

Why Do We Have An Offering?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 August 2016

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[0 : 00] This is the day that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it. If any of the kids want to come up and sing, they're welcome to join us. This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made.

Hi, welcome to our church. I'm Mike Maciejewski. And I'm Julie. Please fill out your friendship card to get on the mailing list, to sign up for any activities, any prayers or concerns, and any notes you want to send to the staff.

[1 : 23] And if you're new to our church, please be sure and pick up a gift that we have for you in the back of the church at the Connection site after worship. Thank you for coming today, and welcome to Pendleton Center Church.

And we are glad to have you here this morning. I've got an announcement that I'm supposed to announce that regular services are going to be starting on September 11th, which means these must be irregular services.

I'm not sure what that means, but you'll have to talk to your doctor about that. I don't prescribe those kind of things. We also will be starting our children's ministries with our full Sunday school, a lot of activities during the week, Bible studies.

Watch your little good news for all the upcoming activities. There's been a request that if you have children's clothes that you're donating to the church over the next two or three weeks, instead of putting them in the clothing bin, if you'd bring them actually and put them in the church, because we're collecting for certain families, and we need clothes for some children that need clothes to go back to school.

So if you happen to have the kind of clothes that would work for that, we'd appreciate you bringing them into the church. And I guess that's what we have for announcements this morning. So let's turn our hearts to the Lord in prayer.

[2 : 29] Dear Lord, it is a wonderful thing to be here and be blessed by you, and we just pray that you'll pour your Holy Spirit into this place, that you'll lift us up, you'll touch us, you'll move us, and fill us with the blessing of God.

As we offer our prayers in Jesus' holy name. Amen. I'd like to invite you, if you're able to stand, as we're going to sing together, Come, Christians, Join to Sing. Come, Christians, Join to Sing.

Hallelujah, Amen. God, praise to Christ our King. Hallelujah, Amen.

Let all be proud and voice before His throne rejoice. Praise is His gracious voice.

Hallelujah, Amen. God, lift your hearts on high. Hallelujah, Amen.

[3 : 36] Let praises fill the sky. Hallelujah, Amen. He is our guide and friend.

To us He'll condescend. His love shall never end. Hallelujah, Amen.

Praise yet the Lord again. Hallelujah, Amen. Why shall not end the strain?

Hallelujah, Amen. On heaven's blissful shore, His goodness will adore.

Singing forevermore. Hallelujah, Amen. Amen. The Lord be with you.

[4 : 37] Take a moment, if you will, and greet your neighbor with a piece of the spirit. I'd like to invite our children to come up and join me. If any kids want to come and join me.

You guys know what this is? It is a chocolate bar, isn't it? It's a pretty big chocolate bar. You know, when I was a kid, they were actually a lot bigger. They were about this big and they only cost a nickel.

Now they're about this big and they cost a dollar. They've somehow shrunk the chocolate bars and charged us more. You like chocolate? I do too. So, if I ate this whole chocolate bar, it probably wouldn't be good for me.

And my doctor tells me I shouldn't eat a chocolate bar this big. Not only that, if I ate this whole chocolate bar, what would you get? Nothing. Nothing at all.

So, I found I can buy a chocolate bar like this, or I can buy chocolate bars like this. Little, itty-bitty, tiny chocolate bars.

[5 : 36] Aren't those cool? And so, because they're little, itty-bitty, tiny chocolate bars, they're not so bad for me. And I have enough to share. You know, God gives us everything we need so that we can not only have what we need, but we can share it with others if we just look around and make it happen.

Okay? Are you guys thankful for something? Raise your hand if you want to share something. My mom and dad. My family. Mama.

Nancy. Mommy and daddy. Okay. Lord, we do thank you for our parents, for the blessings you give us, and even for chocolate. Be with us always in Jesus' name.

Amen. You guys aren't going anywhere, so you kind of figure you're going to get one of these, huh? Yeah. I kind of figure you will, too. Tell you what. Take one, because I'm going to let you pick the one you want.

Okay? So, take one. All right? So, that there's enough for everybody to get one. Once you've got one, you can go out to church school if you'd like to. They're going to love me. Thank you.

[6 : 40] And while the children are going out to church school, I'd like to invite Leslie and somebody else who's supposed to come up.

They'll come up and share with us about our thankful moment. Ready? Here it comes. Sometimes I forget Jody's gone.

My husband Jody died from cancer. I knew in my head, you love God, you trust him, you pray.

And that doesn't guarantee that things aren't going to go well. But I guess I really didn't know it in my heart.

My friends invited me out to dinner shortly after Jody died to cheer me up and to help me see the bright side of things. They didn't have a clue as to how I was feeling.

[7 : 55] It felt like there was a moat between us and there was no bridge. Grief Share helped me realize that I wasn't going crazy, that it really helped me to focus on the Lord during those dark times.

The folks in that Grief Share group were the only ones who knew what I was going through and how I was feeling. It still hurts, but I'm not suffocating anymore.

Grief Share is a small group open to men and women who are dealing with the death of a loved one, friend, or relative. So join us and begin your journey from mourning to joy.

Good morning.

I am Sue Hiltz and this is Leslie Wagner. Our thankful moment, this is a sharing thankful moment as well. God has blessed me very richly in my life.

[9 : 09] One of his greatest blessings did not appear as a blessing to me for a while. Actually, not for many years. Our all-knowing God placed me in a career that demanded education and compassion and the ability to work under extreme stress, helping those experiencing great heartache.

Working in child protection and child welfare, we were often placed in the position to administer that heartbreak. By removing children from the only home that they ever knew in order to keep them safe, suffering and loss was only the tip of the iceberg.

All this pain I embraced in my own heart. And I know God was always there and he held me in the palm of his hand.

But I confess there were many times I would say, why me? Why me? Why me? But the Bible tells us that we suffer so that someday what we experience, the comfort and love God gave us, we can then share with others.

So he has since provided me the opportunity and the ability to retire so that I can now follow his guidance towards the next life chapters in my ministry for him.

[10 : 40] I can now say I'm so very thankful to have had that opportunity in children's services. I was able to share God's love and compassion with so many lost and lonely families.

My job, along with my own life experiences, has strengthened and prepared me to be used in the next venture of God's work. So God has now blessed me with this opportunity to assist with the grief share ministry.

And for this, I am so very, very thankful. God, so very good. Thank you. As facilitators of this program, we will be facilitating for the 10th year.

We started the program in 2007 here. And over the course of the 10 years, we've been able to service our church congregations and our community, as well as other churches in the area.

When I was a young Methodist girl, my father was, or my grandfather was a local preacher. Last week, we talked about communion, or Pastor Tom did in our sermon.

[11 : 58] And as a child, we always came to the rail for communion. And my grandfather, as a local pastor, would help to serve communion. And as he came down the rail, he would recite from Matthew 11, 28 to 30, Those verses have stayed with me through the years and comforted me many times.

For the last 10 years, as a grief support facilitator, I've thought of those verses often, as I worked with people who came to find some relief from the burden of grief.

We use a curriculum from church initiative called Grief Share. And it's been very well received by those who have been through the program.

It's a 13-week program. We do it the first and third Thursday of each month, and we will be starting on September 15th. God has provided rest for the souls of many people who have been through the program.

And they, as a result of their experiences and life losses, have been able to reach out to others and comfort them. We also held a boot camp here for Grief Share, and shared the program with many other churches that sent representatives.

[13 : 40] And since then, the program is more widely available throughout Western New York for other people. Sue and I will be offering this support program, and we hope that if you have a burden of grief or loss on your heart that's weighing you down, that you'll join us.

Loss comes in many forms, and sometimes it is just one more loss, a death or a loss of someone or something important to you that kind of tips the scale so that you might feel a need for support and a way to navigate that loss.

We want you to come and to know that there is hope and that you can get through your grief, and as the program suggests, turn from mourning to joy.

Thank you. If you have questions and want more information, there are pamphlets out on the table in the hallway, or you can see us later. Thank you. Thank you, Leslie.

Thank you, Sue. As we continue in our worship, let's bring our gifts, tithes, and offerings before the Lord. We lift our voices.

[15 : 05] We lift our hands. We lift our lives up to you. We are an offering.

Lord, use our voices. Lord, use our hands. Lord, use our lives.

They are yours. We are an offering. All that we have.

All that we are. All that we hope to be. We give to you.

We give to you. We lift our voices.

[16 : 08] We lift our hands. We lift our lives up to you. We are an offering.

We are an offering. We are an offering.

We lift our mouths. Praise God from the moon of every fall.

Praise the glory to the Lord. Praise the love of the heavenly Lord.

Praise the Lord, love and holy God. Praise the Lord.

[17 : 47] Praise the Lord, please give us to work for the furtherance of your kingdom. Help us by your Spirit to draw many into your fold so that they come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Be with us, Lord. Bless all we offer in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Please be seated. Thank you.

As we move into our time of prayer, we lift up our joys and our concerns before the Lord. Melissa Rada called this week, and she has successfully come out of her surgery and is in recovery.

She is grateful for all of our prayers and asks that we continue in prayer for her recovery. We have a number of folks who are in need of prayer for recovery from surgeries.

Bob Zanke is in rehab after knee surgery. Ron Ellman's son is recovering from surgery. Lexi Nato is home recovering from surgery as well.

[18 : 56] We also are in need of healing prayers for Lori Rivers and Donna Swain and John Zimmerman. Marilyn Bain, who is Kathy Hill's sister, had a heart attack and wanted to keep her and her family in our prayers as well.

Joe Matina is in need of prayer because of a work situation. And Anna Ward, who is supposed to be, she's going to be getting married in two weeks, was in an accident on a bus, and she's been injured.

She's been injured, and so she's got some recovering to do before that event in two weeks from today. So with these concerns and those that are in your heart, you are welcome to join me in prayer from your seat where you are right now, or you're welcome to come to the rail and kneel or stand in prayer.

Lord God, we come to you knowing that in and of ourselves we are not worthy to come before you.

There's nothing we can do to make ourselves good enough or worthy enough to be able to approach your throne of grace. Lord God, we are grateful that we are grateful that we are grateful that we are grateful that we are grateful for you.

[20 : 34] We are grateful that we can come together with you, the God of all creation. As you rejoice when we rejoice, and we mourn when we mourn, you are with us in all things.

Lord God, we lift up to you this day all of those who are sick and infirm, those who are recovering from surgeries, those who are recovering from injuries that they have suffered, and pray in Jesus' name for your hand of healing to be upon them.

Be with their doctors and nurses and other caregivers, granting them wisdom to know how to care well for the needs of their patients. Lord God, we lift up those who are grieving losses, and we are grateful for the support that comes through our church as we are trying to get over those things and live through those things that have caused us so much trouble and pain.

Lord, we pray for people who are in need of help with the situations of everyday life. We ask that you give us wisdom to be able to get through them, to trust you for what you have for us in our lives.

We lift up, Lord God, all of those people who are suffering because of those disasters that have happened in our world, especially, Lord, we're lifting up this morning the floods in Louisiana that are just, they say, Lord God, that it's been a thousand years since there's been something like this there.

[22 : 28] We just pray, Lord God, for those people who have lost so much. We pray that your love will come in and comfort them, that there will be people to help them with their spiritual needs as well as their needs in this physical world.

We pray, Lord God, for all of those who are affected by the earthquake in Italy. We ask that you be with them, Lord.

Touch them. Help us, Lord, to know how to reach others for you. Help us to know how to be your hands and feet in this world.

Give us the words, Lord God. Let us know what the actions should be. And change our hearts, Lord. So that as we go out to do your will in our world, we would have a Christ-like attitude.

That when people see us, they don't just see the actions or hear the words, but they see and hear you. Allow the word to transform us this day, whether we're hearing it read out of the scripture or in the songs, in the prayers, in whatever way it is today, that you touch our hearts with your word.

[24 : 00] Let it be transforming to us. Be with Pastor Thomas. He delivers the message you've given him. It is for us. It is for him.

Let it be a blessing, Lord God. God, we pray that all of our worship will be a blessing to you this day. Help us to always be in mind that that is why we came.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Shall we hear from the word of the Lord? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Good morning.

Good morning. This morning's reading is from the second book of Corinthians, the ninth chapter verses 6 through 15. Remember this, whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 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, 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. As it is written, they have freely scattered their gifts to the poor, their righteousness endures forever. Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed, and will engage the harvest of your righteousness. 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.

[26 : 10] This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you, their hearts will go out to you because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for this incredible gift.

This is the word of the Lord. Asks are asked about a whole sermon now about why you should give more money to the church. That's why people don't go to church, because they're always asking for money.

We've been talking about all the parts of worship all summer long, and I left this one to last. Why do we have an offering? Why do we have a benediction? Why do we have thankful moments and mission moments?

Why do we take up an offering for different causes and concerns? What's that all about? The benediction, by the way, is very simple. We put it in very flowery words, but what it says is, go do something. Go do something to change the world.

I don't know if you're aware, but the first act of worship in the Bible was bringing an offering. Cain and Abel brought their gifts before God. One came, and they were happy and cheerful to do it, and the other one came, and they were kind of like, yeah, yeah, here's what you got.

[27 : 51] They did it out of a sense of obligation. And as 2 Corinthians tells us here from Paul, doing it out of obligation is not the idea God had in mind. God loves a cheerful giver.

Why would we be cheerful about giving? Well, there's lots of reasons. The ones we've heard quite often is God gave to us, and so we give back out of gratitude in return. John 3.16 says, God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him wouldn't perish but have eternal life.

God gave to us, and we give back as a thanksgiving. God so loved us that we show our love with our heart, our soul, our mind, and even our strength.

The Christian goal is to be right with God. In verse 10 it says, He who supplied the seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store and seed and will enlarge your harvest of your righteousness.

A harvest of righteousness is the purpose of life. A harvest of being right with God. Sometimes we misunderstand the word righteousness, and we think it's something to do with our particular behaviors, but it's about aligning ourselves with what makes things work in relationship with God.

[29 : 14] My wife and I are on entirely different calendars these days. We used to be aligned. We used to be kind of in order with each other. We had similar days off, similar work schedules, and even though we'd have variations, we could make it work without even trying.

Now we have to actually be deliberate about it. We have to sit down and decide where are we going to find some time together. Because she works during the day, during the week, and I work evenings and weekends and all kinds of other times too.

But bottom line is we miss each other a lot unless we make a deliberate effort to align ourselves or make ourselves right with God or justify ourselves aligning with each other.

And that's what God wants too. He says in verse 9 that as he's quoting him here, he says they have freely scattered their gifts to the poor. Their righteousness endures forever.

So what we do in this world lasts not just from this world but into the next. And the purpose of this world or this life is get to the next one. And so we read in Matthew chapter 6 verse 19, Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moss and vermin destroy and where thieves break in and steal.

[30 : 31] But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven where moss and vermin do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

And I could actually end my sermon here and say you should pledge and give well to the church and be generous to God because God is good to you and God grants you eternal life.

And you probably would say, okay, and go home. But you know it's too soon for me to end. I did have a fellow last night, he told me that the priest at the church where his wife was only preaches for two and a half minutes.

I said, well, that's not happening here. You see, this passage isn't just about money. In fact, if that's all it was about, we wouldn't need this passage.

We've got all kinds of places that talk to us about what a tithe is and why we're supposed to give and how we give out of gratitude. This passage is about being cheerful, about being filled with the joy of God.

[31 : 29] We have an offering in our worship service because we need an opportunity to prove to ourselves, to our God, to the whole world what we love and who we love.

Do we really love God? Or is there something else that takes a priority in our lives? Most of us, if we were to list our priorities in life, especially the people gathered in this room, would probably put God somewhere up in the top five.

Some would actually make him number one. Some would put him down around two or three, depending on their way of looking at things. But they would say he's very important. God gives us everything we need.

But we want what we want. Not just what we need. We want to be comfortable and we want to be happy. And we want life to be easy.

God has something else in mind. How many of you watch television? Come on, be honest. Of course we do. You know, I like to watch television about 10 o'clock at night.

[32 : 39] Oftentimes, that's about when I get home. And I sit down in front of the thing and it doesn't really matter what's on. In fact, the more mindless, the better. Because my goal as a man is just to get in my nothing box.

We've talked about that before, right? Just completely think of nothing, which we can do, ladies. I know that freaks you out. But we can think of nothing. We love to go there.

And that's why we watch TV and you'll say, you've seen this show like eight times. It doesn't matter. It really doesn't matter. We're just going in our nothing box. We just want to get to a place where all the misery and all the troubles and all the difficulties and all the problems will go away.

And a lot of people have come to think that that sort of sensual ease is the goal of life. The idea is to retire and do nothing. Therefore, this is what we'd want our society to look like every day.

If you can't fool the stars, you have to be so-called easy. It's not good. Bot, over here.

[33 : 52] Tunnel, I'm in the tunnel. I can't hear you. By and large, everything you need to be happy with, your day is very important to us.

Hey, Dr. Bot. Here, take the cup. Hey, take the cup. Please remain stationary. A service bot will be here to assist you momentarily.

Storch? Hello? Please remain stationary. A service bot will be here to assist you momentarily. What's that? What's going on? Uh, John?

That would be the perfect world, right? We'll just ride along in our little machines looking at the screen, and any time we want something, we'll just ask, and a bot will come and bring it. It's coming, by the way.

It's coming. And so is this. Is that the goal? Is that what we love? Do we love to have that sensual, enjoyable world where everything just makes us feel good?

[35 : 06] Where is our heart? Do we really love God? And do we show God? We love him in who we are and what we do.

You can tell a lot about what people really appreciate and want and like out of life by where they spend their money, by the way. If you could look at somebody's expenses, you'd say, this is what they like to do.

If you looked at my expenses, you'd know there's a couple of restaurants I particularly like to go to. I go to the same ones quite often. Now, my wife and I have gone to different ones. This is part of the schedules not matching thing, you know?

So we tend to go out to eat more than some people do. And there's certain restaurants we particularly like. And do you know why we like those restaurants? Because they're nice to us.

And you know why they're nice to us? Because we're nice to them. You see how this works? So when we come in, we always have a table waiting.

[36 : 06] There's always a friend like, hey, good to see you. And when we leave, they always have a smile on their face. We ask them how things are going in their lives.

And before long, you start to feel like you're actually one of the family. Where do we spend our time? Where do we spend our efforts? Where do we spend our money?

Where do we spend our lives? In verse 11, it says, You'll 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.

As you provide, supplying the needs of others. God will be generous to us as we're generous to others. He's generous to us so we can take care of each other.

And so that in the end, God will be praised. As a pastor, I sometimes wonder what people say about our church. As a father, I wonder what they say about my family.

[37 : 10] As a person, I wonder what they say about me. Have you ever wondered what a community will think about you or the things you think are important? I was reading the other day about a church that was concerned about their tax-exempt status.

And the reason why they were concerned is because they raised money, not their own, from other people so that they can take care of themselves and that's all. Well, to tell you the truth, I don't know why any church that keeps all their money for themselves should be tax-exempt.

I don't see the reason for that. The purpose of a tax-exemption is because churches are supposed to be an organization that's helping somebody else. Do you follow? So the government doesn't have to.

What do people say about us? What do people say about you? Do they see you as generous? Do they see you as the kind of people they're looking forward to coming in? At the restaurant, do the waitresses say, oh, great, here they come.

Or do they say, yeah, all right, I don't want that table. How do they look at us? How do they see us? And how do they see God through who and what we are?

[38 : 20] Actually, in verse 15, it says, thanks be to God for this indescribable gift. It's a gift. It's a gift from God to have the opportunity to help other people.

To have the time to take with other people. To have the finances to help other people. To have the opportunity to help people in this world and do something for God.

We need to learn to live for the things that matter. In the book of Matthew, Jesus said, Seek first the kingdom and its righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Or the way I remember it, they'll be added to you. God wants to add to our life. He wants to bless us. We are supposed to be blessed. To be a blessing.

In verse 8, it says, God is able to bless you abundantly. To bless you how? Abundantly. Abundantly. Beyond your need. God is able to bless you.

[39 : 19] God is able to bless you abundantly so that in all things, at all times, having all you need, you will be able to do good for other people.

What we do makes a difference. It brings joy into the world. And that's the purpose. We're supposed to add into the world more than what we receive.

Remember, whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly. Whoever sows generously will reap generously. If we put a lot of good in, a lot of good will come out.

If we put a lot of misery in, a lot of misery will come in. The purpose of this life is not just to get to the next one, but to add value to this world and to this life while we live here.

Because we can't help people. We need to do something. Some people will say, well, I don't have a lot of money. Okay, we'll do something else.

[40 : 18] I saw one person just recently from our church sorting through a bunch of bags. They had a bunch of bags, and I asked them what the bags were about. They were bags for school children. That's why we're asking for clothes, because we're finding people that we know need clothes.

And so rather than having them go out to that bin and sort through all the clothes my size, we're going to put them all separate so that somebody can sort them out and give them to somebody in need. Now, not all of us have the time to sort through clothes, but that person took the time.

Somebody else goes on a mission trip, or somebody else gives a backpack, or helps with shoes. Pastor Lisa was talking about the floods down south. We're going to take up an offering for that.

We get what we can, where we can, how we can. What are you doing? When we started this sermon series, I talked about something someone called the Platinum Rule.

That wasn't in the Bible, by the way, but the golden rule is in the Bible, right? Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. The Platinum Rule that he described I thought was good.

[41 : 26] Do unto others as you would have God do unto you. How do you want God to treat you? If you were to treat other people the way you want God to treat you, maybe God would treat you that way.

Because he wants to add his blessings. He wants to bless us. He wants us to be happy. He wants us to be full of joy. He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store.

God provides everything for everyone, everywhere. Even the birds of the field and the flowers have what they need. The problem is we're afraid.

And so we worry about money. We worry about our safety. We worry about our possessions. We worry about having control over everything.

We worry about never having enough. We worry about not being happy. And we fulfill the prophecy. And we make ourselves miserable. Always clawing after what doesn't seem to be enough.

[42 : 37] Always striving after the wind as Ecclesiastes says it. Because we can't be happy with what we need. We have to have what we want.

But when we change our goal to righteousness, we change the results to happiness. King Solomon about 3,000 or 4,000 years ago wrote these words.

He said, One person gives freely, yet gains even more. Another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. I don't know if you follow what he was saying.

He's saying, I observed, King Solomon was like an early day scientist. All the Proverbs are his observations. They're not saying what should be. They're saying what is. And what he's found out that the people who are generous end up with more.

And the people who are stingy and hold on end up with less. He says, this is weird. People give away and end up with more. People hold tight and end up with less.

[43 : 37] How does that happen? Well, it happens for two reasons. The first is because if you're generous with other people, they will be generous with you. Or at least more so. Generosity begets generosity.

But it's also because of something that we misunderstand about God himself. People try to explain the origins of the world. And they get all complicated and confused about how long it took and how it happened.

But even the most scientific of scientists will say, at one point in time, there was a great big ball of matter that exploded. Who made this stuff? Right?

Where did the original stuff come from? You see, the bottom line is, is only God can make something out of nothing. The best that you and I can do is put it together differently.

So we eat all these different foods now than we used to eat because people are giving us ingredients that we didn't know were there. They were always there. We just didn't know about them. And we put our food together differently than we used to.

[44 : 42] But we haven't invented anything with what we invented as and become creative with what's there. But nobody's making something out of nothing because only God can make something out of nothing.

And our problem is, is we're not understanding how God works. God wants to enlarge what we have based on what we're willing to put in.

God wants to enlarge what we're willing to do. Many years ago, there was something called the potato famine in Ireland. The way I understand it is, is that people started to get hungry and they started to eat up the seed potatoes.

Now, the thing is, is the way they saw it was, my child is hungry and I've got a big potato. So I'm going to feed that to my child because they're hungry, right? And I'll plant the little potatoes.

You know anything about genetics? If you keep planting all the little potatoes, your potatoes over years start getting smaller. So somewhere along the line, somebody tried to convince these hungry people that they had to take the big potato, the one that they're hungry for, and put that in the ground and eat the little potatoes and be hungry.

[45 : 56] Wow. You want to talk about a step of faith? Can you imagine the first poor person who put a big potato in the ground and ate the little one? How many of us would do that? We say, we can't do that.

We'll starve. But an amazing thing happened. Little by little, instead of the potatoes shrinking, they started getting bigger and bigger and bigger. That's why sometimes now you've got potatoes that are like this.

You know, have you seen these things? These monster potatoes? Because we can genetically control how big the potato is on the basis of how big of a potato we plant.

That kind of illustrates God's way of doing things. The more we plant into this world, the more God creates in our lives, even out of nothing.

In verse 11, he says, you'll 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.

[46 : 53] Which is the main point, is the thanksgiving to God. But the strange thing is, generosity really gains us more. We become enriched, as it says, in every way.

So when you don't have enough time in your life, and you take some time to help somebody in need, all of a sudden you find more time. If you don't have enough money in life, and yet you help people out, somewhere along the line you end up with more.

I can't explain it to you. I don't get it. But I've seen it happen in my life over and over and over again. Now, I'm not trying to argue with you, so go and give everything you've got to God and make the church rich.

The church has bills. We all know that, all right? But the offering is not the collection. It's not about taking up money for the church. If we need money as a church, you'll get a letter in the mail, okay? That's the way it works, if you haven't figured that out around here.

This is about why do we have an offering? Because we need an opportunity to give to God. Why do we keep taking up all these little offerings?

[47 : 59] Because we need an opportunity to give money away that we'll never see. That goes to somebody else. Because when we give in a way that God who can make something out of nothing makes something for us.

You know, God gave us this philosophy of the tithe, giving 10% of our income. Some people think that that's meant to be some sort of strict law or rule.

That's so the generous people don't go crazy. If you give all your money away, then I've got to take care of you. I don't want to do that. All right? But I've found most people don't have a problem with being too generous.

Most people's problem is they're so worried they're not going to have enough that they hold it so tight, they end up losing all the joy of life. And the joy of life is not riding around in a motorized scooter and having everybody take care of your every need.

The joy of life is to feel that your life is good and has made a difference and is a blessing. Because, you see, giving doesn't just change others.

[49 : 09] It changes us. It changes us. From a life of worry and fear and deficiency to a life of abundance and joy and possibility thinking.

God wants to do more with us than we even imagine. Some of these restaurants, I find myself praying with people. I find myself helping people through their difficulties in life.

Sometimes we help people with money. Sometimes we help people with our time. It all works to a blessing. I had an interesting experience a little while back.

A fellow who has more money than I will ever possibly have, but was dropping all these hints so I would know he had money. Even though I know he had money. You know what I'm talking about? So he would talk about Escalades and when they were driving, you know, what car and the million dollar home that they had or this or that.

And just talking about the trips and dropping in all these things. At one time, he said, you know what's really the weirdest thing, though? He says, when we pull up to a restaurant in our Lexus, you know, the drop right there?

[50 : 23] In our Lexus, my wife gets out and all these homeless people come up to her and put in their orders for dinner. He said, it's the strangest thing. These people look for her and they're waiting for her.

And she writes down their orders when she goes in the restaurant. And when she comes out of the restaurant, she comes out with bags of food for everybody out there. And I thought, maybe that's why you're doing so well.

Because God is sharing blessings abundantly through the gift. Can you imagine pulling up to a restaurant and everybody in the street is waiting for you and just thinks it's wonderful you're there?

I know you're all going, well, that's not meal. I could have bought four things of... That's not the point. People who are abundantly blessed with whatever it may be need to be an abundant blessing if they want to continue to receive that joy.

One of the fascinating things I read recently is passion comes from action, not action from passion. I really like to believe that when I give you a really inspiring sermon, you just want to go do something really great.

[51 : 36] But I find more often than not, when I give you an incredible opportunity to do something great, you come back to worship with an incredible passion. When we send our teenagers off on a mission trip and they do something cool, they come back with a passion.

When we have people go work with teenagers in another city and do something that changes their lives, they come back with an amazing passion. When we have people feed people and take care of people and help people, they come back to worship with an incredible passion.

The passion doesn't come from me.

Giving with joy. Giving is an opportunity of giving with joy. Why do we have an offering?

We have an offering so you have an opportunity to give. You know, I was thinking that we might change things and we might start encouraging people not just to give your gifts of money, but to write down something you're going to do this week.

[53 : 00] That would really push you, wouldn't it? For some people, giving money is the easy part. But write down what you're going to do this week. Now that might take a little effort, a little thought. What am I going to do this week for God?

Maybe that's what we should do at the benediction. What are you going to do this week? What are you going to be this week? Why do we do these things? Because we need an opportunity. It's a pathway to joy.

It's a pathway to joy. And Jesus said to us, seek first his kingdom and all its righteousness.

And all these things will be given to you as well. Seek first the kingdom of God.

Seek first the kingdom of God.

[54 : 07] And his righteousness. And his righteousness. And all these things shall be given unto you.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. As and it shall be given unto you.

Seek and ye shall find. Seek and ye shall find. Now then the door shall be opened unto you.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Ash. Alleluia. Alleluia. privacy.

Alleluia. Alleluia. alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

[55 : 26] Alleluia. Alleluia. the glory of alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[59 : 02] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. If my heart will open past me
Bring my mind from all distress Use my hand Cause I can't disagree I need to follow after
you Oh, change the world And let it start with me Open up my eyes Fill my heart with your
compassion Bring my mind from all distress Use my hand Send the care of me free I need
to follow after you Oh, change the world And let it start with me Change the world

And let it start with me You know, my wife is an incredibly generous woman Sometimes to
the point of fault Because sometimes I have to explain to her That you also have to let
other people be generous You know, one of the hard things People who are generous
don't understand Is that you have to give other people the opportunity To give a gift too So
you have to learn how to receive Now so this part of the worship service Is about receiving
It's about saying we also need Even those of us who happen to be doing pretty good We
have need We always have need And next to God We always need that great gift He can
give to us Of His blessing, His forgiveness, and His love So part of learning to be
generous Is also learning how to say Thank you For helping me

[62 : 08] So let's turn to our Lord And give Him our needs Dear God in heaven I have sinned I fall
short Of your righteousness Of what you want from me And what I want from myself
Forgive me Lord Bless me Fill me with your love And your grace And help me to be
Someone who honors you In Jesus name we pray Amen Oh it's hard to ask for help It's
hard You know We want to be self-independent And be able to control everything But
we're just not capable Of getting it all together And sometimes in life We have to learn the
lesson of saying I need help And God blesses us through that too

In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins
are forgiven Glory to God Amen When the music fades All is stripped away And I'm slowly
gone Longing just to bring Something that's a word And I'll bless your heart I'll bring you
more than a song For a song you'd answer Is that what you have been found

What you have been found You search my teeth, you're within The way things are living
You're looking into my heart I'm coming back to the heart of worship It's all about you It's
all about you, Jesus I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made It's all about you It's all about
you, Jesus I'm coming back to the heart of worship I'm expressing how much you deserve

Lord, we can't pour All I have is yours Every single word I'll make you more than a song
You're sorry, Jesus It's not what you have required You search my sleeper within The way
things are living You're looking into my heart I'm coming back to the heart of worship
When it's all about you It's all about you, Jesus I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made
When it's all about you All about you, Jesus

You're listening to my heart I'm coming back to the heart of worship And I'm coming back
to the heart of worship And I'm coming back to the heart of worship And I'm coming back
to the heart of worship And I'm coming back to the heart of worship And our God has
invited us to worship Amen?

[66 : 30] We worship because it's just welling up in our hearts As we begin And God meets us And God wants to meet us here at the table this morning We are all invited to join in the celebration of the Sacrament Holy Communion Everyone is welcome if you love God Repent of your sin and seek to live in peace as a disciple of Jesus Christ Whether it's your first time here, you've been coming all your life Or you're somewhere in between If you are seeking to be filled with Christ In a way you've never been filled before To meet with Jesus You're welcome to come and join us at the table So come The Lord be with you Lift up your hearts Let us give thanks to the Lord our God It is right and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere

To give thanks to you, Father Almighty Creator of heaven and earth You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life When we turned away and our love failed Your love remained steadfast You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God And spoke to us through your prophets And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven We praise your name and join their unending hymn Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and might Heaven and earth are full of your glory Hosanna in the highest Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord Hosanna in the highest Holy are you and blessed is your son Jesus Christ Your spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor To proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind

To set at liberty those who are oppressed And to announce that the time had come when you would save your people He healed the sick Fed the hungry and ate with sinners By the baptism of his suffering Death and resurrection You gave birth to your church Delivered us from slavery to sin and death And made with us a new covenant by water and spirit On the night in which he gave himself up for us He took bread and he gave thanks to you Broke the bread And gave it to his disciples saying Take it, eat This is my body Which is given to you Do this in remembrance of me When the supper was over he took the cup And he gave thanks and praise And gave it to his disciples

He said drink from this all of you This is the cup of my blood The blood of the new covenant Poured out for you It is poured out for many For the forgiveness of sin Do this as often as you drink it In remembrance of me And so in remembrance of these Your mighty acts in Jesus Christ We offer ourselves In praise and thanksgiving As a holy and living sacrifice In union with Christ's offering for us As we proclaim the mystery of faith Christ is died Christ is risen Christ will come again Pour out your holy spirit On us gathered here And on these gifts of bread and wine Make them be for us The body and blood of Christ That we may be for the world The body of Christ Redeemed by his blood By your spirit

Make us one with Christ One with each other And one in ministry to all the world Until Christ comes in final victory And we feast at his heavenly day Through your son Jesus Christ With the Holy Spirit In your holy church All honor and glory Is yours Almighty Father Now and forever Amen Shall we pray together With the confidence of children of God The prayer Jesus taught us Our Father Who art in heaven Hallowed be thy name Thy kingdom come Thy will be done On earth as it is in heaven Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses As we forgive those who trespass against us And lead us not into temptation But deliver us from evil For thine is the kingdom And the power And the glory forever and ever

[71 : 35] Amen For those who are serving Please come forward Amen Amen.

Amen. Amen.

God has given to us a great gift at the table and invites you to come and join us. Join us at the table, at the rail, for prayers for healing or to light a candle.

Come and join us with God. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[75 : 09] Amen. Amen.

If you're able, I'm going to invite you to stand as we're going to sing together.

Jesus calls us. Jesus calls us from the ship of the plain angels golden storm.

From China that he must say, Christian love me more. In our joys and in our sorrows, days of hope and hours of ease, still goes in cares, pleasures, Christian love me more than these.

Jesus calls us by mercies. Savior, may we hear thy call. Give hearts to thy obedience.

[77 : 31] Serve in love the best of all. I was talking to a young person last night that's worried about the condition of our world and particularly the Christian faith.

And feels we need to defend our faith and we need to stand up for our faith because it's being attacked on every side. You want to know what will change the world's opinion of us. As if we become the people God designed us to be.

Everybody wants somebody who's loving and kind and generous and filled with joy. Don't go out and be miserable. Don't go out and be stingy. Don't go out and be angry.

Go out and be filled with the blessing that God has put into your hearts. And share that with the world and watch if it doesn't come floating back to you. I think there's a problem about that.

You can look it up in that book there. So go into this world and do something. Be something. And change the world with the joy of the Lord.

[78 : 29] Go in his peace. Amen.