

Luke 6:38 – Excel in the Grace of Giving: Receiving Through Giving

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

How interesting it is, in our text today that Jesus is saying that, through our giving, we will not lose, but receive as much or more in return. Do you, as I do, find this fact very intriguing that God will bless us because we choose to show Him honor through our giving? The amount that you and I can give is very minuscule in comparison to the potential that God will return to us. As our loving Father, He graciously and willingly provides for us daily. Our text today assures us that our meager offerings will not go unnoticed.

Throughout Scripture, Jesus speaks about the importance of giving. In Acts 20:35, our text last Sunday, we read Jesus' words: **"It is more blessed to give than to receive."** Today's text goes into greater detail about that blessing. He says that what we give will be returned to us, and more. Our gift will be measured out, like flour in a cup, but then He will press it down, He will shake it to allow it to settle to make room for even more, and then He will continue pouring till that blessing runs over our cups and fills our laps. The more we give, the more we will receive.

Let's not get the wrong idea, though. Giving in order to receive is not to be our motivation. Love must be the foundation of our giving. In 1 Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul writes, **"If I give all I possess to the poor ... but have not love, I gain nothing."** It has been said, "You can give without loving, but you can never truly love without giving." Love must be the primary motivation for everything we do, because it was God's motivation in giving His ultimate gift. Jesus lived, died, and rose again for the forgiveness of our sins and for life forever with Him. Everyone who believes the promises of God will receive forgiveness.

It is impossible to separate loving and giving. Spouses share their love with one another without any limitations or constraints. The young man who loves his girlfriend never thinks he has given enough to her. Moms and Dads will do whatever they can for their children. Likewise, followers of Christ, who truly love Him, know no limits in their giving.

God has developed a partnership with us in the life that He's given us. It is not an equal partnership, because what God gives us is many times greater than we can give back to Him. God is the creator, the provider, and the owner of everything, so our stake in the partnership is small, yet it is acceptable to God. In this partnership, God provides us with the tools and resources to accomplish His purpose in our lives. For our part, God expects us as His partners to be faithful and obedient servants who will use those tools and resources to extend His kingdom and love those He places around us.

This partnership is like the vocation of farming. None of us are farmers, but the analogy provides a good illustration of how one-sided the partnership with Christ is. God furnishes the farmer with seed, soil, sunshine, and rain; He sends the night and the day and the seasons of the year; He gives fertility to the soil and makes the seeds grow. He furnishes the people who constitute the market. The farmer prepares the soil and plants the grain. He diligently tends the crop, but his efforts do not compare with God, Who has His forces of nature working 24 hours a day. Would we estimate that God furnishes 90, 95, or even 98 percent of the power or energy that goes into the making of a crop? No, God gives His all; He gives 100 percent.

Then, after the crops are harvested, how much of the proceeds does God ask for? 90 percent? 95? Maybe 50? No, all God asks of us is that we return ten percent to Him and faithfully manage the remaining 90 percent.

Each and every day, God gives and gives. He expects that we will respond with commitment and devotion and by giving a portion of our time, talents, and treasures. As our text in Luke states, our giving results in receiving, and receiving even more than what we have given. When we give something, we always receive something more in

return. If we spread love, joy, or truth, we still have it and even more of it. What we give to our Savior, He accepts, uses, magnifies, and returns to us changed and enhanced in value.

There is a medieval story that illustrates this truth. An announcement was made that the king—and everyone loved this good king—was going to make a tour throughout his kingdom on a certain day. Great preparations were made for the occasion. Roads were repaired, bridges built, houses painted. The people got out their best holiday clothes. If they cared to, they were encouraged to express their loyalty and love by making some gift to their king.

Now, there was a certain poor widow living all alone in her little cottage. She had no gift fit to give a king, nor had she suitable clothing for such an occasion, so she decided she would just stay in her little house on the great day. Oh, she might just peep through the curtains and get a glimpse of his majesty as he passed.

The day came. The people gathered by the hundreds along the highway. The widow looked out her window and saw the multitude. She looked down the king's highway and saw the procession coming. She heard the festivities and the people shouting and cheering. The old woman could not stand it. She grabbed her old black bonnet and put it on. She picked up her bag and ran out into the big crowd. "Oh, he will not see me," she said to herself, but, just as the chariot approached her, it stopped. The king looked right through the crowd and into her face. The old woman thrust her hand into her bag and took out a big copper coin, the only coin she had, and put it in the hand of the king.

The king smiled and said, "My dear good woman, you can't afford to give all that gold to your king. Here, take it back."

"O king," cried she, "don't poke fun at a poor old woman. I know that copper coin is not fit to give a king, but it was all I had."

"Here," said the king, "take it back." When she took it back, it had been turned into pure gold!

So it is when we give our best to our King, Christ Jesus. He accepts it, blesses it, changes it, gives it back, and our copper is turned to gold. In 2 Kings 4, we read about a famine. A man from another country brought the prophet Elisha twenty loaves of bread. **"Give it to the people to eat," Elisha said. 'How can I set this before a hundred men?' his servant asked. But Elisha answered, 'Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the Lord says: "They will eat and have some left over.'"** And that's exactly what happened. In faith, the bread was given, not hoarded, and God multiplied it to feed a hundred men with leftovers to spare.

The two fundamentals of life are get and give. We must get in order to give and live at all; we must give in order to live abundantly and to help others live.

This same principle applies to us; we must receive, and then we must give in order to live. God warns us of the danger of becoming a receptacle, rather than a channel. In Proverbs 11:24, we read, **"One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly but comes to poverty."** There are unpleasant consequences for refusing to share our love and our blessings with others, but rewards beyond measure come from giving.

Love gives and delights in giving. We sing, "I gave My life for thee; what hast thou given for Me?" We hasten to answer, "Dear Lord, it is so little we have done for You that we are ashamed. Take the little we bring as an expression of our love and devotion. We want to be good stewards. Help us, Lord, not only to give, but to excel in the grace of giving. Help us to honor You with our first and best. Help us show our love and gratitude to You through our giving."

In every way, our gifts to Christ are small in comparison to what He gives us. Our heavenly Father loves His children, and He promises to continue giving and providing for us. When we give generously out of our love for Him, we will experience the joy of giving and discover together that, through giving, we will receive. **"For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."** It is inevitable that, when we give, we receive, for that is the way our giving heavenly Father has planned it.