

Generous Giving

Responding generously to God with our treasure



The Widow's Mite: Luke 21: 1 – 4

Today we begin a three part series looking at Generous Giving from a Biblical point of view. There will be a handout each week. This week we look at a very poor woman who gave everything to God, and see why it is good to plan what we give.

Our Starting Point

When running a race an athlete needs to start at the right place. The start point for Christian Giving is that we serve a Generous God who made the world and everything in it for us to enjoy and be responsible for. When people in earlier times got that wrong and messed up, God gave his ultimate gift, by sending his Son, Jesus, to be our Saviour and show us the way back to God. So the key starting points are:

- God is an incredibly generous God who loves us and always wants to provide the best for us.
- He has made us stewards of all that he has given us, to use wisely for ourselves and for others, not selfishly.
- Using our resources wisely is part of our growth as followers of Jesus. We need to learn how to do it: it will often be a struggle.
- We cannot hold on to our resources when we die, but God has promised Christians eternal life with him in heaven and a richness we cannot imagine fully now. Using our resources wisely on Earth is an investment in heaven.

Generous Giving is not just about money. It is about lifestyle. It means giving ourselves, our time, our talents, our resources back to God and asking him to help us use them wisely. Ultimately it is our hearts that matter: our motivation in all we do is our relationship with Christ, His love towards us and poured out to others through us.

Bible Background

In the Old Testament, money was not the primary means of payment. Mostly people traded with what they grew or made or the service they could offer. Early on God instructed His people to bring a tenth of all that they had 'earned', usually at harvest time, as a thanksgiving to Him to be used to help people in need. This practice became known as tithing (which means 'one tenth'). When people deliberately refused to bring tithes God was angry and said they were robbing him. Worse still, by not giving, they were robbing themselves of the blessings God wanted to shower on them. In the New Testament Jesus commended a widow for giving a tiny amount because it was all she had: he said that in God's sight it was more that wealthy people who gave more but held a lot back. Later, the apostle Paul encouraged systematic giving as the church and its mission developed.

The Parish of Chalfont St Peter

Planned Giving

It costs us £260,000 a year, (£5,000 a week) to run this parish, excluding expenditure on major capital projects such as the new AV system. This pays for staffing (except the vicar), premises and supplies.

We do not receive money from the Government or from the Church of England. In fact we pay the Church of England nearly £80,000 a year to pay for our vicar (salary, National Insurance, pension), support for churches in poor areas, and the national church infrastructure.

In 2016 we received £132,000 from regular Planned Giving, Gift Day and plate collections and also obtained another £25,000 from Gift Aid tax recovery – equivalent in total to approximately 60% of our outgoings. Income from lettings, investments and fees on some activities is approximately £60,000 a year.

In simple terms this represents a gap between income and expenditure of over £40,000 a year – only partly met in 2016 by various fundraising activities and legacy income. We would love to close that gap before the new vicar arrives in July. We would ask all who regard themselves as regularly committed to us to consider prayerfully if they can either commence or increase planned giving. Optimally this is done by bank Standing Order but it can be through the weekly envelope scheme. Details are given in the Planned Giving leaflet available from the stewards.

Next Week:

10 Principles of Christian Giving plus Giving for Special Projects

Week 3: Legacy Giving culminating in our Gift Day.

Please join us for the rest of our series and respond as God speaks to you.

Thank you for your kind consideration.