

In the HOUSE *of the* LORD

LESSON #6 – OFFERING



We receive many bountiful gifts from God in our daily lives – food and drink, house and home, family and friends, etc. We also receive spiritual gifts throughout the worship service – the forgiveness of sins in the absolution, the mercy of God in the Kyrie, the strengthening of faith through the Word, etc. The offering is an opportunity for the worshipers to give back to God with glad and joyful hearts. The offering allows worshipers to return to the Lord a portion of what He has first offered them.



Giving to the Lord

Before we give, what do we first need to recognize about everything that we “own”?

- Psalms 24:1 *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;*
- Deuteronomy 8:17-18 *You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.*

Why do we give to the Lord?

- 2 Corinthians 8:9 *You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*

In the Old Testament, how much did God expect the Israelites to return to Him in their offerings?

- Leviticus 27:30,32 *A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.³² The entire tithe of the herd and flock-- every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod-- will be holy to the LORD.*
- 2 Chronicles 31:6 *The men of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of their herds and flocks and a tithe of the holy things dedicated to the LORD their God, and they piled them in heaps.*

In the Old Testament, God treated the Children of Israel like children. He told them exactly how much they were to give. Today, God treats us differently. He does not tell us a specific amount that we are to give to Him. However, He does give us some instructions on giving. How does God want us to decide how much to give to Him?

- 2 Corinthians 9:7 *Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*



These are some biblical examples of people who gave willingly and cheerfully. What do they teach us about our giving?

- Luke 21:1-4 *As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury.² He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins.³ "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others.⁴ All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."*
- Acts 4:32-37 *All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.³⁴ There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement),³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.*
- Philippians 4:15-18 *Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.¹⁷ Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account.¹⁸ I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.*

How do we honor the Lord with our offerings?

- Proverbs 3:9 *Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.*
- Malachi 1:6 *"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty. . . .⁸ When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty.*

God gives us some practical principles to follow when giving to Him. What type of giving is described in each phrase?

- 1 Corinthians 16:2 *On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*
 - "first day":
 - "every week":
 - "each one of you":
 - "in keeping with his income":

Our sinful nature wants to hold us back from fully trusting the Lord with our gifts. What comfort does God give us when we return our gifts back to Him with our offerings?

- Matthew 6:31,33 *So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*
- Malachi 3:10 *"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test 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 you will not have room enough for it."*



Besides giving our offerings to the Lord through the Church, how else does God want us to use our possessions and income?

- 1 Timothy 5:8 *If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*
- 1 John 3:17 *If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?*
- Matthew 5:42 *Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.*
- Romans 13:6-7 *This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.*

How does God normally give us our money and possessions?

- 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12 *For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.*
- Colossians 3:22-23 *Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.*



The Doctrine of Vocation

Martin Luther's greatest gifts to the Christian Church were the restoration of pure and right doctrine taught in the Scriptures and also Luther's translation of the Scriptures into German for everyday Christians (before Luther, only priests and monks were able and allowed to read the Bible). One of Luther's lesser known, but also important, gifts to the Church was the teaching on vocation.

In Luther's time, the Church wrongly taught that people were serving a higher purpose for the Lord if they became priests, monks or nuns. Luther used the clear teachings of the Bible to instruct people that God calls the Christian to serve the Lord, as well as their family and neighbors through one's normal, everyday occupation. Whether that be a spouse, parent, child, etc.

What vocations does God give us?

- Galatians 5:13 *You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.*
- 1 Corinthians 10:31 *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

Whatever vocation we choose, we must do all our work to serve others and give glory to God.

- Romans 13:1 *Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities.*
- Colossians 3:19 *Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.*
- Ephesians 5:22 *Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.*

- Ephesians 6:4 *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*
- Ephesians 6:1 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*
- Ephesians 6:5-7 *Obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men.*
- Ephesians 6:9 *Treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.*
- 1 Peter 5:5 *Young men, . . . be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility.*
- Luke 3:12-14 *Tax collectors also came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?"¹³ "Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them.¹⁴ Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely-- be content with your pay."*
- 1 Timothy 5:5 *The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help.*

What special vocation has God given to his Church?

- Ephesians 4:11-13 *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*
- Acts 20:28 *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*

THE OFFERING

The worship service is about receiving from and giving to God. Worshipers have received the forgiveness of sins and the words of eternal life. They respond with their songs of praise, their prayers and their confessions of faith. They also respond with their monetary offerings to the Lord. In the Offering, worshipers give to the Lord a portion of what He first gave to them.

According to Romans 12:1, the greatest gift Christians give to the Lord is the prize of the Lord's creation – their very selves. So in the weekly offerings, Christians do not give what they can afford or do without. They offer their very selves.

A hymn that teaches the faith: *Christian Worship #485 – "We Give Thee But Thine Own"*

We give thee but thine own,	To comfort and to bless,
Whate'er the gift may be;	To find a balm for woe,
All that we have is thine alone,	To tend the lone and fatherless,
A trust, O Lord, from thee.	Is angels' work below.
May we thy bounties thus	The captives to release,
As stewards true receive	To God the lost to bring,
And gladly, as thou blessest us,	To teach the way of life and peace
To thee our firstfruits give.	It is a Christ-like thing.
Oh, hearts are bruised and dead,	And we believe thy Word
And homes are bare and cold,	Though dim our faith may be:
And lambs for whom the shepherd bled	Whate'er for thine we do, O Lord,
Are straying from the fold.	We do it unto thee.