

HURC Mid-week Service – 5 August 2020 – Led by George Barnes

Sowing Generously

2 Cor. 9: 6-15

People may hesitate to give generously because of the worry about having enough left over for their own needs.

Paul assures us God will supply all our needs (Phil. 4:19) “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

In fact the more we give to God’s work, the more He will provide, and with plenty left over. (Prov. 3:9-10) “Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.” This scripture may not only refer to money but also the use of our gifts and talents and very importantly our time.

It’s interesting Paul says in Rom. 12:8 about different gifts given to us, he says “... if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously ...” We all have different gifts. We all can give – as we can all share our faith – but can we give generously ?

We must make up our own minds, not to be forced into giving more than we want to. Many circulars, letters, phone calls, pleading for money and more money. God is generous and will abundantly supply all our own needs with plenty left over, so more can be joyfully given to others.

The World’s view is “Hang on to all you can get, make more money, invest it, bank it, save it, so you can make more and more, then maybe buy something for yourself, something you’ve always wanted, you deserve it! Hanging on, not only to money but our gifts and talents, which sometimes may never be used.

Paul Getty I hear, was one of the wealthiest persons in the World, but he was also one of the saddest and loneliest persons in the World.

God turns all that upside down, He supplies more of his harvest as we give more of it to others. It’s all God’s seed and harvest anyway but he is so kind and generous that he rewards us with more generosity, so we can use His resources to benefit others. Paul says in vs 11(a) of our reading “You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion,” It is through others receiving and our giving that all praise goes to God. The Gospel is mentioned in vs 13. It appears to be an opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus as people see good works and faith in action.

In Malachi 3:8-10 gives a warning and a wonderful promise which says:

“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ “In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe (10%) into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”

In a book I am reading “The Good night Book” by Richard Bewes he mentioned the life of a British industrialist, Sir John Laing, who attained international acclaim in the building of airfields, motorways, numerous churches, many homes and housing estates. Although he was ‘rich’ in the popular sense, money had no hold on him whatever, and he drove an old second-hand Morris Minor. John Laing’s riches were within. Most of his fortune he gave away. When in 1978 this humble Christian man died, in his ninety-ninth year, his personal net estate came out at ... £371.

A happy man? Completely. He lived for the interests of God and His kingdom. In this way, according to Jesus, he possessed the kingdom And it made him happy – and ‘blessed.’

We had an exercise recently to discover our gifts, what do you think your gifts might be? For me the Gift of “Giving” came second.

It is true what the Bible says that the more you give the more you receive, and I have experienced God’s blessings in many ways over the years of my Christian life.

At a previous church I attended St. John’s in Colchester, I was privileged and asked to attend the Giving group. Every month there was usually a pot of money to be allocated to various charities. The church had a large congregation of around 300 and with their generosity and after much prayer it was decided to improve their tithing and 15% was allocated to God’s work on each occasion. As in Matt. 10:8 Jesus said “Freely you have received; freely give.”

In Gal. 6:7 Paul says “Do not be deceived; God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” It’s a natural law to reap what we sow. It’s true in other areas too. Every action has results. If you plant to please your own desires, you could reap

a crop of sorrow and evil. If you sow or plant generously to please God, you'll reap joy and everlasting life. What kinds of seeds are we sowing?

There are many scriptures referring to Sowing and Giving. One that stands out is the Poor widow who gives all she has, as mentioned in Mark and Luke's Gospels.

Jesus watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few pence. Jesus said 'this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.'

When we consider ourselves generous in giving a percentage of our income to the Lord. Jesus admired the woman's generous and sacrificial giving. As believers, should we consider increasing our giving sacrificially – whether in money, time, gifts or talents – to a point beyond convenience or comfort?

Jesus also said "It is more blessed to give than to receive."