Series: The Blessed Life

September 22, 2019

Message 1:

**It’s All About the Heart**

Deuteronomy 15:7-15

**Intro:** Who does not want to live a blessed life?I challenge you to find anyone …

The Bible teaches us that the pathway to blessing is giving - there is no way around it - if I’m going to be faithful to my call - If I’m going to help you live your desire, which is to live a blessed life - then I’m going to teach you what the Bible says about getting to the Blessed Life - and that involves the blessing of giving! ***One cannot happen without the other!***

You may give – you may not give – you may give 10% - you may not give 10% - you may give way more than 10% -

Let me say first, these messages are intended to teach us. My chief motivation here is not to get you to give or get you to give more. My chief motivation is to teach God’s Word – that gives us life - that absolves me of my responsibility before God - what happens after that is between you and the Holy Spirit – but there are some things that have not been taught – and there has been so much wrong teaching in the church at large concerning giving and money that I believe there is confusion in the church.

I want to teach truth in the next few weeks, first of all, just for the sake of teaching the truth! We need to learn the truth, know the Bible, know the Word of God, know what it says, know what God intended.

So, let’s just start with that. Let down all your defenses … “I’m going to steel myself against this teaching … I may not even come back for the next few weeks.” – that’s up to you – but all I want to do is to teach the Bible and for us to learn the Bible. That’s first – OK?

(Scriptures NIV)

Matthew 7:1-2 - “Do not judge, or you too will be judged.
For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

What is the main subject or topic of those two verses? – At first glance it appears that these verses are about Judging –

Read again emphasizing JUDGE …

There doesn’t seem to be any doubt about the subject of those verses.

It doesn’t look like there is anything about money in those verses.

We find the exact same first sentence and last phrase in another place -

Luke 6:37-38 - “Do not judge, and you will not be judged… For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

Here’s the complete passage -

Luke 6:37-38 - “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 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.”

Often, just the part of these verses about giving is quoted -

But - the topic of Matthew 7 was judging -

The topic of Luke 6 is judging -

We often think this has to do primarily with money because that is what preachers have said through the years!

We have a couple of problems - one is that we don’t understand Greek – the other problem is that we don’t understand English!

Grammar lesson – Give is the verb – The subject is implied – “You give” – It is an objective pronoun –

“You give and whatever you give will be given back to you”

Good measure, etc…. the way a poor Jewish person would fill their basket out in the field … (like you do with the trash in the kitchen…)

Whatever it is that you give you are going to get more back.

Think of the apple seed – When you give someone an apple seed – a tree comes back – many apples – many seeds – you always get back more than what you give no matter what you give!

This is both a great verse and a terrible verse – because it depends on what we give!

If we give judgment, we are going to get judgment back! – Good measure … pressed down …

If we give condemnation … forgiveness …

The main subject is judging, but does this principle also refer to money? Yes – The passage says WHATEVER we give we will get back – Kindness, love, candy, pie, …

The problem with a lot of teaching on this is that people preach this as the motive instead of the reward –

Receiving is not the motivation for giving - it is a side benefit!

Luke 6:30 – Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

Luke 6:34 - And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ lend to ‘sinners,’ expecting to be repaid in full.

What is he talking about here? MOTIVE!! What is your motivation in giving?

If our reason for giving is, “I’m going to give so I can get a lot back!” You mess everything up when you do that!

Our motive is that we give in order to give! Give to give – not give to get!

We want to get back - we want to receive – so sometimes we give with the wrong motivation.

Do you think God is thinking – “This is great! All of my people are getting the revelation of how to get more for themselves!!”

God is the One who started giving – and He doesn’t need anything! God didn’t implement giving for Himself – He implemented the principle of giving for our sake. We need to give to be givers – to build God’s work – not giving for our own sake! There is a work in our hearts that needs to be done first!

**Big Idea:** God doesn’t bless giving – He blesses giving with the right attitude.

If you’re giving because you just want to get back - then you’re selfish and greedy – you’re going to be disappointed in terms of what you’re expecting to give back. But if you’re giving because you are generous, you want to help someone, and you want God’s work to grow, then you are going to get back as a side benefit, because it is the motivation and the attitude of the heart that God blesses – not just the act of giving itself!

Deuteronomy 15 –

In this chapter God tells them how to help poor people – and in so doing it will change their hearts.

Deuteronomy 15:7-8 - If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs.

Four things we all need to do in order to live the Blessed Life –

> Deal with Our Selfish Hearts

Deuteronomy 15:9 - Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: “The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near,” so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the LORD against you, and you will be found guilty of sin.

In their economy all debts were cancelled every 7 years –

Pretty good, huh?

God knows how we think – He was saying, “If someone comes and has a need, don’t even let the thought come into your mind, ‘How close are we to the 7th year … it’s only 6 months away! I could loan this dude money now, but if he doesn’t pay it back before the 7th year starts I’ve totally lost all my money! I’m not going to give him anything!’”

God says – don’t even let that thought enter your mind. That is a selfish thought – not a generous thought – That’s a wicked thought! God calls selfishness wickedness!

Before you get offended – we are all selfish! We were born selfish!

One of the first words babies learn to say clearly is “Mine!”

Mine! Mine! Mine! - Seagulls from Finding Nemo

Selfishness was the motivation for the first sin – and since we are all fallen sinners, it is the chief issue in our hearts that we all have to deal with – and even after we accept Jesus’ forgiveness and follow Him, we have to deal with our selfish, messed up human nature and crucify it every day … crucify …

We would like to think that we grow out of it – but there is an area of selfishness that men never grow out of – we try to teach our children to share – But men do not want to share their food!

Women want our food! Guys, do you ever go through the drive-thru, ask your lady what she wants, and she replies, “Oh, I don’t want anything, I’ll just have some of yours!”

No you won’t! You’re not getting any of mine! I’ll get you 2 orders of fries, but I’m not givin you mine – and the fries in the bottom of the bag are mine!

We have to deal with a selfish heart.

> Deal with a Grieving Heart

We grieve over money –

Deuteronomy 15:10 – Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to.

KJV & NASV – “…your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him…”

The Message - Give freely and spontaneously. Don’t have a stingy heart. The way you handle matters like this triggers God, your God’s, blessing in everything you do, all your work and ventures.

We have all got to deal with a grieving, greedy, stingy, selfish heart! Not you – but me – we – all of us!

God will bless us if we get this fixed! Selfishness attacks us before we give – grieving attacks us after we give!

Have you ever given a large amount, then something goes wrong? Car breaks down? The devil puts a thought in your mind, “You shouldn’t have given that money … “

The devil doesn’t want you to give because every time you give people’s lives are changed by the power of God! People receive eternal life because of the giving of faithful people!

(ILL) – Pastor says, “I just thought – I don’t have any cash to go out to eat after church. Here I am talking about money!” [Volunteer] jumps up before he’s finished with the sentence and gives him $100 –

Let’s think about that a minute – why did he do that? “Because I gave it to him before the service! It’s mine!”

Is [volunteer] grieving the loss of that money? He shouldn’t! It was mine to start with! He was just holding it for me!

The reason we grieve over money that we lose, or give or spend is because we think that money was ours! And all the money we have comes from God! So when God asks for it, we get up immediately and give it to Him – because we’re not giving it to Him – we’re just giving it back!

> Develop a Generous Heart

Deuteronomy 15:14 - Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you.

We need to grow in our faith to a place where we not only give, but we love to give! When we hear of a need, it doesn’t turn us off, it excites us, because we can meet that need, we can give to meet a purpose for God’s Kingdom!

This is not about our money, our wallet, our giving – this is about our heart! It all comes back to our hearts!

Matthew 6:21 - For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Many people quote this backwards – they say, “Where you heart is, there your treasure will be.” Wrong!

Here’s the important difference – It’s not that your treasure follows your heart, your heart follows your treasure! Jesus says, “Wherever your treasure is – that’s where your heart will be.”

If you put your money in a stock – you start following that stock – you start praying for that stock! Because part of your heart is there!

This is simple – if you want your heart to be in God’s work, then put your treasure there!

Some people say, “I see people who it seems love God more than I do, they have such a strong relationship with God – I want that! I want my heart to be in the Kingdom!”

Start giving 20%! What? If you want your heart to be into God and His work – simple – teaching of Jesus – put your treasure there. The more treasure you put into something the more your heart will be there.

If you want your heart in your family, put your treasure, your time, your money in your family. You’ll have more of a heart for your marriage, your children, your family!

We have got to become generous givers!

> Develop a Grateful Heart!

Deuteronomy 15:15 - Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today.

Think of the Hebrew slave … the son is asking why he is giving the sacrifice … the response … “I was a slave.”

I have given testimony in the past of how the Lord has led me in giving - not intended to draw attention to myself - but to be an encouragement to others. God has led me to make commitments to give amounts that in the course of that time would be impossible without Divine Intervention - but God provided every time.

Just recently, I was looking at the Social Security report … For 3 years my taxable income looked like it was so low I thought I had made an incredible mistake in my taxes and would have to to through a process with the IRS to correct it. After being on the phone with a nice lady from the IRS for a while, I realized that I had given so much in those 3 years - that it had reduced my taxable income by almost half of what it would have been otherwise … which is another side benefit …

Pastor Robert Morris has given testimony about how the Lord prompted him a few times to give everything he had to the Lord.

*Guy in Guatemala asked – “How do you do that?”*

*Immediately, Robert Morris was reminded of what his life was like before he got saved –*

My motivation –

* For God to be honored – I speak in obedience to Him – and whatever He asks me or us to do is first for His honor – that’s why we were created! This is first, about honoring God-
* I want you to be blessed! The Bible tells us what brings blessing! I want God to be honored! I want you to be blessed –
* If we are blessed together, then the church as a whole will be blessed and we will be a blessing to our community – in greater ways than we have been – and that circles back to God being honored again!

So, don’t think I’m a money-grubbing preacher. This stuff is in the Bible. I have to be obedient to the Bible. If anything, I’m guilty of avoiding the teaching for too long for fear of offending and driving people away. Please be mature. Just come and listen. Open your heart to God’s Word – to His voice – to the Holy Spirit – that’s all I ask.

I don’t know what anyone gives … I don’t know what anyone makes … I don’t judge anyone in this regard. I just want to teach God’s Word so that God can be honored, you can be blessed, and together the church can be blessed to be a blessing to our community.

**Invitation** – For God so loved that He gave …

**Blessing -**