

Give as an act of worship Exodus 35; Philippians 4; Malachi 1

God is worthy of our worship. He is matchless. There is no one and nothing to compare with Him. And one of the most transforming ways we worship God is through becoming generous and joyful givers.

This morning we are not just launching into a new teaching series; we are beginning an exciting new season in the life of our church.

- This is going to be an exciting journey for Grace Bible Church
 - Our team has put together a tremendous resource for you
 - Part 1 – where we have been, where we are going, and why
 - Part 2 – your response; how you can be a part; including response card
 - Part 3 – study questions based on sermons
 - Use the questions for personal study or in a small group
 - This morning on page 46 – you can turn there now.

A lot of information in this book; summarize Every Knee Initiative

- Goal #1 (p. 19) – challenge each of us to a deeper level of investment in God’s kingdom – challenge each of us to give all we are and all we have to Jesus
 - Moments in my life when I heard a message, read a book, friend spoke
 - Pushed me into deeper consecration of my life to Jesus. Hoping this will be such a moment for every single one of us.
- Goal #2 – we need to raise the funds required for our next two years to fulfill the vision that we think God is laying before our church.
 - \$32 million – that’s a big #; other moments of courageous faith
 - Break it down - \$12m is what we’d already give over the course of 2 years
 - And \$16 million is to build our Creekside Campus that now meets at Pebble Creek Elementary
 - We are intentionally not being extravagant – about the same sq ft as SW and Anderson
 - It is just REALLY expensive to build in this town, especially south end of town where Creekside is located because there is so much growth going on there.
 - BUT that’s actually why we felt like God was calling us to establish a campus in the south of this town – because there are not enough churches to serve the thousands of new people moving into those neighborhoods.
 - So our goal is to raise the entire construction cost – all \$16 million so that we can pay off the Creekside campus in just these 2 years so that Grace can continue to multiply in our community and throughout the world.
 - So \$12M for 2 yrs of regular annual budget; \$16M to build Creekside... then \$4M to start the next local campus and two new church plants, one national, one international. Maybe God will call you to GO!

Now that is a HUGE financial goal, so we have given you this card stuffed into the booklet

- This is NOT a Pledge Card
 - We will never call you, beat on your door!

- **2 purposes for this card.**
- **First, it is a tool to help you think strategically about your giving to your local church**
 - o Don't fill it out today. Take before the Lord and ask Him to guide you, challenge you to think deeply and strategically about what you give
- **Second purpose of this card is for you to communicate to the elders and leadership of the church**
 - o Let me clarify: I won't see your card; Blake and Matt won't see your card; none of Teaching or Campus pastors will see your card. Elders won't be looking through these cards. Our financial department who send you receipts are the only people who ever see your name with your giving. I have no idea what you give and it will always be that way!
 - o We believe God has called us to this \$32M goal over the next two years so Grace can multiply more rapidly... but we could be wrong!
 - o We need these cards from you so that, when we add them all up, we can see if this is indeed what God has called us to do, so that we can be wise stewards of this vision.
 - o All we'll get is the total number so we can make wise decisions.
 - o If the total # is exactly \$32M – then we know we should move forward
 - o If it's less – then we need to go back to the Lord in prayer and see what He wants us to do instead
 - o If it's more – then that's God telling us we haven't dreamed big enough yet.
- This is how you help us move forward in God's will
- Don't fill it out yet!
 - o For now, just begin to pray and ask God to guide you and your family

Every Knee is bigger than anything we have done before. Not unusual for God to call His people into new things, big things, into overwhelming opportunities to advance His kingdom on earth.

So, start our time in the text by looking at moment in the history of Israel when God's people gave so that He would be worshipped. Exodus 35:4

- **Exodus 35:4-8**
 - o Purpose: create space for God's people to worship Him as they were led by Him through the wilderness toward the promised land
 - o Give from your stored wealth; some of which they had just received from Egypt
 - o "Willingly" – choice directed freely toward serving God; Ps 110:3
- **Exodus 35:20-22**
 - o Hebrew, heart = "desire" – they feel a desire to give, not an obligation to give
- **Exodus 35:10, 25**
 - o Everyone, male and female, got involved; gave their wealth AND skill
- **Exodus 35:30-31**
 - o First person in Bible to be "filled with the Spirit"
- **Exodus 36:2-6**
 - o The people give TOO MUCH for the tabernacle! They are so generous that Moses has to tell them "enough"!
- Why did they give like this? What stirred their hearts?
 - o They saw God's greatness – mockery of Egypt's god and king
 - o They experienced God's grace – cried out and they were redeemed from slavery
 - o They wanted to worship God, and in the process their worship became a witness to the world; they were becoming a kingdom of priests
- Have to ask myself...
 - o When was my heart last stirred like that? Am I a generous, joyful giver like they were? If not, why not? What's holding me back?

Why should we become generous and joyful givers? Wrong Ideas

I should give generously and joyfully because...

- God needs my money
 - o No He doesn't! He owns EVERYTHING in the universe.
 - o His plans for humanity will be accomplished with or w/o our money
 - o Acts 17:24-25
- Then God will give more money back to me
 - o No! He never promised that for us in this life.
 - o Jesus, Peter, Paul, John, James... they ALL died poor and persecuted and they gave everything to God! If God didn't reward their faith with riches in this life, He's not going to reward ours with riches in this life.
- I'm more likely to go to heaven
 - o Good outweighs my bad; and my good includes giving away a lot of money
 - o No, no, no!! Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone!
 - o Eph 2:8-9 – Gospel; Our giving has NOTHING to do with our getting to heaven!
- God will love me more
 - o Sure, getting in is free, but God will love me more if I give more.
 - o No! His love is unconditional

So why should we become generous and joyful givers?

Reason #1 – because generous, joyful giving is an act of worship and God is worthy of our worship

1. Generous, joyful giving is an act of Worship

- Turn to Philippians 4
- What is “worship”? Reason we are here. What is it?
 - o Portion time during the service when we sing. Maybe that's one aspect
 - o Hebrew = to fall down. The thing I am worshipping is above me; worth more.
 - o English = to declare “worth”
 - o Anything I say or do that declares to God and others His worth, value
 - o That includes giving; giving is one of the most transformative forms of worship
- Philippians 4:15-16
 - o Commended for participation. Missionary prayer letter. Thanks for your gift
 - o Notice how he describes that gift – Phil 4:18
 - o Imagery drawn from Pentateuch = Jewish instruction manual for worship.
 - o Exod 29:18. “You shall offer up in smoke the whole ram on the altar; it is a burnt offering to the LORD: it is a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD.”
 - Paul's worship = finding more worshippers
 - Their worship = helping Paul find more worshippers
- Generous, joyful giving is itself an act of worship because my giving shows that I value God, and I value His name being known among the nations.
- How much do we really value God? Are there things that we love more than God; or things that compete with God?
 - o Love the Lord your God with all your heart...
 - I want to love God like that. How do I know if I love God with all my heart?
 - What do you do with your earthly resources?
 - So you're saying God wants my money? No, God wants your heart! But your heart follows your money
 - “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”
 - This series might make you feel uncomfortable. “Brian, you can meddle in my prayer life; challenge me to memorize scripture; push me to share my faith, but don't mess with my money!”

- Money matters to God because it is so closely tied to your heart
 - Every form of pleasing worship becomes sacrificial at some point
 - Ex – American cultural tradition: if you want to ask a girl to marry you, show up with a ring. I bought a ring, and it was expensive. I had to make sacrifices to afford that ring because she was/is worth it! I wanted to show her how valuable she was and is to me. I enjoyed making sacrifices to buy that ring. Buy ring out of love.
 - I could have cut corners
 - Plastic Zip-tie. Frugal (“cheap”); durable; comes in lots of colors and sizes
 - Go show your friends how much I love you!
 - Inappropriate expression based on the relationship
- Same mistake Israel made at the end of the OT. Malachi 1:6-8
 - That’s not worship; that’s a zip-tie
 - Malachi 1:11-12. Nations will also regard me as common
 - Every form of pleasing worship becomes sacrificial at some point
- David made plenty of mistakes, but he was an exemplary worshipper – 2 Sam 24
 - 2 Sam 24:18, 22-23, 24
 - David made sacrifices to worship. Why? Because he knew that God is worthy

2. God is worthy of all our worship – turn to Revelation 4

- Worthy (Greek) = balance the scales. It is appropriate
- What moved Israel to worship through joyful, generous giving? They had seen God’s Greatness and His grace; His power and His love
- **He is great**
 - Revelation 4:11
 - We can’t make something out of nothing. We can’t make much out of something!
 - Circle WORTHY
 - Why did He create? For us!
- **He is gracious**
 - Revelation 5:9-10
 - He rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt. He has rescued us from sin and death; made this earth for our enjoyment and pleasure.
 - Revelation 5:11-12
 - Worthy of everything that we have and everything that we are

Application

Bill Bright once said, “You can’t outgive God.” No matter how generous we become, we can’t out-give God. He gave first and He gave what was most valuable. But we can learn to worship Him by becoming generous and joyful givers.

In fact, giving Him our all is the only appropriate response to our God who has given us everything.

Pray that every single one of us would become generous and joyful worshippers with all that we have and all that we are