

REJOICING IN GIVING
1 Chronicles 29:1-14

Dr. Howard Batson
First Baptist Church
Amarillo, Texas
November 13, 2022

This morning, we look at the central passage for our stewardship emphasis for this season. It comes from 1 Chronicles 29:9. “Then the people rejoiced because they had offered so willingly, for they made their offering to the Lord with a whole heart, and King David also rejoiced greatly.”

Put plainly, the best giving to God is not done reluctantly or with regret. When you truly understand who God is and what the church is to Him, your gift brings you more joy than any other purchase, investment, or expenditure. For only what we give away are we really able to keep.

The event in 1 Chronicles 29 is a farewell by David, a handing over of leadership from David to Solomon. It’s a two-day event. The people are gathered to give their gifts for the building of the temple that David had not been permitted to build. His son, Solomon, would have the responsibility, the privilege, the task of building God’s temple. God’s choice of Solomon as king is now assumed. And the people are prepared to begin collecting for the building of the temple.

David admits in these first verses of chapter 29 that Solomon, look at verse 1, is still young, inexperienced, and the work is great. The word for temple in verse 1 is “palace” or “palatial structure.” The word reminds the people that this building is for God, and He is the one enthroned over Israel.

I want us to notice some guidelines about the way the ancient Israelites gave to God for the building up of His temple. These are good guidelines for our giving, too!

I. Make provision for giving.

The key word in the whole passage is “prepared,” making provision. Look at verse 2. “Now with all my ability I have *provided* for the house of my God the gold for the things of gold, and the silver for the things of silver, and the bronze for the things of bronze...” It happens again at the end of verse 3. “...I have already *provided* for the holy temple.”

Or verse 16. “O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have *provided* to build You a house for Your holy name, it is from Your hand, and all is Yours.”

Again, the end of verse 19, “...to build the temple for which I have made *provision*.”

We must plan and budget for our giving to God. Our gifts must not be the leftover, the last. We need to make provision, preparation. When you give to God, you need to be prepared to give.

Giving by tossing a few bills or coins in the collection plate as it passes is unimaginable to David, who says, “We have made plans, preparation, and provision for our gifts to God.” David’s

generosity was based on his devotion to the work which was to be done. The temple would honor God and, therefore, David had intended to do all that he could to provide for that purpose.

God's people have to be intentional in their giving.

Wallace M. Alson, Jr. of Princeton says, "Only those who love the Church and believe in that for which she stands can be expected to support her with their stewardship. If Christians do not direct their stewardship to the life and work of the Church, no one else will – not the disinterested person, not the community charity fund, and certainly not the state. The Church depends for its support solely on those who love her." (Robert R. Kapp, "The Heart of the Matter," www.preaching.com)

Have you provided for the needs of your church? Have you provided for your giving to God? Are you prepared and purposeful in your giving? Or is you giving the leftovers, the loose change?

II. Give yourself – for to give money is to give yourself.

Look at the end of verse 5. "Who then is willing to *consecrate himself* this day to the Lord?" Now, above he's talking about gifts – gold, silver, bronze, precious stones, onyx, and alabaster in abundance. But when it comes time to talk about what's been consecrated or devoted to God, it is not so much the material things but the heart of the one who gives. Like the Old Testament priesthood, David calls upon the whole gathering of the people – leaders and people alike – to freely offer *themselves* to God (Exodus 28:41)

You see, this passage is not just about the amassing of glittering jewels and precious metals of every measure, but the pouring of themselves into their offering, which is a symbol of the whole-hearted worship that will soon take place in the sanctuary.

We have truly inherited the most beautiful edifice of worship that many of us have ever seen. At the dedication of this beautiful sanctuary, the pastor at time, Dr. Yates, said, "It cost some of us far more than the world will ever know." Even in recent years, the beautiful courtyards outside cost some of you more than we will ever know. I had a member of our church, who served as a missionary, tell me that when he turns down Tyler Street, his heart leaps for joy – like an ancient worshiper of God heading toward Zion. And some of you, even now, are making costly gifts to The Loft, which will expand our impact on the next generation.

Our gifts represent our worship – not just bricks and mortar, not just gold and silver nor onyx or alabaster.

Our gifts represent us.

It happened one time after a pastor had made an appeal in church for a great and worthy cause, that a certain woman, a member of the church, came to him and handed him a check for \$50, asking at the same time if her gift was satisfactory. The pastor immediately replied, "If it represents you."

There was a moment of soul-searching thought, and she asked to have the check returned to her. She left with it and a day or two later she returned, handing the pastor a larger check for \$5,000 and asked the same question, "Is my gift satisfactory?" The pastor gave the same answer as before, "If it represents you." As before, a truth seemed to be driving deeply. After a few moments of hesitation, she took back the check and left.

Later in the week she came again with a check. That time it was for \$50,000. As she placed it in the pastor's hand, she said, "After earnest, prayerful thought, I have come to the conclusion that this gift does represent me, and I am happy to give it."

III. Give with a willing heart.

Look at verse 6. "Then the rulers of the fathers' household, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and the commanders of thousands and of hundred, with the overseers over the king's work, offered *willingly*...."

Look at verse 9. "Then the people rejoiced because they had offered so *willingly*, for they made their offering to the Lord with a whole heart, and King David also rejoiced greatly."

I want you to notice that David did not levy a tax to finance the work of the temple. Rather, he collects based upon the willing and generous hearts of God's people.

It's one thing to give generously, but it's another to giving willingly. There are so many examples throughout history of kings collecting money from the people by force. David didn't send out the army to go door-to-door. No tax collectors lurking in the shadows. This was giving for their Lord. They were not only prepared and generous, they were willing as well. Giving was worship.

Look at verse 17. "...with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here, make their offerings *willingly* to You."

IV. Follow the leader in giving.

Do you notice who gives first in this passage? In verse 3, it says David gives from his personal treasure. Look at verse 3. "...the treasure I have of gold and silver." This was not the property of the state; it was the property of the king. David gives generously as a catalyst for the generous outpouring of gifts from the leaders and, then, the people. Not only does David give as the leader, the clan and tribal leaders, political officials, and military officers are of a single mind in responding to the king's challenge to give to the temple building fund (v. 6).

It is a proven leadership principle that generosity needs an example. Generosity wasn't always true of the kings of God's people. Ahab was rebuked for his greed by Elijah in 1 Kings 21. Micah condemned leaders who rendered judgment for a bribe (Micah 3:11). And the gifts of precious metals by these many leaders are enormous. They give another 190 tons, then another 185 pounds of gold, and about 375 tons of silver. The other leaders give twice as much as David gave individually.

Every staff member hired at First Baptist Church is asked the question during his or her interview, "How do you feel about tithing?" If the pastor and staff are not willing to tithe, to give, how can we ever expect you to do so? When we give, we follow the leader.

V. Realize it is all God's anyway.

It all belongs to God anyway – that's what David is saying here in verse 14. "But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generously as this?" Looking at the mass of

metal, at the profound and precious jewels – all brought forth for the building of the temple. David says, “How can we give like this? Because all things come from You, God, and from Your hand we have given to You.”

The story is used by John Maxwell. One day, a father named James wanted to do something really special with his five-year-old son, Josh. So he asked his son Josh, “Is there anything you want to do – just you and me – right now?” “Yes,” said Josh, with a big smile. “I want some McDonald’s french fries.” His father thought to himself, “If that’s what he wants, that’s what he’ll get.” They got into their blue and white Chevy truck and headed for the nearest McDonald’s. Josh was anticipating the taste of those salty fries even before they reached McDonald’s. His dad placed the order. Josh’s heart pounded when his dad said, “Make it a super-size fry.” James took the money out of his wallet to pay for the fries and a Coca-Cola drink. Josh couldn’t even wait to get to the table to start eating those golden, hot fries.

When they sat down, Josh said grace really fast – so he could get to the hot fries. James was so happy to see his boy so enthusiastic about something so simple. In fact, he decided to join in the fun. He reached over to get a couple of Josh’s fries for himself. To his total shock and disappointment, his son quickly put his hands around his fries, as though he were building a fort, pulled them toward himself and said, “No, these are mine.”

His dad couldn’t believe what had just happened. James pulled back his hand, did not take a fry – but he sat there in silence and reflected about his son’s selfish attitude toward the french fries.

This is what the father thought:

1. Josh failed to realize that I am the source of those french fries. At the counter, I was the one who gave the cashier the money from my wallet. I didn’t even give him the size he was expecting. I gave something really big. Yet here he is talking about “his” french fries.
2. Not only was I the source of his french fries, he’s forgotten that I’m six-feet-one, 195 pounds, and have the power to take every one of these fries out of his little fingers if I want to.
3. Or, if I wanted to, I could go back to the counter, open up my wallet and get out my credit card – I could bring him so many fries that he could never eat them. I could bury my son in french fries.

The dad thought about it – about the ingratitude of his son to refuse the provider of the fries a couple from the bunch. All he wanted to do was enter into his son’s little world of joy in eating the salty snack. All he wanted was for his son to be willing to share the very blessing that he had provided.

Change the characters of course. God doesn’t need our french fries. God could bury us in french fries – or whatever it is that delights our heart like fries delighted Josh’s heart. But God wants us to be a giver like He’s a giver. In John 3:16, one of the first passages we memorize, we learn that God so loved the world that He gave his only Son.

In verses 10-17, the people indicate that they know God is the source of every blessing that they have. In verse 11, “everything.” In verse 14, “Everything comes from You.” Verse 16, “All that belongs to You.” David understands that there is nothing that they are giving to God that is not simply through their hands back to God, the original giver.

You and I are being stingy with the giver of all that we have? Everything belongs to God.

A scientist approached God and said, “Listen, we no longer need You. Really, these days we can clone people, transplant hearts and do all kinds of things that were once considered miraculous.” God patiently heard him out and then said, “All right. To see whether or not you still need me, why don’t we have a man-making contest?”

“Okay, great,” the scientist said.

“Now we’re going to do this just like I did it back in the old days with Adam,” God said.

“That’s fine,” replied the scientist. He bent over to scoop up a handful of dirt.

“Whoa,” God said, shaking His head. “Not so fast there, pal. You go get your own dirt.”

The point is this: you can’t do anything without using something God has created. Whether it’s the dirt at your feet, the strength of your arms, the wisdom of your mind – everything is a gift from God. For God created you in His very image.

C.S. Lewis says we’re like small children going to the Father and saying, “Daddy, give me a six pence to buy you a birthday present.” Of course, the father does, and he’s pleased with the child’s gift. It’s all very nice and proper, but only a blockhead would believe the father is now a six pence to the good in the transaction.

We cannot give God anything that is not already His.

When my children were young, they wanted to give me something “real nice” for Christmas. I replied, “Not much. Not too nice.” I don’t really want anything all that swell because I realize that, at the end of the day, it’s the giving of my own gold.

Everything we give comes from His hands, through our hands, in giving to others. Everything we give has come from Him.

VI. Entrust it to a faithful administrator.

Look at verse 8. “Whoever possessed precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the Lord, in care of Jehiel the Gershonite.”

I bet you didn’t think I’d highlight the Gershonite, did you? But he’s an important character. Jehiel is a Levite of the clan of Gershon (23:8), whose family is linked to the temple treasuries (26:21). The significance of this reference to the temple treasury should not be overlooked. The gift of administrative oversight, especially financial management, is an important service to the on-going work of God.

I am amazed at how often we read of scandal in charitable organizations, especially on the national level, where you realize, lo and behold, all of the money was collected for Cause A but only a little bit trickled in that direction. It all ended up somewhere else, lining someone else’s pocket. I’m

even amazed at governmental spending when we find out that money was appropriated by Congress for Cause A but, in reality, the money never reached its destination. Bugged down, burned up, squandered and wasted, the money never gets to where it's going.

"No so," said David of the temple gifts. They were in the hands of Jehiel, who was a trustworthy keeper of the treasury. Compare that to Judas, who was the treasurer among the disciples and actually took from the till.

The ministries of this church are your ministries. You vote upon them. You elect the Finance Committee to oversee their administration. You hired a business administrator to sign the checks to empower the missions and ministry that are your church's and, thus, are yours.

VII. Give with joy (29:9)

"The people *rejoiced* because they had offered so willingly, for they made their offering to the Lord with a whole heart, and King David also *rejoiced* greatly."

The lavish gifts prompted the king and the people to have a spirit of joy. Their pure hearts, their whole heart prompts generous giving which results in joy.

On the grave of the Earl of Devonshire in Tiverton, there is engraved the following epitaph: "What we gave, we have. What we spent, we had. What we kept, we lost."

Annie Dillard puts it this way: "One thing I know is this: Spend it all, shoot it, play it, loose it, all, right away, every time. Do not hoard what seems good for later; give it, give it all, give it now. Anything you do not give freely and abundantly becomes lost to you. You open your safe and find ashes."

Give to God with joy.

Give to God willingly.

Give to God, for He is the greatest giver of all.

Let us pray.