

Extreme Faith

Saturday, August 28, 2022

Extreme Commitment

1. EXTREME COMMITMENT puts God First
2. EXTREME COMMITMENT Believes it and Lives it out
3. EXTREME COMMITMENT Never Turns Back
4. EXTREME COMMITMENT Makes No Excuses
5. EXTREME COMMITMENT Isn't Based On What You Have to Offer
6. EXTREME COMMITMENT Focuses On Kingdom Work

EXTREME TRUST

Proverbs 3:5-6

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

There is another part of our faith that some people view as extreme (even crazy or foolish) especially when viewed from those outside the faith; but which God has taught us is a normal part of our relationship with Him.

EXTREME GIVING

KEY TEXT: Mark 12:41-44

41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

It takes FAITH but cannot be reduced to a FORMULA

The difference between the widow and the rich people was the fact that she gave by faith. They didn't have to have faith to give because they had plenty to spare. She gave all she had. That takes faith. Faith means stepping out and doing something because

we believe that is what God wants us to do, even if we don't have the tangible presence of the return at the moment we step out.

Peter stepped out on the water by faith. He didn't have the tangible presence of solid ground beneath him when he stepped out.

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

11 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1 (NCV)

11 Faith means being sure of the things we hope for and knowing that something is real even if we do not see it.

Now James reminds us that "*faith without works is dead*" (James 2:20, 26 - NKJV)

There was a man who wanted to take up farming to make a living. So he went out and bought about 100 acres of land, gathered up all of the tools he needed to farm, bought a brand new tractor, even a hat and a nice new pair of overalls. He said to himself, "Alright, I'm ready to go!" So the next day he got up, had a nice breakfast, put his hat on, went outside, and sat on the porch and just stared at his land all day. The next day he did the same thing. Then the next day. And even the next day! This process continued for weeks, until the man was confused and went out checking the ground for even the smallest sign of growth, but there was nothing. The obvious reason is that this man hadn't planted any seed! Natural laws dictate that if seed is not planted, nothing will sprout. He can have all the tools, look the part, and even call himself a farmer—but until seed is planted there will be no return.

Mark 4:26-32 (NCV)

26 Then Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is like someone who plants seed in the ground. 27 Night and day, whether the person is asleep or awake, the seed still grows, but the person does not know how it grows. 28 By itself the earth produces grain. First the plant grows, then the head, and then all the grain in the head. 29 When the grain is ready, the farmer cuts it, because this is the harvest time."

30 Then Jesus said, "How can I show you what the kingdom of God is like? What story can I use to explain it? 31 The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, the smallest seed you plant in the ground. 32 But when planted, this seed grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants. It produces large branches, and the wild birds can make nests in its shade."

Some people, however, want to reduce giving to a formula. Giving with not a formula for getting rich. We don't give to get. But we do give knowing that our investment of faith will produce a harvest much greater than our investment. We give knowing that God will *"meet all of our needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:19)

TITHING is about TRUST

Last week we talked about Extreme Trust. Giving takes trust, not in our own means but in His. What trust it must have taken for this widow to give ALL that she had.

Malachi 3:8-11

10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me (Try me, Trust 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 there will not be room enough to store it.

Remember our verse from last week, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding..." It doesn't make sense in our own understanding that we can have more by giving away 10% than we would have if we kept 100%. But I promise you we do. When we trust God with what we have he takes the 90% and makes it go further than it ever would have gone with the entire amount.

It takes trust to Tithe and that is just the beginning. God, will challenge us to give, not only the tithe, because that belongs to Him anyway, but to give freewill offerings above and beyond our tithe.

The Lord WATCHES our giving

Just as Jesus was watching in this parable, we can be assured he watches what we give now. God keeps perfect records. He sees when you give by faith, he knows your heart of trust. Not only that, he knows what your need is. He is not unaware of your circumstances.

Listen you are not accountable to a pastor or a church or a denomination for what you give. It is between you and God. We don't give to be seen by others, but we give knowing that it is seen by God.

Matthew 6:1-4

6 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2 “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

It's not about the AMOUNT

Jesus makes it very clear in this parable that even though the rich people had given "large amounts," they hadn't given as much as the Widow.

*The Gospel of Mark specifies that two mites (Greek *lepta*) are together worth a [quadrans](#), the smallest Roman coin. A lepton was the smallest and least valuable coin in circulation in [Judea](#), worth about six minutes of an average daily wage.^[2]*

Don't compare what you are able to give with what someone else can give. Just be faithful to the Lord - You may be surprised one day to find out how God's accounting system tabulated the totals.

Remember there was a little boy (John Chapter 6) who gave his little lunch (Andrew made it a point to emphasize the size of the gift - "5 *SMALL* barley loaves and 2 *SMALL* fish") and yet we are told that the boys gift was enough to feed 5,000 men (plus women and children) and that afterwards there were 12 basketfuls leftover.

It involves MORE than just MONEY

I truly believe that giving involves so much more than just money. Sometimes we try to reduce it to finances. But I believe that God calls us to give of Our Time, Our Talents and Our Treasures.

Money is simple a means by which we use to measure our time and our labor. Have you heard the phrase time is money. That is true. Do we tithe our time to God's kingdom, do we tithe our talents to His work?

Proverbs 3:9-10

9 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

ATTITUDE Matters

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Sometimes it requires SACRIFICE

There is no doubt that the widow in the parable gave sacrificially. There will be times that God calls upon us to make a sacrificial gift.

Think about the Widow of Zarephath.

1 Kings 17:7-16

7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him: 9 “Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” 10 So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?” 11 As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

12 “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

13 Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14 For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.’”

15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. 16 For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

This isn't something we should be guilted or manipulated into doing. This is something that only God can ask of us. That's why it is important for us to keep an open line of communication with Him and listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

You can't OUTGIVE God

Luke 6:38

38 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.”

2 Corinthians 9:8-11

8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9 As it is written: “They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.”

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Psalm 37:25-26

25 I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. 26 They are always generous...