

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7 (ESV)

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8 (ESV)

For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. 2 Corinthians 8:12 (ESV)

D. Some Christians attending CrossWinds give beyond the tithe.

But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. 2 Corinthians 8:7 (NIV)

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 2 Corinthians 9:10 (ESV)

...give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you. Luke 6:38 (ESV)

Life Group Questions

1. Read Mark 12:38-44. What does Jesus tell us we need to notice about the scribes? How did the scribes devour widow's houses? How are the scribes similar to modern prosperity preachers and televangelists today?
2. What contrast did Jesus want us to see between the scribes and the poor widow?
3. In what ways are you tempted to live like the scribes and feed on other people to gain your identity? What steps can you take to have your identity more rooted in who you are in Christ?
4. Does this text expect everyone to give away all they have to live on so they can trust the Lord more completely?
5. What is the relationship between our faith and our finances? What is the relationship between money and what we truly value?
6. Pastor Kurt talked about generosity at CrossWinds. What would it look like for you to take the next step on that journey?
7. What is wrong with thinking a tithe is the Holy Grail of giving? What is the danger of claiming to follow Christ, but not having some expression of regular and proportional giving?

Mark 12:38-44 – What Does Genuine Love For God Look Like?

March 15, 2020

1. The scribes were examples of fake love for God.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. Matthew 23:27 (ESV)

And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts,..." Mark 12:38-39 (ESV)

A. They liked walking around in long robes.

They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,..." Matthew 23:5 (ESV)

B. They liked being greeted in the marketplaces.

C. They wanted the most important seats in the synagogues.

D. They loved the place of honor at feasts.

E. They prayed long prayers.

...who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation. Mark 12:40 (ESV)

F. They devoured widow's houses.

You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry,...
Exodus 22:22–23 (ESV)

He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Deuteronomy 10:18 (ESV)

G. They will be judged harshly.

2. The poor widow was an example of genuine love for God.

A. Many rich people gave an offering at the temple.

And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. Mark 12:41 (ESV)

B. The poor widow put in all she had to live on.

And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. Mark 12:42 (ESV)

C. God cares about the size of the sacrifice more than the size of the gift.

And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on. Mark 12:43–44 (ESV)

3. What observations can we make?

A. These pictures represent extreme ends of the spectrum.

B. There is a link between our faith and our finances.

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 1 John 3:17 (ESV)

But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. 2 Corinthians 8:7 (NIV)

C. What we spend our money on shows what we value.

4. What should we know about generosity at CrossWinds?

A. Some Christians attend CrossWinds, but we have no record of their giving to CrossWinds.

To give regularly, proportionately, generously and cheerfully for the work of the Lord. Malachi 3:8–10; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7 — from the CrossWinds Membership Covenant

B. Some Christians attending CrossWinds give sporadically, not proportionately.

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. 1 Corinthians 16:2 (ESV)

C. Some Christians attending CrossWinds give a tithe.

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 2 Corinthians 9:6 (ESV)