

Giving Series

Becoming A Joyful Giver

2 Chron.29-31

Introduction

1. Video of Annanias & Sapphira
2. We need to be joyful givers not fearful givers!
3. Review previous message & Pathway to the Christ centered life

Context

- Read 31.2-8. What prompted this outpouring of giving? Especially in light of the spiritual climate 3 months earlier.
- Read 28.1-8, 24f. This is the spiritual climate that Hezekiah is walking into. They were spiritually & morally regressing into paganism, but 3 months after King Ahaz dies & Hezekiah becomes king they are joyfully giving their tithes to God w/in 100 days.
- The purpose of this message is to demonstrate how we can become joy filled givers...givers who look forward to contributing...
- The truth is that giving can become stale just like prayer, Bible reading, witnessing, serving...the reason spiritual disciplines get old & stale is because I get old & stale...it's hard to sustain a joy filled heart when you aren't actively pursuing God!

Pursue God by dealing aggressively with disobedience & reconsecrating ourselves to God (29.2-7)

- Explanation: Things were in disarray...the priests were not discharging their duties...the nations spiritual, moral & economic life had plummeted...it was going to take a focused effort to reestablish a healthy spiritual environment
 - Appl - becoming a joyful giver doesn't happy w/o focused effort & attention. You don't slip into joyful

giving, but rather you walk into it. You always slip away from God and never slip into God.

- It began when the king called the priests back to God & they reconsecrated themselves (29.15). They didn't get everything in order and then served God. They served God as they were getting things in order.
 - Don't believe the lie that says "Get it all straight and then come to God"...you'll never get it all straight...come to God & get it all straight.
 - Step 1 – Rededicate myself to God and to his service
- Then they began the hard work...it took 16 days to get all the junk out and rededicate the Temple to God...16 years of repairs, garbage & false images that had to be dispensed...and misused or abused articles replaced.
 - It is never an automatic turn around with our habits & emotions...we start dealing with disobedience it will be messy...it will be hard to let go of some things...imagine some of the priests ran across stuff they wanted to keep.
 - Animal life story of catching baboons...they won't let go of the fruit.
 - You can't hold onto the sin...and expect there to be any change in your giving attitude.
 - It's hard to get the giving gear engaged when the living gear is in reverse...you have to stop the reverse motion before you can go forward! You can't have a joyful heart w/o giving up disobedience.
 - But it was fun! (29.30b). Everything was restored and all the junk was burned.
 - Anybody enjoy throwing stuff away?! I do...the one theme that has been the source of constant contention in our relationship is that I throw stuff away...Julianna's papers...

- It also ultimately feels good when we eject stuff out of our spiritual lives...there's a release that happens
 - Anybody enjoy restoring stuff...I enjoy seeing people in conflict work through to reconciliation...
 - Working on your sin may not be easy but it ultimately can be enjoyable if
 - Step 2 – Get rid of disobedience.
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- Summarize: Joyful giving arises from a heart that is free of junk & filled with God
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Participate in activities that have eternal significance & feed your spirit

- Explanation: They came back to God and began worshipping Him according to his standard which included: the sacrificial system, participating in collective worship, observing the festivals, the priests serving in their rightful positions, tithing, and being with God's people. When they began walking in the ancient paths they began to experience joy again.
- For the past 16 years they had been doing their own thing...it led them far from God and under His hand of discipline. They consecrated themselves, dealt with areas of disobedience and then started practicing the habits of devoted Jews.
- Joyful giving is accelerated when we participate in activities that feed our spiritual lives. You can't expect to live the abundant life if all you do Step 1 & Step 2, but not Step 3.
- There are activities of the Christian life that have always facilitated spiritual growth. I mentioned some of these in my series, "The Life You've Always Wanted." Order the tapes or read my notes on our website.
- Step 3 is to participate in activities that have eternal significance. They includes things like serving others, worshipping together with

God's people, spending time alone with God in prayer, fasting & solitude, reading the Word, hearing God's voice, resting and giving.

- I can read my gauges okay. I can tell I'm about to run out of gas & it usually due to me not practicing these disciplines...too busy to rest, not spending time in prayer
- An interesting thing happens, if I stay out of the Word and my spiritual gas gauge is dropping I don't feel like reading the Word. On the otherhand, if I stay out of the Word and my spiritual temperature is right I can't wait to get back into the Word. When it comes to giving what does your gauge say?
- This is often the cause of that gauge dropping I have a constant stream of the world flowing into my life (activities, entertainment, internet, gaming, people, whatever) it depletes my spiritual resevoir. You not only have to practice these spiritual activities, but you also have to decrease the flow of the stream of the world into your life (even the good stuff). It's not necessarily bad stuff either that's streaming into your life.
- In James, you hear this question, "Can both salt water & fresh water come from the same spring?" Appl - There can be no mixture...we're like the baboon...we have one hand up worshipping God and the other hand down in a hole holding on to our junk.
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- You may be doing these things and there's no freshness. There's nothing wrong with the activities, but it may be that I need to approach them differently. Example of how I used to read God's word & now how I read it.
- Here's another truth (this is from Raymond Wells), practice makes.....not perfect, but permanent. The more I do something the more it becomes a part of me. If I start stop something all the time it typically leads to discouragement and a sense of failure. Do you know what motivates me to share my faith...sharing my faith.
- I'm not suggesting every time you give you will always be joyful, but your heart will be in the right place...it won't be disengaged

from the activity of God. Who does it take longer to warm up by the fire on a cold winter's night...the person who is 10' from the fire or the person who is 50 yards away.

- Example of giving a month ago & giving now. Because I'm talking about it, I'm excited and want to, whereas a month ago it was just a habit. Due to my current walk with the Lord, it doesn't take me long (a few minutes) to become joyful in my giving. If I were in the spiritual wood and had my life filled up with the world it would take me much longer to become a joyful giver.
- It was three months for God's people in this story...relatively quick turn around compared to where they were 100 days earlier.

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