

Creating the Future

The lay of the land (money stat about Mosaic)

- Last spoke on this 2009
- Yesterday met with Landlord to talk over why we have not paid the rent
- Staff member gave back wages this week
 - GET ONE THIRD TO STAND?
 - Thats roughly how many support everything going on in Mosaic

Right now we have an average combined gathering attendance of around 200 people each week

- This time last year we had an average gathering attendance of around 200 people

This year our average weekly giving has been \$4650, made up on average by 57 giving code

- Compared to the same period last year our average weekly giving was \$6300 ,made up by 77 giving code
- So each month this year we have been on average sort up \$6000 which compounded over 5 months this year means we are in a very tight position.

You might then ask about our expenses,

- since June last year we have cut over \$4000 off our monthly expenses in wage cuts and budget tightens.
- We have also doubled our extra income revenue.

Why does this subject make us so uncomfortable?

Relationship breakdowns

- Sex
- Money
- these are the two biggest causes

Money is more about our hearts than it ever is about \$\$

- When we have heaps we feel as if we can take on the world
- When we have little we feel fear & shame

Churches - not a great track record

- Always asking - begging mindsets
- Too much bling on the "man"

Sunday, 12 June 2011

- Don't trust leaders
- Never seems to go where it matters
- Why spend money on rent & power when people matter more

Bottom line these are heart matters

- lets deal with them today

Note - we are putting on our website today a teaching series I did a while ago.

- I cannot develop everything in one session
- Please take the time to listen and pray

The bible calls the nature of this "heart subject" stewardship

What is Stewardship?

- What is the meaning of stewardship anyway?
- "Stewardship is the responsibility of managing some assets or affairs or property of someone else's." (dict.com)

Key Verse

1Tim. 6.17 Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment.

1Tim. 6.18 Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others.

1Tim. 6.19 By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.

Principles of stewardship

1.God owns everything!

Psalms 24:1-2 The earth is the Lord's & the fullness thereof, the world & all they that dwell therein

"Ok. But at least I belong to myself."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "You are not your own. You are bought at a price, the shed blood of the Son of God on our behalf."

Deut. 8:17 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."

Deut. 8.18 *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.*

- Sometimes we think it's by our own ingenuity, our own skills, our own labor.
- But God says that talent and skill and gift and financial success is a gift from Himself.
- even if we don't believe it God says our life is part of a much bigger picture

2. God's people are God's management company.

Matt. 25.14 *“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone.*

Matt. 25.23 *“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!’*

two key words

- faithful - "faithful in handling this small amount"
- it was the little stuff that indicated faithfulness

Money is amoral

is not evil nor good - it is a resource

God has given you resources & opportunity for two reasons

1. To reveal your character
2. To develop your character

God has entrusted us to manage a portion of what's his and to glorify him through handling responsibility faithfully.

- How we handle money is the biggest comment on our values there is

3. Stewardship is responsibility with accountability.

- What is the purpose of Wealth?
- What does the God the owner want me to do with the wealth I have been allowed to possess?
 - Remember: Stewardship being the responsibility I have for managing that which I possess for the benefit of those for whom it is intended.

Here is where I have a choice. I can be either a good steward or a bad steward. If I'm a bad steward then I hoard it. I keep it to myself. I become selfish with it.

- I interpret the right of use to be the certificate of ownership, & pretty soon I begin to think to myself, "It is mine.
- I worked for it. I earned it. I saved it.

- Therefore I can keep it or do with it whatever I want."

4. Good stewardship creates a commitment to others.

- Good and faithful stewardship is doing something for others with God's money
- Wealth is ours to do good for others

18 Tell the rich people to do good, to be rich in doing good deeds, to be generous and ready to share.

- God prospers me not to raise my standard of living but to raise my standard of giving.

Mal. 3.10 Bring your full tithe to the Temple treasury so there will be ample provisions in my Temple. Test me in this and see if I don't open up heaven itself to you and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams.

Luke 6.38 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."

5. Stewardship has a future focus

Matt. 6.19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

Matt. 6.20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

- Live for the line not the dot.

Break for Prayer

- God what are you saying to me? To us
 - God are you happy with my current attitude towards and pattern of giving
-

Tithing - training ground for generosity

Two very important principles... in regard to understanding OT

1. The journey towards maturity....

- life thing - move from environmental stimulation to internal conviction
- Chook poo, stones & Izzy
- external structure becomes internal conviction
- Driving - young idiot! We used to drive like that but now we have kids the stakes are higher - suddenly legal rules to be ignored become ethical boundaries that give us safety.

2. The OT (arrangement) build towards the NT (arrangement)

- old covenant - new covenant - could call it - old arrangement - new arrangement
- Covenant - dict; Theology an agreement that brings about a relationship of commitment between God and his people

The goal of the arrangement is relationship

- OT not discarded but fulfilled in NT
- elements found in OT ramp up in NT
 - examples from bible
 - divorce no longer about performance but about heart
 - retribution replaced with forgiveness
 - sacrifice of sheep symbolic now a reality
 - external legal requirements give place to a new attitude (heart)

God is moving from the environmental influences to the greatest form of influence - relationship

- learner licence
- restrictions replaced with new privileges & responsibilities

these are critical to understanding tithing

- tithing becomes generosity
- tithing is the training ground for generosity which is shapes our character

but people freeze when you talk about this

- people go legal - girl once wrote me 15 page letter on why tithing no longer matters - its OT

Tithing in OT is God creating external stimulation to live a different life long enough to see the benefits of this new life and become convicted that being generative & sharing is better than consumption

What is a Tithe?

Lev. 27.30 "One tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain from the fields or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD and must be set apart to him as holy.

Actually tithing was more than 10%

- Well, if you claim a tithe is just ten percent, you would be wrong, because there were several tithes plus freewill offerings!

- Also, there was the shekel temple tax, and whatever tax was required if they were occupied by a foreign power
 - (They were occupied by the Romans, but the government was not run by the Romans. This is why Jesus said, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; in other words, pay the Romans what they ask for, and render to God the things that are required by God).
- In addition, if you were a farmer, you were required to leave about ten percent of your crop un-harvested, for the poor.
 - Thus, you would have had a square field and only have harvested in a circle, leaving the corners for gleaning to the poor.
- The actual breakdown of the entire tithe load was around 23.3% per year, plus the atonement offerings, to which most Jewish scholars say the total could have been as high as thirty to forty percent plus, including foreign taxes.

Here is the heart of tithing: The first and the best

2Chr. 31.5 The people of Israel responded immediately and generously by bringing the first of their crops and grain, new wine, olive oil, honey, and all the produce of their fields. They brought a large quantity—a tithe of all they produced.

Neh. 10.37 We will store the produce in the storerooms of the Temple of our God. We will bring the best of our flour and other grain offerings, the best of our fruit, and the best of our new wine and olive oil. And we promise to bring to the Levites a tenth of everything our land produces, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all our rural towns.

- God constantly challenged the attitude of his people by requiring them to not give him the left overs or damaged goods
- Why?
- It was never a tax - he wanted his people to place a priority on giving so they would value the investments they were making

tithing is relational

- first and best
 - when we give that which our best & we give it first we will emotionally invest in the relationship
- throughout OT God insists that tithing involves the first and the best
- this challenges perspective
 - \$20 at bayfair is not enough & \$20 at Mosaic is too much

Jesus connects heart to best

- Key to new level of giving = sacrifice

Luke 21.1-4 While Jesus was in the Temple, he watched the rich people dropping their gifts in the collection box. Then a poor widow came by and dropped in two small coins. "I tell you the truth," Jesus said, "this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them. For they have given a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has."

This is the heart of the matter

- here is why we react
- True giving alters our lifestyle - for the worse
- Sacrificial giving means just that

We have a saying here

Not equal giving - but equal sacrifice

IF I OFFEND YOU

Honestly I'm sorry

BUT let me ask some really pointed questions

- Are you comfortable with others carrying your part of the load in Mosaic
- When was the past time you adjusted your AP up?
 - There are solo mums who give more than some singles & double income families - sound familiar?
- Is your lifestyle being compromised in any way by the Mission of Jesus?

See... love is the context for all mission

- Generosity must change your lifestyle
- God is testing your heart

worship without generosity = sham

- our worship isn't measured by our passion & loudness but by our uncomfortable sacrifice & radical generosity

tithing in NT steps up to generosity - the place that we value as Mosaic

- no longer external percentage but internal conviction
- we want to move beyond compliance to active conviction
- you can only do this if you see value in generosity and character as being of greater worth than lifestyle

the Bible uses the metaphor about harvesting a lot

Matthew 9 - With a compassionate heart for lost people Jesus said, "The harvest is

plentiful but the workers are so few.”

John 4:35 - “I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”

Matt. 13.37 Jesus replied, “The Son of Man is the farmer who plants the good seed. The field is the world, and the good seed represents the people of the Kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the evil one. The enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the harvesters are the angels. “Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Our giving (sowing) creates a new future

harvesting is always about creating the future -

- you don't plant seeds you grow future fruit and vegetables
- the seed is not the end goal

harvesting (in the bible) is about people

- reality check - there is life going forward
- there is non-life going forward

God calls the man who gets this wrong a fool

Luke 12.15-22 Then he said, “Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own.”

Then he told them a story: “A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. He said to himself, ‘What should I do? I don’t have room for all my crops.’ Then he said, ‘I know! I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. And I’ll sit back and say to myself, “My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!”’

“But God said to him, ‘You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?’ “Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.” Then, turning to his disciples, Jesus said, “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear.

In the beginning of that story he said that *“Life is not measured by how much you own.”*

- these are the words of Jesus
 - a follower of Jesus takes that to heart
 - you can invest your whole life in following patterns given to you by the world only to end up losing

Why give to the local church (Mosaic)

silly things I have heard

I don't want to have my money pay for rent

- How would you feel about that today
- Assets & facilities are all used for local mission

rather it went overseas

- So would we
- and when everyone is saved in TGA we will do that - we want to create a budget for that
- But some of you have had your eyes opened as to how it is for locals in Merivale

I give to charity

- that is good
- but God has a better plan that you invest locally so your heart can be connected
- it stops us from just giving money and not serving in other ways

I spread my 10% over a places

- focus is better - together we can achieve so much more

I attend here but give there

- try that line next time you eat out
- give to the place that feeds you

They need it more

- fair enough
- that being the case they also need you more

don't trust the leadership

- understand that but need to ask why you would make a place you don't trust leaders your home

II Corinthians 9:6-7

“Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

I can't be cheerful about it so best not to give

- let me know when your appointment with Jesus is - want to see how this one flies

Friends there is a lot at stake on the table today

- this is not just about paying the bills
- Vision to bless the kids
- Vision to release songs to the world
- Vision to reach you
- Friends our dreams are dying in front of you for the lack of one thing and on thing only

Finally

- we have been given some great gifts
- not looking for one off help a living expression of equal sacrifice.