

Is This It? Isn't There Something More?

"Is There More To Money?"

(Part 6)

Intro: There is no doubt that we are in the midst of an economic crisis. Oregon has one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation. Economists tell us that things are improving; but it sure doesn't seem fast enough. With all the money problems facing so many people, how can I in good conscience stand up here and talk about money? My response: How can I not!

Our problem is that we ask the wrong question. We get stuck on asking, "Is there more money?" Instead we should ask; "Is there more to money?" We create a dilemma when we don't understand and embrace God's perspective of money. As followers of Christ, we must accept and obey God's Kingdom perspective on money. We have a tendency to embrace the values of the wrong kingdom. So many professing Christians live the earthly kingdom values instead of God's. There is SO much more to money in God's Kingdom...BUT the only way to experience more is to be generous with it. (This is why the 40 Day journey)

The last thing Satan wants you to experience is more. The last thing he wants this church to experience is more. Therefore, he causes people to get uncomfortable / defensive when we speak of generosity. He knows that it is God's doorway to more. More what?

I. Generosity Helps Me Love God More

Prov. 3:9 "Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops." (NLT)

A. My giving reveals who I really honor

1. We honor the people we love. Since the greatest command is to love God with all that we have, how can we say we love him and yet not honor him with our giving?
2. In God's kingdom, generosity is a relational term, not a financial one. It is a demonstration of who we love and who we honor.
3. Generosity actually impacts our relationship with God. Our problem is we don't connect the two! God does! Generosity can actually unleash a greater intimacy with God.
4. It's tough to experience an intimate relationship with someone where we don't demonstrate love and honor. In God's Kingdom generosity is a way to honor and love God. Some of you may be putting a barrier in your relationship with God because of your refusal to honor God with your finances.
5. Some of you are stuck spiritually and you haven't moved forward in years. This may be the reason why. You're hindering the relationship.

B. Giving reveals who I really serve

Luke 16:13 "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." (NLT)

1. If I bring up the topic of generosity and you get instantly defensive / irritated / uncomfortable / you have just revealed what you really serve...who your master really is. WHY?
2. Because in God's Kingdom, giving is a joy / privilege / it helps me love God even

- more / it's a relational term. If God is our master then money doesn't control us. If money is the master, then that master gets angry when it's not in control.
3. How can we have intimacy with God if we're really not serving Him? If we actually despise a Kingdom value that produces more love in our relationship?
 4. I honestly believe Satan fights very hard against this principal. WHY? Because the last thing he wants are people loving God more / experiencing God more / connecting with His heart / Honoring and serving God more!
 5. I want to encourage you to be generous so that your love for God can be unleashed!

II. Generosity Helps Me Trust God More

A. Giving reveals that I trust God not circumstances

Prov. 3:5-6 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." (NLT)

1. Some of you are thinking; "I do love God and I want to be generous, but I just don't see how it's possible?" That's the point! Learning to trust God is choosing to NOT depend on your own understanding. As long as you want things to make sense, you will never trust God.
 2. Our trust is not dependant upon our understanding. Our trust is not waiting until all the circumstances line up and then we follow. We have to remember that God doesn't work off the principals of this world.
 3. I hear all the time about people waiting to be generous until their finances improve. This is earthly kingdom thinking! You're basing your generosity on what makes sense to you instead of your trust in God. (Once again it is a relational term!)
 4. We are constantly faced with trusting in the circumstances or trusting God. How will we ever grow in our trust of God until we simply do what He says regardless of the circumstances? (Move past circumstantial obedience)
- Story: Sam and Stephanie (Short on money to pay bills – time to tithe – choice? They chose to give and then Stephanie got 3 shifts at work unexpectedly.)

B. Giving reveals that I am committed to obedience

II Cor. 9:13 "For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ." (NLT)

1. If we really trust God, then we simply decide to do what He says no matter what. Giving simply reveals that I have a commitment to be obedient.
 2. AND...obedience = blessing! Part of the blessing is that we learn to trust God with even more of our lives. When you begin to discover how trustworthy He is, you begin to trust Him in other areas as well.
 3. This is where my confident trust in God comes from. I've had people ask me how I can be so confident about things / how I can be so sure God will do something? It comes from years of choosing to be obedient despite the circumstances.
 4. God has proven Himself trustworthy so many times that my confidence and faith in Him just keeps growing! So will yours if you trust Him with giving.
- God is wanting to teach us this as a church body. This type of obedience = vision!
 - 5. Let me encourage you to break out of being controlled by the circumstances / stop

trying to understand it all / and simply trust in what He promises.

III. Generosity Helps Me Grow In God More

A. My giving reveals my spiritual growth

II Cor. 8:7 “*Since you excel in so many ways...I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving.*” (NLT)

1. There are many things that help us grow up spiritually. It’s important to read the word / to pray / to serve / but it’s also essential that we give. Choosing to be generous helps us grow up spiritually.
2. HOW? Because of everything I’ve said so far. It helps me love God more / trust God more. It allows me to see God work in one of the most tangible areas of my life...finances.
3. Often people will complain about not experiencing God / seeing God / hearing God / yet they refuse to trust God in the area of giving. Giving will help us grow in all these areas. (When God comes through in finances, He’s very real!)
4. If you want to grow spiritually in your understanding and experience with God...choose to give! (It has changed my relationship with God.)
5. Some of you have stopped growing in this area. You’ve reached some level of obedience (maybe 10%) and you haven’t grown past this point for years. I want to challenge you to consider trusting God again. Excel in the act of giving!

B. My giving reveals my transformation from this world

Rom. 12:2 “*Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*” (NLT)

1. Spiritual growth is all about being transformed. We are people of another Kingdom. My giving reveals that this transformation is taking place. To not give implies I’m still stuck in the values of the other kingdom.
 2. This transformation happens as we allow God to change the way we think. Now our thinking needs to change in a variety of ways to be consistent with the Kingdom we now belong to. Changing how we think about money is simply one of those ways.
- Are we willing to allow our thinking about money to be challenged and changed? OR are you so convinced your perspective is right no matter what God’s word says?
 - 3. Transformational giving will never happen until there is transformed thinking about giving. When we stop resisting what God says about money and allow Him to transform us into new people by changing the way we think through His word!
 - Are you growing in your relationship with God? Giving fosters this!

IV. Generosity Helps Me Prioritize The Kingdom of God More

Matt. 6:33 “*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*” (NIV)

A. My giving reveals which Kingdom I am living for

1. It’s very clear from the word of God that our priority is to the Kingdom of God.

(Seek first His Kingdom) There's also a promise if we do. "All these things will be added to you."

2. God promises us that if we will seek His kingdom first, then all the other stuff we get so caught up in worrying about, He promises to just give us. (Trust issues)
3. I know that we all at times may struggle believing this. We get so consumed with trying to provide for ourselves in this earthly kingdom that it doesn't even seem logical to change our focus to God's Kingdom. Yet, this is the promise!
4. Choosing to be generous is changing your kingdom focus and trusting in God's Provision. It is a statement of what Kingdom I'm living for.

B. My giving reveals which Kingdom I am advancing

1. Am I committed to advancing the Kingdom of God? Do I care that people come to know Jesus Christ? The poor are fed and the needy are cared for? That people find hope / marriages are restored / addicts find freedom? / children hear about Jesus?
2. If I say I care about these things then my giving should prove it. None of this comes free! To advance the Kingdom of God in our geographic area is costly! The larger we grow / the more impact we make / the more it costs.
3. To fulfill what God has called us to do will require all of us to personalize advancing the Kingdom of God. This means each one of us choosing to give towards it consistently...no matter how big or small.
4. If we would all personalize this, it would be miraculous what we could do in our community. If everyone believed it was their responsibility to help shoulder the financial burden to advance the Kingdom of God in Molalla we could change a town! (Imagine what 1000 people could do in unity!)
5. I want to point out the financial numbers we print in the bulletin. These figures reflect minimums. In order to do our job effectively our monthly operating expenses run about \$63K. If we reach that number this doesn't mean you can quit giving or the money is not needed. To go where God is taking us and to continue advancing His Kingdom will require a lot more than this!
 - There is such a need for more people to make a commitment to consistently give. Only about 100 family units give...(Envelopes in the bulletin – boxes)
6. Our KAC goal to finish the construction project is \$200K. Again, this is bare minimum. Yes, this should get us in and done. BUT, this doesn't reflect the other items that we will still have to purchase. That \$200K still doesn't buy chairs.
7. Our money can go to advance one of two kingdoms. Why do I want my money to advance the other kingdom? God has called us all to personalize advancing His Kingdom in Molalla. Our giving reflects this.

V. Generosity Helps Me Partner With God More

A. My giving reveals that I am actively partnering with God

I Cor. 1:9 "God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." (NLT)

1. Isn't this an amazing verse? We have been invited to partner with Jesus in what He's doing. We are not spectators in the advancement of His Kingdom, we are

partners with Him. Wow!

2. Every time I give I am choosing to partner with Jesus. Every time I put money in that envelope and put it in the back box, I am saying that I believe in working with Jesus to make a difference in Molalla!
3. The vision of Foothills did not originate with us. It came to us from God as an invitation to join Him in what He wanted to do. My giving reveals that I believe this and have decided to join Him in His work.
4. This offering today is a statement that we accept our role and responsibilities to partner with Him.

B. My giving reveals that my partnerships results in God's provision

II Cor. 9:10 "In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you." (NLT)

1. This is why we never have to worry about if we'll have enough. We are in a Kingdom business partnership with Jesus and He can't run out of money or resources. This understanding is what frees us up to be generous people.
2. God's Kingdom is NOT in a recession. His Kingdom cannot run out of money / Therefore we should just learn to start enjoying the act of giving because there is an inexhaustible supply waiting for us.
3. Notice this verse promises that He will "provide and increase your resources". WHY? So there is a great harvest of generosity!
4. This is why we can embrace becoming RIVERS for His resources NOT RESEVIORS. We don't have to stockpile them. We don't have to dam up the river and protect them. We let the river flow feely because God's resources never run dry!
5. My giving reveals that as I partner with God, I have access to the resources from God.

- There are critical moments in our lives personally and corporately as a church, where God puts before us choices where we have the opportunity to trust Him / live by faith and move forward, or live in fear and doubt and remain the same. We are at one of those moments. (7 years ago we faced a similar moment – We trusted God and He has blessed mightily.)
- Now, God is asking us to trust Him once again. It is not a coincidence that all this is happening during an economic downturn. God loves to set the stage. What will we do? Will we trust the circumstances or will we trust in the promises of God? Will we move forward and experience more than we ever imagined, or will we choose to stay the same.
- Our destiny as a church is to experience more. Let's take hold of that today!
- We are going to collect our gifts today as we worship. If you came prepared today with your KAC envelope, great. (Baskets up front) Let's celebrate giving to the advancement of God's Kingdom. (Give cheerfully) If you didn't or you are a visitor today, please feel no pressure to give. Just let the Lord work in your life today.