



# Sacrificial Giving - Midweek E-Devotion

## In Christ, There Is No “Giving ’til It Hurts”

Last week’s e-Devotion explored the topic of *proportionate giving*. Whereas *firstfruits giving* addresses the issues of the heart’s *attitude*, *proportionate giving* begins the conversation about the *amount* given. We saw that a key question for proportionate giving is not so much what percentage is given, but how much remains for us to live on. A millionaire who gives \$100,000 has “only” \$900,000 left to live on. A single mom who makes \$30,000 and gives 10% has only \$27,000 left to live on. The percent given was exactly the same. The amount of sacrifice behind the two gifts was extremely different. In other words, the millionaire could easily give a more substantial offering than 10% with precious little impact on daily life.

This week we come to our final **Ten for Ten** topic: *Sacrificial giving*.

Sacrificial gifts have a significant impact on daily life because they are given out of faith in God’s promises to care for his children. Sacrificial gifts both stretch our faith and provide significant resources for the Lord’s work. Randy Alcorn shares some biblical thoughts on sacrificial giving:

*Describing the Macedonian Christians, Paul writes, “Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability” (2 Corinthians 8:2-3).*

*How do “severe trial,” “overflowing joy,” “extreme poverty,” and “rich generosity” all fit together in one verse? Among other things,*

*we see here that giving is not a luxury of the rich. It's a privilege of everyone. (Emphasis added)*

*There are three levels of giving—less than our ability, according to our ability, and beyond our ability. It's fair to say that 96 percent of Christians in the Western world give less than their ability. Perhaps another 3 percent or more give according to their ability, and less than 1 percent give beyond their ability.*

*What does it mean to give beyond our ability? It means to push our giving past the point where the figures add up. It means to give when the bottom line says we shouldn't. It means living with the faith of the poor widow. For most of us, giving according to our means would stretch us. Giving beyond our means would appear to break us. But it won't—because we know God is faithful.*

*Giving sacrificially also means giving the best. If we have two blankets and someone needs one of them, sacrificial giving hands over the better of the two. Sadly, much of our "giving" is merely discarding. Donating secondhand goods to church rummage sales and benevolence organizations is certainly better than throwing them away. But giving away something we didn't want in the first place isn't giving; it's selective disposal. It's often done because we want a newer or better version.*

*King David said, "I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing" (2 Samuel 24:24). Sacrificial giving is parting with what we'd rather keep. It's keeping the old and giving away the new or giving away both. The giving of the first Christians was spontaneous, unguarded, and uncalculated...*

*We may not like risky faith. We may prefer our safety net below us, a backup plan in case God fails. Our instinct for self-preservation leads us to hedge our bets...*

*A disciple does not ask, "How much can I keep?" but, "How much more can I give?" Whenever we start to get comfortable with our level of giving, it's time to raise it again." (Alcorn, p. 203)*

In other words, sacrificial giving is never an effort at “getting blood from a turnip.” Sacrificial gifts are gifts that are inspired by the promises of God’s continual care and the totality of Christ’s sacrifice for us. May these truths transform each of us into Macedonian Christians for our day and age—a people who “*gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people*” (2 Corinthians 8:3-4).

A Christian never “gives ’til it hurts.” Instead, the Christian eagerly looks for opportunities to grow in the grace of giving—sometimes even beyond our ability. How is that possible? Simple, we give with the mind of Christ—not according to the ways of the world!

## **PRAYER**

Lord, remove the obstacles in my heart that would keep me from trusting you and following you. Do not let me stop giving just because some local needs have been met, but, as you give the ability, lead me to provide for the saving gospel to be heard in places far removed from my home. Give me a spirit of joy and an increase in eagerness for the work of your kingdom. Thank you for the great sacrifice you made for me and my sin upon the cross. Let your once-for-all sacrifice inspire my sacrifices for you! Amen.

## **TEN FOR TEN NEWS AND NOTES**

If you weren’t able to pick up your **Ten for Ten** commitment packet, it was mailed to your home via first class mail last week. Why first class? Because the contents are important. Set aside some time within the next few days to read the letter, use the planning tools, and prayerfully consider what your response will be to our **Ten for Ten** emphasis.

- This coming weekend your commitment cards will be gathered via the offering plates. If you would like another copy of the commitment card, they are available in the back of church or in the church and school offices.
- **PLEASE DO NOT PLACE OFFERINGS IN YOUR COMMITMENT ENVELOPES.** Your commitment cards will not be

opened. Your commitment card is not between you and Our Savior Lutheran Church. Instead, it is meant to be an exercise of faith in the Lord's promises. All **Ten for Ten** offerings utilize our regular weekly envelopes.

- **Ten for Ten** has promoted the thought of tithing and/or increased giving for ten weeks. The ten weeks of enhanced giving will begin the last weekend in February. During these ten weeks, you will receive printed encouragements in your bulletin. Take them home. Read through them. Pray through them. May Jesus richly bless your use of them!