



JESUS TEACHES US...

LESSON FOUR: To give

Matthew 10:5-8

“Freely you have received, freely give”.

Many Christians have an adverse reaction as soon as the word GIVING is heard. People automatically equate giving and money, but that is only part of the story. If you read these four verses in Matthew 10, you will see that Jesus is sending out the disciples to *the lost sheep of Israel*. They were told to preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand; to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and cast out demons. On reading those words one might be tempted to think giving money is easy by comparison!

Matthew 20:28 *“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

This verse sums up the reason God sent his son Jesus, to die for us. **He gave his life as a ransom.** Sometimes in high profile kidnapping cases, a ransom is required before the individual can be set free. Jesus is our ransom: **John 3:16** **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”**

Here, when speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus sums up the gospel.

When we read the accounts in the gospels of the death of Jesus on the cross, we begin to get a glimpse of what giving meant to God and Jesus.

Romans 12:1 *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God--this is your true and proper worship.”* (NIV). The NKJV puts the last few words like this: *“for this is your reasonable service.”*

- Do you consider it reasonable to give your whole self to God?
- Write down what this might mean for you.

Leviticus 16:21-22

In the Old Testament, when sacrifices were placed on the altar, they were burnt up, nothing of their previous existence was left. On the most holy of days for the Jews, the Day of Atonement, a pair of kid goats was chosen. One would be sacrificed and

on the head of the other the priest would lay his hand and confess all the sins of the children of Israel. The living “scapegoat” was released into the wilderness, taking with it all Israel’s sins and impurities. The scapegoat paid the price for the sins of the people. Likewise, Jesus is our scapegoat in that he carried all our sins whilst on the cross. He gave his life that we might live.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

If this verse is true for us what does this new creation, this new self, have do to? Simple! ***“Freely you have received, freely give”.***

Let’s look at some of the things we need to give. It’s easy to say, our whole self but what does that mean.

We need to give our time

The pace at which most people live their lives mean that time is in short supply. No longer do most people remember what they’re supposed to be doing in the day at a given time. Now we have phone reminders so that we don’t forget to pick something or someone up, or buy certain groceries, or fit in our run or exercise routine. We are incredibly *time conscious*.

- Think about your day. Did you ‘fit in’ any time for God?
- In what ways do we give our time to God?
- Do we make it a priority to read our Bible and pray?
- Do we make time for people who need our help and support?
- Did we miss church because we had more important things to do?

Mark 1:35 *And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.*

If Jesus needed to spend time in prayer, then surely, we also need to do that. We need to read and learn the scriptures so that we can call to mind what God says about situations and be encouraged by his word.

Read the following verses and try and relate them to your life.

John 15:1-5 Psalm 119:11 Psalm 63:6-9 Psalm 32:6 Mark 6:33 Matthew 6:6 Psalm 119:105.

We need to give our love and compassion to those in need

John 8:1-11 The woman caught in adultery was about to be stoned to death until Jesus wrote on the ground and then said: he who is without sin, cast the first stone. We need to have compassion on those having difficult times for whatever reason.

Luke 10:25-37 In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus emphasises that we need to love and support our neighbour. I remember reading a book many years ago by

Tim Ruthven in which he said this: *If you have the means to meet someone's need you do not need to ask God to do it because he has already given you the resources.* It hit me between the eyes. That's exactly what the Good Samaritan did.

- Pray that the Lord will direct us to those we can help.
- Pray that we are willing to show a generosity of spirit.

In **John 4**, we read how Jesus needed to go through Samaria. That reason was a woman who had had five husbands and was living with another man. It is a lesson to us all in not standing in judgement on others but giving unreservedly of our time and compassion.

We need to give financially

There is no dodging this issue. People often say that money is the root of all evil. What the Bible does say is: *the LOVE of money is the root of all evil.* (1 Timothy 6:10) If we are bent on making money regardless of the way it's done, we are treading a dangerous path. Some people become so obsessed with having money that it ruins their lives.

Many Christians believe that we should tithe. "A tithe is a one-tenth part of something, paid as a contribution to a religious organization or ... Tithing was taught at early Christian church councils, including the Council of Tours in 567. Until 1836, it was law in this country to give a tithe to the established church (The Church of England). It was obligatory under Old Testament law. However, if we look closely at teaching in the New Testament, we find the scriptures encouraging us to give willingly so that the needs of the church, the people of God, are met.

Read 2 Corinthians 8

This I believe, should be the guidance we use in deciding what we give.

Paul explains that despite of being poor, and being tested by many troubles, the churches in Macedonia were so filled with joy that it overflowed into generous giving. Think also about the widow's mite (**Luke 21:1-4**). There are two important lessons here, the first being, if you have plenty of money, don't brag or let others know what you give. The other is to give willingly and generously even if we are poor.

It is an important part of our service to God that we give and give generously. The Bible in **1Chronicles 29:13-14** tells us that God is no man's debtor and the NIV says: ***"Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand."***

- What do you notice about the last part of the verse?

- Do you think about giving? Is it important to you?
- Write down your immediate reaction to this concept of generous giving.
- Do you think God expects too much of us?

To whom should we give? I believe we must give to our church as this is the place where we are spiritually fed and enjoy fellowship.

The Bible teaches us that if we give, we shall be blessed. Now this is not saying you will get back the same, but it does say that giving brings blessing.

Malachi 3:8-10 Here God is promising that if we are faithful in our giving, he will open the windows of heaven and bless us.

We should be generous to those who are in need. This may not necessarily mean money – there are many ways of giving.

In **Matthew 6:19-34** Jesus teaches that we should not worry, that he looks after “*the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*”.

- Prayerfully consider what you give and when you do give, it must be with a willing spirit and not grudgingly.
- The spirit in which we give is more important than what we give. Not however, an excuse to hold back on generous giving.

The gospel song may have old fashioned words but the truth of them is powerful.

He Giveth More Grace

Don Moen

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater
 He sendeth more strength when the labors increase
 To added affliction He addeth His mercy
 To multiplied trials His multiplied peace
 His love has no limit, His grace has no measure
 His pow'r has no boundary known unto men
 For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
 He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again
 When we have exhausted our store of endurance
 When our strength has failed ere the day is half done
 When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
 Our Father's full giving is only begun...

Prayer: Father God, thank you for giving your most precious gift, that of your son Jesus. May we give to you willingly and generously.