pretty sneaky. You timed the first sermon of the new year to talk about tithing. Well, you are wrong, first off, I don't plan sermons like that, you know we exposit a book of the Bible therefore where we land, is not coincidence but it is not my planning. I can't tell you where we will be 4 weeks out let alone 4 months out when we started the SoM. That's all God's plan.

Secondly, this passage is not about tithing, it is about the giving of alms or to the needy. It was an expected thing for people in that day to take care of the poor, there was no social welfare system. The Jews already had a tithe committed to the poor specifically, but they were also expected to keep spare change for the beggars on the corners and especially for those in the temple gates.

**BUT - When the time comes to give sacrificially to those in need – those in the church are practiced, prepared and persistent in their giving to the local church and it has made them ready for sacrificial efforts.** That is to say, we do need to talk about giving in the church, because it affects one's giving to those in need. So yes, we are talking about it, but 'no' I did not plan it.

Now let's look at what God says about developing an attitude of obedient giving.



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The first thing we want to notice is that there is an expectation and practice to give to the church regularly.

**1 Corinthians 16:2 ESV**

"On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up. As he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come."

Weekly speaks to the **systematic practice of routinely giving** to the church so people are not spending their designated gifts to God on other things. We pay our bills before we spend money on materialistic things like toys and outings, and so it is with God's bride, we contribute to her and then we take care of our other business. If we are serious about the work of God then whatever we are giving to God will be a first fruit, not a question of if I have anything left.

Again, Paul says as one **prosper**s, that means not everyone is going to give the same amount or percentage but please understand the practice of the church for 2,000 years is, **if you are a member then you are a giver**. So that, when it comes time to fund ministry, we don't have to go a begging we go a doing!

**First, Giving is systematic, it is expected, and it is for the purpose of moving when God calls to action.**

There is also an expectation from God that we give in order to receive because you cannot out give God, and that is part of His testimony to this world.

**Luke 6:38 ESV**

"give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

**2 Corinthians 9:6 ESV**



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"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

God gives to us with the expectation of us to give to others. So, giving opens us up to a stream of God's Grace and Mercy that unless you practice it and jump in you will never know it exists. This practice grows your faith and teaches you that yes indeed you are doing a work for God and 'NO' you really don't have a need, God is taking care of you! **(Illustration of Publix Fresh Pack!)**

**Second, Giving always comes with the understanding that God takes care of the giver through the act of giving.** It's funny but people always want security before they give, that's not how faith works, God says trust first and then watch your faith grows as you trust Him to provide.

Review - The act of obedient giving is systematic, it is expected, and the practice takes care of and grows the faith of the Christian. Then next we will see the practice of obedient giving grows the ministry impact of the giver.

**Luke 16:10-12 ESV**

<sup>10</sup>"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. <sup>11</sup>If then you have not been faithful in the **unrighteous wealth**, who will entrust to you the true riches? <sup>12</sup>And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"

Your unrighteous wealth, that is your money, and it is what we are to use to enact God's will on earth. We take it, it's the system we have been given to use, and we put it to play for the kingdom of God. The exchange rate is an earthly system is converted into eternal rewards that will glorify God forever with the souls that were saved by wise stewardship of it. God uses a system by which the Devil seeks to control the world, a system that traps men's hearts, and God uses that system to set His people free. And what's more, it is something that every believer can do because every believer is tied into the same stream of blessing.



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When the Christian begins to trust God with money and gives systematically and sacrificially then God's true riches can be had! What are true riches (16:11)? When I think about that in relation to the church, to me a person that is the happiest in the church, that has been blessed with the true riches of God, is the person that has discovered not just a calling but that they were made for a specific ministry. People are truly blessed and happy when they discover how they were made to serve God, that is an unlocked richness directly from heaven!

**Thirdly, Giving is how you practice righteous wealth and earns you the ability to put more into kingdom play.** The people that I know, that I work with both within our networks, and in this church, the ones that put their gifts to practice for the body and are most content, have always discovered the  **blessing of giving first.**

They trusted God in their finances, they trusted God to begin giving even when it seemed hard, and in return God blessed them not just with spiritual gifting but with opportunities to be able to use it for the body! I have seen too many times young men wanting to be trained for the ministry but spurned the idea of generosity. Those two things go hand in hand, and this is exactly why Jesus starts first with the practice of giving, because it is where every Christian begins to learn faith. Trust and blessing comes through obedient giving, and it creates a life of fulfilling ministry because God is entrusting you more with Kingdom opportunities because you have already been faithful with what He has already given all of us.

Review - The act of obedient giving is systematic, it is expected, it grows the faith of the Christian and releases the true riches of heaven unlocking the ability to use spiritual gifts for ministry. Lastly, in light of all we receive it should produce a glad heart in us when we give.

**2 Corinthians 9:7 ESV**

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a **cheerful giver.**



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When we start entering the realm of painful giving, a giving that causes poverty, giving that is controlled by behavior modification of those in power, it negates a cheerful heart. The text says do not give under compulsion (distress)<sup>2</sup>, for God loves a cheerful giver!

**Fourth, Giving should never be done under the compulsion of man but should be the outflowing of a thankful and glad heart.** Look, just so you understand and perhaps it needs to be said, God doesn't need your money, He owns it all and all will be accomplished by His Providence not your provision. BUT you need to give to learn how to have faith and learn joy even when it is sacrificial.

The question always comes up somewhere in church membership discussion, "do you believe in tithing?" The answer is, *absolutely yes*, but the explanation is not as in an OT law, as an act of compulsion. The law and its' practices, according to the reformed protestant teaching, its' third use is to reveal **what is pleasing to God**.<sup>3</sup> It enlightens us to what pleases our Father, the God in whom we are now called to serve. I will hit this later in our Call to Obey today the use of that law here at HCC.

Review - The act of obedient giving is systematic, it is expected, it grows the faith of the Christian and releases the true riches of heaven the use of spiritual gifts for ministry, and it should come from a glad and thankful heart.

**MP Reworded - That type of Obedient Giving protects us from using others to justify ourselves, because you are no longer doing it to gain other's approval.**

## **2. Commit to Quiet Giving.**

<sup>3</sup>But when you give to the **needy**, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

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<sup>2</sup> ἄνγκη **anánkē**, an-ang-kay'; from [G303](#) and the base of [G43](#); constraint (literally or figuratively); by implication, distress:—distress, must needs, (of) necessity(-sary), needeth, needful.

<sup>3</sup> <https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/threefold-use-law>





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We don't have as long to work this passage through, but that's ok it doesn't need it, we just need a clear definition of what is going on here.

OK, as we said earlier, we now understand the biblical principles of giving, and yes, the necessity and command to give to the church but what about the needy. These people that Jesus points out that you will be accountable for, but don't be hypocritical in your giving, yet it still needs to be done.

**Psalm 41:1-3 ESV**

- <sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one who considers the poor!  
In the day of trouble the Lord delivers him;  
<sup>2</sup> the Lord protects him and keeps him alive;  
he is called blessed in the land;  
you do not give him up to the will of his enemies.  
<sup>3</sup> The Lord sustains him on his sickbed;

First blessed is the man, happy and content, is he that considers the poor! He has become a tool for which God intervenes and shines grace down on those that are in desperate need of help. There will be people in and out of this church in which you will be able to help.

Notice though, it doesn't mean fix the poor, Jesus taught us that the poor will always be with us (Matthew 26:11). That kind of keeps us out of the weeds with social gospel movements that spend their time trying to eradicate poverty instead of spreading the Gospel. We also are aware that there are those that just don't want to work, and we are told in 2 Thes 3:10 not to support those people, so yes we need to be smart when we consider giving to the needy.

But what it does mean, sometimes I have found, that generosity for people when they are down, tied with Gospel proclamation, that kindness will call people out of a life of self-derived poverty. Sometimes what you give will help people to help themselves but just don't always go into it expecting that.

**Proverbs 19:1 & 6-7 ESV**



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<sup>1</sup> Better is a **poor person who walks in his integrity**

than one who is crooked in speech and is a fool.

<sup>6</sup> Many seek the favor of a generous man,

and everyone is a friend to a man who gives gifts.

<sup>7</sup> All a **poor man's brothers hate him;**

how much more do his friends go far from him!

He pursues them with words, but does not have them.

As well sometimes the poor are people who should have been helped by family or other friends, but they are people who would not lift a hand to help. Sometimes it was done on purpose because of the integrity of the poor person that will not do anything for money. Listen, you will most likely run into someone in your life trying to get out of a sinful past and they will need help, that is the person you most definitely should be aware of.

We help the needy because we are God's grace to those less fortunate and sometimes, we are the helping hands for those that are trying to escape their past.

But Jesus is also careful to teach us not to bring attention to it. His statement there on not letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing is a little strange. The meaning of the text is that it is not necessary to make a mental note for yourself, you don't have to journal about your charity, don't make it a habit to pat yourself on the back when you do a good thing. Your reward is in heaven it is not now, even in your attempt at trying to feel good about what you have done. Be lost in your love of God and others and that will sustain you. If you start trying to keep a tally on what you do as good works, then that will become the thing you chase.

I have known a lot of Christians that have done that and that is the beginning of falling prey to a hypocritical heart that eventually will not be convicted of sin, because you have taught yourself what makes righteousness. Remember righteousness is not something you make it is imputed to you. Go and live out that gift well, you can't gain anymore even if you tried!



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Commit to obedient giving, commit to quiet giving and you will be protected from the desire of justifying yourself.

### **3. Commit to Giving for the Approval of God Alone.**

<sup>4</sup>so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will **reward** you.

*"Not only are we not to tell other people about our Christian giving; there is a sense in which we are not even to tell ourselves. We are not to be self-conscious in our giving, for our self-consciousness will readily deteriorate into self-righteousness."* – **John Stott** (p.109)

There were two places in the ancient world in which the everyday man could earn the applause and commendation of others. First one is the theater, where a person could perform and make others believe in the character they were portraying (practice at being hypocrites). The second one was the athletic arena whereby the onlookers could cheer on contestants. One was done for the approval of others, and one was done to gain approval of self. Both of these stances are wrong when it comes to how we view our giving. When we compete in giving against our own selfish tendencies we are attempting to strive against self righteousness and in doing so we are obtaining the praise and future reward of the Father.

In **Revelation 4:10-11**, we see a picture of the elders in heaven, laying their crowns at the feet of the Lord. It is a picture of true humility, even when we receive rewards from the Father all we want to do is give them back, because the opportunities to live for Him was enough. Getting to learn to give for God, it is hard, it is a necessity, we are called to it, but through it we are sanctified and persevered! The reward in giving is that it helped you enter into the presence of God, **the reward to me IS the act of giving**. I, we, have been given something that builds our faith, that transforms our spirit, and let's us point others to the one that has done it all for me! That is committing to the approval of God alone.



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How do we build on the principles of obedient giving, how do we seek to give to the needy without looking for approval, I do have some considerations.

**[CALL TO OBEY]**

**To practice living out obedient giving you need to pick a target percentage.**

It is a lot like trying to learn to shoot. Anyone can go out behind their house and shoot into the woods and claim they are prepared for a home invasion. But I tell you the person that uses a target and gages at what distance they are accurate at, that learn about distance of drop, windage, and elevation, that's the person you should feel safe with. That's the person ready to defend themselves because they used a target to train with.

I like to teach people to use a tithe 10% of a net income to practice with, going back to that third use of the law. Not out of compulsion for the OT teaches 3 different tithes totaling up to at least 30%.<sup>4</sup> But in the NT, we see grace applied to the life of the believer and people give from a glad heart. We also see though the church always had enough, always took care of their needs, and for the most part were always generous in their giving. To me a tithe is using a number God instituted in the OT, teaching about the firstfruits belonging to Him, so it is my target. When I take aim at it, it tells me does it hurt? Then perhaps my spending is off, does it still hurt then perhaps it is too much right now, take it down some. If it doesn't hurt, perhaps I am not giving enough? You will never know until you commit to a target percentage and begin to challenge yourself to gracious/sacrificial giving without the expectation of anything in return.

**To practice living out obedient giving you need to be prepared for the needy.**

For me and my life I always carry cash in my wallet. Because a few times a year I will run into that person that really needs something. Whether it is a meal or it is a couple of gallons of gas, I want to be prepared on the spot. As well I want to take that opportunity, as a price for what I am giving, an opportunity to pray with someone. To bring them before the throne of the

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1958/09/the-three-tithes-of-the-old-testament>



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God I serve, to pray for their need, so they hear about Jesus, and that they are called to steward those funds rightly.

**To make next generation obedient givers you need to teach your family to do the same.**

Want to be involved in having an impact when you are gone, to bring about the day of the Lord all the sooner? Then do your part to not only model for your family but teach them to do likewise. I don't know if it was right or wrong, perhaps if it was just extortion, but my mother had to do my banking, so she always took my tithe out, then her tax which was my car insurance, and then if I had anything leftover, I got it. Well, I learned real quick I can live off the 90% and I always had my car paid for so my mind connected that to the provision of the Lord if I was faithful to Him. Who knows, even when I was not living well for Him do you know I always wanted to give? To the point I wanted to make it a practice, and as we know biblically God entrusted more of His riches to me and I am here now preaching to you! Perhaps all our kids need to have these same hard lessons once in a while. Are you helping your household learn to give?

Family I pray this wasn't too painful for you today, but I enjoyed it, I enjoy watching and learning about giving because it is a real and physical way of watching God's hands move in your life and the lives of others. Just remember learning to give not only fulfills the commands of God but it protects you:

**Obedient Giving protects us from using others to justify ourselves.**

May you find the New Year with lots of opportunities to be generous, and may you break away from that desire to seek the approval of man.

**Prayer**

**Communion**

**Matthew 26:26-29 ESV**



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<sup>26</sup> Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." <sup>27</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, <sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus. He **gave** His life as a ransom for many. He stewarded all His days perfectly living for the Lord, perfecting humility, obedience, and sacrifice, trusting that God would always give Him what He needed to do only what He could get done. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood. Jesus used His life to display the ultimate value in His blood, proven by how it covers the cost of all our sin. We remember today by receiving His sacrifice by Faith that we have stepped into the eternal blessings of God. Praise be to Him for His wonderful Love.

**[CONFESSION OF FAITH]**

\* The Congregation will stand

**Elder – "Christians, what do we believe?"**

**[OFFERING+LAST SONG]**

**[BENEDICTION]**

Go in the name of the Father, that gave His only begotten Son that those who believe on Him are saved.



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Go in the name of the Son, that gave His life as an atonement for sin, His selflessness has conquered our self-righteousness.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that gives us conviction and assurance of Salvation. Now go and share your gift with others and let them know the blessings you have received.



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