

CORNERSTONE

DISCIPLESHIP

GROUPS

THE HEART OF THE MATTER
PASTOR ANN BURNS
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

Overview

Giving as Worship

Core Scriptures: Genesis 14:17–20; Exodus 35:20–29; 36:3–7; 1 Chronicles 29:10–17; Matthew 6:19–21; 2 Corinthians 9:6–8; 1 Peter 1:10–12

Overview

This message traces the biblical theme of giving and tithing from Genesis through the New Testament, showing that generous, willing-hearted giving has always been rooted in gratitude for what God has done rather than obligation or compulsion. From Abram's offering to Melchizedek, to the building of the tabernacle and temple, to Paul's words to the Corinthians, the consistent message is that our giving is an act of worship and a reflection of what is truly in our hearts.

Key Takeaways

1. **The first tithe was worship, not law.** The first recorded tithe in Scripture, given by Abram to Melchizedek, was a spontaneous act of gratitude and worship — not a legal requirement.
2. **God builds with willing offerings.** God uses the financial participation of his people to accomplish his purposes in the earth. The tabernacle and the temple could not have been built without the willing offerings of God's people.
3. **Money is morally neutral.** It is what we do with it that reveals the condition of our hearts.
4. **A right heart produces action.** The heart of the giver is the most important factor in giving, but a right heart will not stay idle. Tithing and generous giving are the evidence of a heart rightly oriented toward God.
5. **You get to tithe.** We are not obligated to tithe. As Pastor Ann put it, "You get to tithe." Giving is a privilege extended to those who have received the grace of God.
6. **We are living what the prophets longed to see.** The plan of redemption, hidden for generations, has been revealed to us — and that reality should produce deep gratitude.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question — Getting Honest

When you hear the word “tithing” or “giving” in a church setting, what is your honest gut reaction? Where do you think that reaction comes from?

Into the Text — Before the Law

Pastor Ann pointed out that Abram’s tithe to Melchizedek in Genesis 14 happened before the Law of Moses was ever given. Why do you think it matters that the first recorded tithe was a free, spontaneous act of worship rather than a legal requirement?

In Exodus 35 and 36, the Israelites brought so much to fund the building of the tabernacle that Moses had to tell them to stop. What does that kind of generosity tell us about the condition of their hearts? What do you think produced that kind of response?

Into the Text — Out of Your Own Hand

In 1 Chronicles 29, David says, “Out of your own hand we have given you.” What does it mean to give back to God out of what he has already given to us? How does that perspective change the way you think about your finances?

Drawing on 2 Corinthians 9:7, Pastor Ann described God as loving a cheerful, joyous, prompt-to-do-it giver. What do you think is the difference between giving cheerfully and giving out of a sense of guilt or pressure?

Going Deeper — Heart and Hands

Pastor Ann called tithing and giving “the evidence of a right heart before God,” and compared it to worship expressed through lifted hands and praise. Do you agree with that comparison? Why or why not?

The message described money as morally neutral — it is what we do with it that gives it virtue or corruption. How does that idea challenge or confirm the way you have thought about money in the past?

Bringing It Home — Where Your Treasure Is

Pastor Ann reminded us from Matthew 6:19–21 that where your treasure is, your heart will be also. Honestly reflecting on where your time, money, and attention go right now, what does that reveal about where your heart actually is?

Have you ever given out of a heart of genuine gratitude rather than obligation? What was that experience like, and how did it differ from giving that felt like a duty?

Practical Application

If you are new to tithing, take one step. Spend time this week reading Hebrews 7:1–10 and Malachi 3:6–12. Ask God to give you a willing heart and begin by taking one practical step — even if it is a smaller percentage — toward consistent, intentional giving to your local church.

If you are already tithing, check the motive. Reflect on the motivation behind your giving. Is it routine, or does it still carry a sense of gratitude and worship? Ask God to renew the joy in your giving this week.

Pray David's prayer. Read 1 Chronicles 29:10–17 slowly and prayerfully on your own. Use David's prayer as a model for your own prayer of gratitude, acknowledging that everything you have came from God's hand.

Have the honest conversation. Talk with your spouse, a close friend, or an accountability partner about your current financial habits and how they align with what you say you believe about God's provision and faithfulness.

Write your deliverance list. Write down three specific things God has delivered you from or provided for you. Let that list serve as a reminder of why you give, the same way the Israelites recited their history of deliverance when they brought their first fruits before the Lord in Deuteronomy 26.

Closing

Peter writes that the prophets were serving people they would never meet, and that even angels long to look into what has now been announced to us (1 Peter 1:10–12). We are living in the fullness of what generations longed to see. Pastor Ann closed with a word of urgency — “I don’t think there’s a lot of time left to do the work” — and our giving is one of the ways we answer it: not under compulsion, but with grateful, willing hearts, free from the deceitfulness of riches and glad to have a share in the mission God has given his people.

Close your time together by praying David’s words:

“Both riches and honor come from you and you reign over all. In your hands are power and might. In your hands it is to make great and to give strength to all. Now therefore, our God, we thank you and we praise your glorious name.” — 1 Chronicles 29:12–13, as quoted by Pastor Ann

News & Events

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- September 27 - Guest Speaker, Jeremiah Johnson
- October 3 - Ladies Event
- October 24 - Harvest Party
- October 29–31 - Men’s Advance
- November 7–8 - Guest Speaker, Chad Gonzales

