

## Freely Give

8/6/2017  
Y. Joe Kim

### Matthew 10:1-8

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. <sup>2</sup>These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; <sup>3</sup>Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup>Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. <sup>5</sup>These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup>but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup>As you go, proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near.” <sup>8</sup>Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

### 1. I Am a Debtor

Yesterday we had a Men’s Breakfast at the parsonage. We had two new people and a total of twelve men at the breakfast. I’m happy that we get to spend time together as men in our church. During the breakfast, I realized that we did not have a women’s breakfast at the parsonage. I do not know when, but I hope we can have an opportunity to serve women as well. Even someday I would love to invite our neighbors to my place.

I feel very blessed to be a part of this church community and have felt God pushing on my heart to share the good things that we have received. Paul says in Romans 1:14, “***I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.***” Personally, I can understand a bit of what Paul is talking about in this passage. In many ways, I feel very indebted to our church for providing such a comfortable place for me and Christine to do ministry. I feel a deep sense of gratitude for the love and support that our church has given to us. As Matthew 10:8 says in the NIV, freely we have received, and so we are trying to freely give.

### 2. Freely Give

Today’s scripture talks about what Jesus did with his disciples. Jesus calls twelve men as his disciples and sends them out to the lost sheep of Israel. In verses 7 & 8, Jesus says, “***Proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near.”*** <sup>8</sup>***Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment;***

**give without payment.”** As I meditated on this passage last week, I realized that Jesus calls us in the same way. Jesus wants us to proclaim the good news that the kingdom of God has come, to heal those who are sick, to give hope to those who are depressed, and to set free those who are demon possessed. Jesus says that we need to do this sharing because all of these benefits are freely given to us.

For me, Christians are those who accept the truth that we are God’s stewards. We come into the world as babies with nothing. And when we leave this world, we can’t take our physical possessions with us. All the things that we receive during our lives are things that we receive freely from the Lord. Although we may need to work to get the things we need, when we reflect on it, the possessions that we have are really “on loan” from God. We are not possessors but stewards of God’s grace and goodness. And as stewards, today’s scripture calls us to freely give and share with others what we have been freely given. The question is, “Do we freely give what we have?”

### **3. The Joy of Giving**

When I was young, I often saw my parents get into arguments. The reason was often the same thing. My mother loved giving things to other people. As farmers, my mother would often give vegetables or rice to our neighbors. When my father would find out, he would get upset. My mother thought it was important to share with those who were in need. Even as her son, I often thought my mother’s heart of giving went beyond what many people might think is natural. Whenever I would visit Korea from the US, my mother would divide up the gifts that I would give her and give them to her neighbors. She wouldn’t save a single thing for herself or my father.

I also remember a time in elementary school when I saw a beggar eating a meal at my house. At the time, beggars would go from house to house getting small scraps from each house. But my mother would treat the beggars as guests. She would invite them inside and give them a meal. When they finished, she would give them more food to take home to give to their family. My mother was always filled with the joy of giving.

### **4. The Final Judgment**

In Matthew 25:31 and following, Jesus talks about final judgment. When the Son of Man comes, he will separate the people one from the other. On his right, Jesus will put the sheep and on his left the goats. Then to those on his right, he will say, ***“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you***

**welcomed me, <sup>38</sup>I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”**

Then those who are on his right will say, **“Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup>And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup>And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?”** Then the king will say, **“Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”** The verse calls us to ask the question, “Will we be on his left or his right?” Moreover, knowing that this will happen in the future, what are we going to do now?

## **5. Worship and Offering**

Before we discuss what we are going to do for others, let us talk about our worship first because worship is important for our relationship with the Lord. In our worship, we praise the Lord, give thanks to God, celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, listen to the Word, share our joys and concerns, and give tithes and offerings. Why do we give tithes and offerings? It is quite true that offerings are neither donations nor contributions to support the church. Offerings are our gifts to the Lord giving thanks for all the blessings that we have received. When we love someone, we try to give the best gifts.

According to Leviticus 27:30, all Israelites are supposed to give 10 percent of everything they earned. It is called the tithes. By giving 10 percent, they acknowledge everything is from the Lord. There are different views among Christians about the tithe. Some say that Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the Law so that the mandatory 10 percent tithe became obsolete. Others say that we should give the Lord as much as we can. Paul says in 2 Cor. 6 and 7, **“The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup>Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”** Paul describes offering as an act of sowing. Your offering to the church is an act of sowing. If we do not sow the seed, we can’t expect any fruit. And the fruit will make a big difference in the world.

Some people say, “We need money to fund the church’s mission.” I do not think that statement is wrong. However, that is not my reason to give my tithes and offerings to the church. Offering is my gift to the Lord, giving thanks to Him for all of His blessings upon me and my family. It is my privilege to

give, and I have the great joy of giving. I try to give God the best gifts. When I suggest the tithe to someone, often they say that they do not have money. I began to tithe in my early 20s while I was supporting my siblings. Many times, I wished I would have had more money. But I gave 10 percent always and have never run out of money. Paul says that for those who love to give, “**God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.**” I would guarantee you that if you give the tithe you will never run out of money.

Would you like to learn about John Wesley’s giving? One year, Wesley’s income was 30 pounds and his living expenses 28 pounds, so he was able to give away 2 pounds. The next year his income doubled, but he still managed to live on 28 pounds, so he was able to give 32 pounds to the poor. In the third year, his income jumped to 90 pounds. Again, he kept his expenses to 28 pounds and gave away 62 pounds. In the fourth year, Wesley received 120 pounds. As usual, his expenses were 28 pounds, so his giving rose to 92 pounds. Wesley felt that a Christian should not merely tithe but give away all extra income. Christine and I are going to try as he did.

## 6. Conclusion

When we reflect on the ministry of Jesus, Jesus called common people like fishermen, political activists, and tax collectors to his ministry. Today, Jesus looks to ordinary people like you and me to share God’s love to those who are in need. Whether we are rich or poor, old or young, educated or not, Jesus calls the people to reach out and share the Good News with others. We may be concerned about running out of resources at times. But Jesus reminds us, “**Freely you have received, freely give.**” We need to remember that God is our provider so that we can serve others.

## 7. Application

There are many churches, many clergy, and laity who are concerned about how to survive. I do not want to serve a church in survival mode. I would rather like to serve a church not for survival but for significance in our community making a big difference in many people’s lives. As long as we trust in the Lord, God will provide us with everything we need for that mission. We are called to be like storages of unlimited resources and to share the overflow of what we have with those who need God’s love and His good news. I want people to see our church as an emergency room that save many lives. I am sure many of you have the same vision for our church. Thanks be to God who calls us to minister to people with His love. Amen.