

Sermon Title: "Giving for a Greater Purpose"

Exodus 35:4-5

Philippians 4:17

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

4 And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying,

5 Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass,

17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

In the three portions of scriptures that we have just read:

Exodus 35:4-5 – giving for the Tabernacle (church building)

Philippians 4:17 – giving for missions

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 – the right attitude of giving: cheerful giving

Pastor Lily has informed me that this year's giving is twofold: church building and missions (taking care of our church planters). This will be my last time, sharing, in our annual faith pledge. Pastor Carlos will take over next year. I want to challenge you concerning this year's faith pledge. It should be a faith-filled generosity for God's house and mission. Faith-filled generosity means giving not out of abundance, pressure, or obligation – but from a deep trust in God and a desire to honor Him, even when it stretches you. Let us try to understand today's message.

1. It is giving that trusts God as the Provider

2 Corinthians 9:8 says, 'And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.'

It simply means, believing God will supply all needs – even after giving something away.

I think since 1992, we started mission faith pledge because of the church planting endeavor. That was 33 years ago. Pastor Lily and I have pledged in every of these 33 years of Mission Faith Pledge. And we have always fully paid. I would say our faith pledge has never been little. Also, it was above and beyond our monthly tithes. We continued to pay tithe every month and we have never once said that I will pay tithe lesser since I am giving faith pledge. It has always been a faith filled generosity on our part towards God. Is it because we are rich. No. But I will say that it is a faith giving, believing that God will provide and sustain us. Which He has done all these 33 years. Does it cost us. Yes. You are not giving because you have extra. You give even when it costs you something, trusting that God will provide what you need after you give. But the benefits, or the returns are hundredfold more than we give. Always. I am reminded of the widow who gave Elijah her last flour and oil, not because she had extra, but because she trusted God's word. What is God's word? **Philippians 4:19**, 'My God shall supply all your needs.' Does our giving involve sacrifice? Yes. But **Philippians 4:19** always hold true: 'My God shall supply all your needs.' Look at

the widow of Zarephath. I mean she had a son. Her precious only son. She had no husband. There was a great famine. She only had a handful of flour and a little oil left. Her last resources. Yet in faith, she knew Elijah was a servant of God. She gave because of God. What happened? Every morning when she went to the vast containing the flour, there was still a handful of flour left. When she investigated the jar of oil, there was still a little oil left. **Everyday**, the same miracle happened. It went on for 3 and half years until the famine ended. I mean, every month, Pastor Lily had to stock up our oil and flour. Every end of that month, the oil and flour will have to be replenished. If we take into calculation 3 and a half year. That is 42 months of a handful of flour and a little oil. The whole vase cannot even contain more than one month of flour and the jar, one month of oil. That is 42 vases of flour and 42 jars of oil. Think of this tremulous miracle. I love God when I see signs and wonders. Why did the woman of Zarephath do it? Because she loved God. Because she put God first. Because she had a faith filled generosity.

You said Pastor, such miracles are no more happening in today's world. Wrong. In Corrie ten Boom's experience in a Nazi concentration camp during the second world war, her Davitamon bottle of medicinal oil never seemed to run dry, even with

frequent use by herself and other ailing women. This was seen as a miracle, with her sister Betsie attributing it to God's provision and love. A similar experience occurred with a bottle of vitamins that were smuggled in, which also appeared to have never ending supply. These two events highlighted God's provision and care for their needs during their imprisonment. Giving is exciting because you will witness the miracles of God. I have personally experienced miracles of God because of our faith filled generosity.

This faith-filled generosity is anchored in the future, not just the present. **2 Corinthians 9:8 says, 'And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.'** When we gave in those 33 years, God is thinking of both our future. God took care of our future. What is future? Future is time that will be or come after the present: something that will exist or happen in time to come. To just give a present example. We are going back to Singapore 2026. That is the future. We are making plans. Pastor Lily would like to enroll in a bible school to take up a course on counselling. Besides that, Pastor Lily, like every woman long for a nice house to stay in. We must renovate our house. We do not have savings at all. But we need to

renovate our flat. And it cost us a lot to renovate. The minimum cost is 4 million pesos, which I know we do not have that money. While we are thinking of how to get that money: borrow from my two kids and pay them in 3 years' time (we wondered whether my 2 sons-in-law will be happy lending us), get a loan. God sees our future. God sees our concern. God see our desire. Just last week, I was telling Pastor Lily that the money we needed for the renovation is almost there. Please, understand that we do not get a single cent from this church for our renovation. It is just that God saw our future and got ready the fund for us to renovate. When I told Pastor Lily about this fund, she was shocked. This fund was the last leftover from Pastor Lily's sister to her. It was transferred to her at the beginning of this year. It was a small fund. But God multiplied it manifold. God see the future. **Philippians 4:19** is so true, 'My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in heaven.' You are not giving based on what is in your wallet – you are giving based on what you believe God can do through it. That is faith, the exciting nature of faith. Also, it is not based on the size of the gift, but the size of the faith. Faith-filled giving says, 'I give not because I can afford it, for this church building and missions but in the God who provides.' Also, it is a way of worship. You say you love God. But when the house of God needs

help (which is the heartbeat of God) or missions needs help, you do not do anything. Then you truly cannot say you love God. James says, 'show me your faith by your works.' God says, 'show me your faith by your giving.'

Let me tell you something about my life. Pastor Lily and I had been giving for 33 years for missions faith pledge. I notice something very interesting in our life. God always meet our needs. He never met our greed. When we need to renovate our flat. God sees and meets that need. It is not greed. It is a simple woman's wish. God sees that and answers it. When Joy needed to study in university, we could borrow from our pension fund to sponsor her university degrees. She graduated and she has finished paying back that amount into our pension. But we did not have the money for Jan's university. We were not aware of the enormity of the circumstances at that moment. Worse, we lost our job. We really had no money for Jan's education. God saw the future. He allowed Jan to get a scholarship to France, even though her grade was not perfect. And the government of Singapore gave her S\$500,000 (20 million pesos) Singapore dollar for the whole 4 years course in France: lodging, tuition, food etc. God saw the future. When we sold our first house to build this sanctuary, God saw the future. He made sure that

we can finish paying for the second house. Even my daughter Joy was shocked that we have almost finish paying this present house we have in Singapore. God is a tremendous, amazing, miracle working God. We love our apo very much. We want to go on holiday with them to see our apo. But my children have high paying jobs. Yet we have never asked them to sponsor our trip: whether it is Taiwan, or Bangkok. Of course, Joy would initiate and pay for the hotel in Taiwan. But we too help to pay for the hotel in Bangkok for Ben and Joy. God saw our desire for a holiday with our apo. That is not greed. That is a desire. God saw the future and sponsored our trip to Taiwan or Bangkok. We are not in debt because of holiday. There is nothing wrong with having a holiday. And God knows and approves. I also notice a truth in God's supply. He has never met our greed. He always meets our need and even a desire. The bible says 'delight yourself in the Lord and He will grant you the desires of your heart.' How to delight in the Lord? By loving what he loves: the church and missions. Today, standing before you, I can tell you that Pastor Lily and I are not in debt. We have credit cards. But we always pay up what we purchase. I do not have to worry about settling some debt because I am getting old. I can only tell you that God see the future when you exercise faith-filled generosity.

2. It is a giving that God invites us to participate in

Text: **Exodus 35:4–5**

"From what you have, take an offering for the LORD. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the LORD an offering."

God did not force anyone to give. He gave an invitation. The Tabernacle (God's dwelling) was to be built by freewill offerings. The same principle applies today—whether for a church building or missions, we are invited to be part of God's holy work. A church building is not just bricks and walls. It is a place for salvation, worship, healing and outreach. I mean it is a place where souls can be saved. Nothing is more precious than a soul. It is a place where people come in with trouble and go out refreshed and strengthened to face the next week. It is a place where we can talk to God about our problems. It is a place where God can heal you physically. But most important of all, it is God's dwelling place. When you give to build God's house, you are putting Him first in your finances. You are declaring, 'God is worthy of my best.' You partner in Kingdom expansion. Giving isn't just financial; it is a spiritual partnership. Every wall built, every chair placed, every soul saved in this

place – you have a share in it. You create a legacy that outlives you. **Psalm 145:4** says, 'One generation shall commend your works to another.' Giving to build God's house leaves behind something eternal. I do not know when is Jesus coming back. Maybe 40 years from now. I do not know. Isaac Newton did some calculation based on biblical texts and suggested a significant event would occur around 2060. He was a brilliant mathematician. He calculated this date based on his understanding of the bible timeline. But still, we do not really know. Then future generation will ask? Who built the structure of this sanctuary? Who built the children's playground? Who built the study hub? And if one of you build the frontage one day, people will ask, who build the frontage? Who will build the multi-purpose hall? Who will build the basketball court? Who will build the beautiful garden. I have made an observation. I will go to the province and see provincial High Schools. And I will see names inscribed on the walls of the school. Oh, this wall is sponsored by this family's names. Oh, this school block is contributed by this family. How about this church? And you think God will just inscribe your name here? No. He remembers. God has very good memory. He will give you a reward, not only on earth but in heaven, far surpassing what you contributed to this church.

I give you the example. Do you know why at the end of the Great Tribulation, God will not destroy Egypt when all the surrounding nations will be destroyed in the Middle East. Even though Egypt gave problems to Israel, God will never totally destroy Egypt because God remembered Egypt housed the nation of Israel for 400 years. **Deuteronomy 26:5** says, 'My father was a wondering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous.' Yes, God punished Egypt because she went against Israel but God will never totally destroy Egypt because it was in Egypt that Israel became a proper nation of 2 million people. Another example. Do you know why God saved Pastor Lily's sister even though she was not a very nice lady and was very anti-God. She was a devout Buddhist Taoist. But God still save her because it was through her that we can have this sanctuary to worship today. So, if you really give out of sacrifice for this church building, or some building project, and you are a child of God, will God not remember? If God can remember the Egyptians and Pastor Lily's sister who were unbelievers, how much more you a child of God. NO. God will say to you, 'You have participated in this church building work.' I can only tell you this one thing from my experience of 33 years in

mission faith pledge. The returns are exponential, enabling you to experience the supernatural hand of God, multiple times, not only now, but in the future of your life. Today God invites you to participate in this giving, not pressurized, but willingly knowing that you can never outgive God.

3. It is giving from a willing heart that God delights

Text: Exodus 35:21-22

"Everyone who was willing and whose heart moved them came and brought an offering..."

This morning God is not asking for forced giving. God is looking for willing hearts. God sees not just the gift, but the motive. The phrase 'whose heart moved them' means 'stirred hearts.' Giving becomes worship when it comes from a stirred heart. So, God is looking for a stirred heart. It means God desires giving that comes from deep inner conviction, love, and willingness – not from pressure, routine, or guilt. It was the same for Israel. Moses did not force the people – he simply shared the need. The ones who gave were those whose hearts were stirred. A stirred heart is one that feels moved by the Spirit of God. It is not passive. It is emotionally and spiritually awakened. Stirred hearts respond voluntarily, not under

pressure. They say 'yes' because of love for God, not because they were made to feel bad.

I truly respect the Jews. No matter how rebellious they were, you can never fault them in their giving when it comes to God. There were two powerful moments in the Bible when the people of Israel gave so generously that the leaders had to stop them because there was more than enough. One was for the tabernacle. **Exodus 36:5** says, **'the people are bringing more than enough to doing the work the Lord commanded to be done.'** Two, when Joash ordered a chest to be placed at the temple gate for people to give freely. People gave gladly and continually. And the money was enough not only to repair but also to buy materials and pay workers. They had more than enough.

Today, we wonder why the Jews are always the richest people in this world, the most intelligent people in this world. My late Prime Minister once made a remark acknowledging the intelligence and capability of the Jewish people, particularly rabbis. I mean Lee Kuan Yew had no patience for people's nonsense. He easily spotted intelligent and capable people. He was discussing meritocracy and human capital from his memoir 'From Third World to First.' This is what he wrote: 'The Jews are a remarkable

people, despite their small numbers, they have produced many Nobel laureates. Their rabbis are extraordinary smart. The ability to retain knowledge and keep their culture alive for thousands of years is impressive.' I ask you this question? Does this have to do with the giving of a willing heart to God's building and missions. I believe so. Because missions is the heartbeat of God. And God's building is His sanctuary. God's church is His dwelling place.

4. God multiplies what we sow

Text: 2 Corinthians 9:6

"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously..."

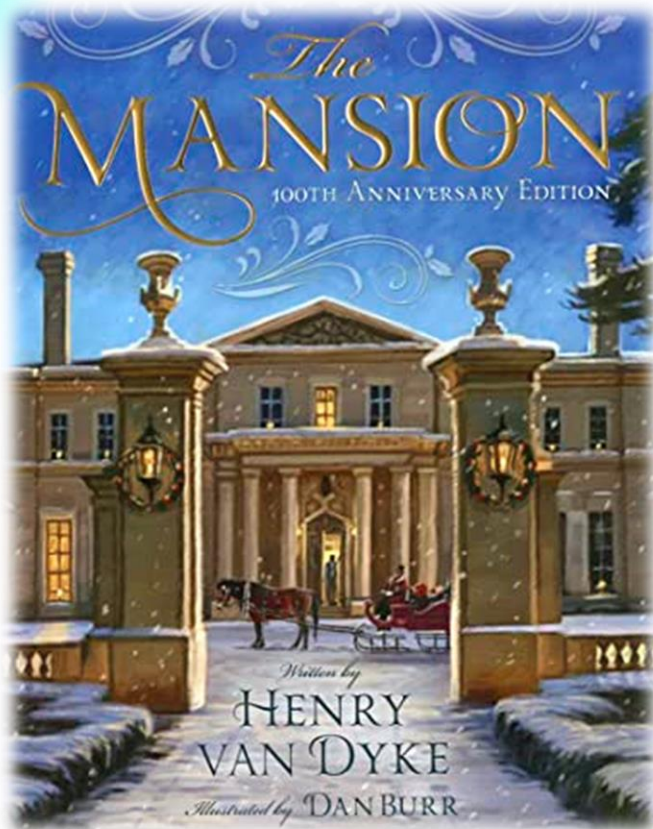
Giving to God's kingdom is not a loss—it is sowing. God promises grace, provision, and fruitfulness to cheerful givers. He does not just give you back what you gave—He multiplies it in kingdom impact and spiritual return. Every dollar given help reach souls. You may never go to the mission field, but your giving sends others.

Then there are the eternal investments. **Philippians 4:17 says, 'Not that I desire your**

gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account."

'More be credited to your account' is a heavenly accounting language. Paul is picturing a ledger. God is noting their giving and their reward is credited to them, like interest on a growing investment. When you give to the church or missions, it is recorded in that ledger and you are laying up treasure in heaven. Every soul saved is every life changed – you are a partner in the harvest.

There is a classic, skilfully written short story by Henry Van Dyke entitled, 'The Mansion' which brings out the truth on **'that more be credited to your account.'**



The short story was first published in 1910 about a successful New York banker named John Weightman who lived in a beautiful, yet 'reservedly opulent' mansion with his wife and two daughters. He is characterized as 'a self-made man' respected by all, and one who lived irreproachably, according to the rules of vocation, society, and religion. As the story unfolds, Weightman's generosity is but a calculated and self-serving giving, always a personal investment in furthering his own rank, status, and reputation. One day he chanced upon his own son's reproving word about him in his study room: the real character of his father. He begins to feel faint, and experiencing a sense of his own passing comes upon him. He died. While in this dreamlike, surreal state, he finds himself heading towards the celestial city. On the way he is joined by some travelers who are eagerly heading to the celestial city to receive the mansion prepared for them. A guide, known as the keeper of the gate, one by one led the redeemed travelers to their eternal mansions, each one a different size but all with the distinct charm and beauty. After walking for miles, there were only two travelers left, John Weightman and an old friend of his named Dr. Mclean. Dr. Mclean was an unassuming country doctor who lived his life in the humble, sacrificial service of others. The next moment they were standing in front of one of the largest and

fairest of the houses, whose garden glowed softly with radiant flowers. The guide laid his hand upon the doctor's shoulder and said, 'This is for you. Go in; there is no more pain here, no more death, nor sorrow, nor tears, for your old enemies are all conquered. But all the good that you have done for others, all the help you have given, all the comfort you have brought, all the strength and love you have bestowed upon the suffering, are here: for we have built them all into this mansion for you. Overjoyed, Dr. Mclean wished his friend well and entered his rewards.

Only the guide and Mr. Weightman remained. With grave solemnity, the guide continued to lead Mr. Weightman to his rewards. It seemed as if they must have walked miles and miles, through vast city, passing street after street of houses larger and smaller, of gardens richer and poorer, but all full of beauty and delight. They came into a kind of suburb, where there were many small cottages, with plots of flowers, very lowly but bright and fragrant. Finally, they reached an open field, bare and lonely-looking. There were two or three bushes in it, without flowers, and the grass was sparse and thin. In the center of the field was a tiny hut, hardly big enough for a shepherd's shelter. It looked as it had been built of discarded things, scraps, and fragments of other buildings,

put together with care and pains, by someone who had tried to make the most of the cast-off material. There was something pitiful and shamefaced about the hut. It shrank and drooped and faded in its barren field, and seemed to cling only by sufferance to the end of the splendid city. 'This' said the keeper of the Gate, speaking with low distinct voice, 'this is your mansion, Mr. John Weightman.' An almost intolerable shock of grieved wonder and indignation choked the man for a moment so that he could not say a word. Then he turned his face away from the poor little hut and began to remonstrate eagerly with his companion. 'Surely, sir,' he stammered, 'you must be in error about this. There is something wrong, some other John Weightman – a confusion of names, the book must be mistaken.' 'There is no mistake,' said the Keeper of the Gate, very calmly; 'here is your name, the record of your title and your possessions in this place.' 'But how could such a house be prepared for me.' Cried John Weightman with a resentful tremor in his voice, 'for me, after my long and faithful service? Is this a suitable mansion for one so well known and devoted? Why is it so pitifully small and mean? Why have you not built it large and fair, like the others?' The Keeper of the Gate replied, 'That is all the material you sent us.'

In conclusion, man struggled with giving. We wonder whether God will provide? We are not willing participants when asked to give. We sowed sparingly and reap sparingly and in return we grudge God for not supplying generously. But God sent a greater man Jesus Christ. Because by nature God is a giver. His giving is motivated by love. The woman of Zarephath's son did not die because of her faith-filled generosity. But God's son died despite the generosity of God. God did not provide a sacrifice for Christ like He provided a goat for Abraham's son. Christ was that sacrifice. Why? Christ was given to die so that we might live. Christ was given not be admired by others. He was given to be sacrificed. God gave Jesus to the cross so that we could be given eternal life. The gift of God cost everything, but He offered it willingly and freely. Today this gift must be received. You must believe and receive it. God gave His Son so that you can be His son and daughter. Have you received Him today?