

Joyous Giving

#0731

Study given by W.D. Frazee—February 3, 1966

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto,
but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many"
Matthew 20:28.

"As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you"
John 20:21.

Jesus came for a certain purpose, and He has sent us out for the same purpose. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. So He wants us to go out in His name, for His sake, and minister to others, and give our lives.

We can't give our lives as a ransom in the sense that He did. But we can unite with Him in serving others, and we can spend our lives in service and sacrifice, and thus share with Him the joy of seeing men and women reconciled to God.

There is something wonderful about full surrender these verses picture. If all is on the altar, the giving is already settled. It is merely a matter of guidance. You have heard of the man who was being baptized in his clothes. Someone noticed that he had his wallet in his back pocket. They suggested that perhaps that ought to be taken out before he went down into the water. He said, "No, I want to be baptized pocketbook and all."

If all is given, it includes all our money. The question of money is an interesting question. We are told that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. I think of many who have gotten very close to the kingdom, but when the Spirit of God put His hand on that point, they turned back.

Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness and lost his soul. Judas sold out for thirty pieces of silver. Ananias and Sapphira made a pledge, and their selfish souls got to thinking how much they had given. They decided not to give so much and yet pretend they had. The Spirit of God took the lives of them both as a warning to the early church.

As we enter into the repetition of the Pentecostal experiences we are going to see things that are going to thrill the heart, and yet sadden our hearts. As men and women repeat the experiences of the early disciples, as they sell their property and lay their money down for the finishing of the work, what a wave of gladness will sweep from heart to heart. But doubtless there will be some like Ananias and Sapphira who will allow the love of money to hinder the blessings that God wants to give.

I think of an experience that I witnessed thirty years ago. We were holding a series of evangelistic meetings in Oakland, California. Among the many who attended was a fine looking woman and her daughter. They gave evidence of being persons of culture and refinement. They came night after night and accepted the Sabbath. They decided to be baptized. They were in the baptismal class week after week.

They even anticipated some of the points of truth. I remember how willing they were to lay off their jewelry before it was ever presented in public.

But one night they were not at the meeting. As the Bible worker visited them and talked with them we finally discovered what the matter was. Tithe had been presented. The axe had struck the root of the tree. The selfish heart had not been interfered with by embracing the Sabbath. It occasioned no cross or sacrifice for them. But when the truth of God on money was presented, it cut right across the natural inclination. They turned back to walk no more. Sad? Oh, yes. So sad.

I remember an experience in New Orleans where we were holding evangelistic meetings. There was a father and mother with their two children who attended the meetings week after week. They had gotten interested through the health message. They had laid aside their harmful indulgences—beer, cigarettes, coca cola, and other stimulants and narcotics. They had embraced the question of diet, and it had brought them an increase in health. They felt better and thanked the Lord for it. They too embraced the Sabbath.

But one night we sat down to talk together in their home, and it was evident that something had happened. I wondered what it could be. We probed in a tactful way.

Finally the father looked across at me and said, "Is it true that everybody who joins the Seventh-day Adventist church has to sell all their property and give it to the church?"

You might think the easy answer to that was to tell him, Of course not, and go on while he breathed a sigh of relief. And I did tell him that. Probably he did breath a sigh of relief. Nobody who joins the Seventh-day Adventist church is required to sell everything he has and turn it into the church. We all know that.

Then I said to him, "Brother, what I have told you is true, but if you become a Seventh-day Adventist you are entering a pathway that will eventually take everything you have. You may as well face that fact and settle it with God before you ever start up that road."

Did I tell him the truth? Yes, you know it. And I am so glad it is. I would hate to be in something that wasn't worth everything.

Now and then we have a wedding on the campus, and the minister says to the young man, Will you leave everything you have and take this young woman and keep yourself only unto her? Will you share with her everything in sickness and health, prosperity and adversity, as long as you both shall live?

Suppose he should say, Really, that's asking quite a bit, isn't it? I think we had better make it fifty percent, or seventy-five percent. There are some things I would like to keep to myself that she is to have nothing to do with, and have no part in it. If you were the bride, how would you feel?

There is something about love that asks for everything, and there is something about love that responds with everything.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" John 3:16.

You and I know that was not alone as a gift. It was the greatest gift from heaven, and all heaven went with it. It included all heaven. And when we stop to think that the ones to whom that gift was given were the most unworthy ones in all the universe, there is something about it that touches the heart.

While it cost the heart of the infinite Father an infinite struggle to give that infinite gift, it was not given grudgingly or reluctantly. The great fountain burst forth, and that great river of love has been flowing from the foundation of the world in irrepressible streams. You and I are invited to share in it. God loves a cheerful giver, and you and I do too. Thank God for it.

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" Exodus 25:1-8.

Did they all give the same gift? Oh, no. Everybody didn't have an onyx stone. There were not many in the camp, but there were enough to take care of what God had planned for. There were not many badger skins in the camp, but there were enough to take care of that covering that was put over the sanctuary. There were several kinds of stones to be set in the breastplate. Not very many people had them, but the people who did have them said, Thank God, I have what God wants. I have something God needs, and God shall have it. Everybody had something to give, and we see the results.

"And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman

make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary.
So the people were restrained from bringing" Exodus
36:5,6.

They had an overflow. Imagine a proclamation like this. Did you ever hear it? You are going to very soon. That's right. That proclamation is going to be made for the last time. There will never again be an offering for the sanctuary, never again be an opportunity to sacrifice for the work of God. We are living in the hour when that is going to happen. I want to read a most interesting comment on this:

"The plan of Moses in the wilderness to raise means was highly successful. There was no compulsion necessary. Moses made no grand feast. He did not invite the people to scenes of gaiety, dancing, or general amusement, nor did he institute lottery or anything of this profane order to obtain means to erect the tabernacle of God in the wilderness. God commanded Moses to invite the children of Israel to bring the offerings. Moses was to accept gifts of every man that gave willingly from his heart" *Counsels on Stewardship*, page 203.

That's all God is interested in. God loveth a cheerful giver.

Jesus, after instructing the disciples, told them to go back to Jerusalem and tarry until they received the Holy Spirit. They laid aside all their differences, and confessed their sins one to another. They came into unity, and on the Day of Pentecost the Spirit of God was poured out. The people responded to Peter's sermon, and three thousand souls were converted in one day. Many of them were people who had been listening to Jesus for three years. They took their stand and were so happy. Now notice:

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need"
Acts 2:44,45.

That showed they were converted. And there was a great need. Many of them were thrown out of their homes. God moved upon the hearts of the people who had something to make it possible for those to live who didn't have anything.

It didn't enrich Peter and John. In the next chapter is the story of them coming to the temple and healing the lame man, and said, Silver and gold have I none. What did they do with all that was laid down at their feet? Well, you know what they didn't do with it. It didn't line their pockets, and fit them out with the most expensive things. No, they were interested in seeing the work of God advance.

After the apostles had been arrested, beaten, and put into prison, they came back and told their story. The multitude were happy they had been released, and they prayed. The Spirit of God came upon them again.

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need"
Acts 4:31-35.

The particular way it was handled there is not always God's plan. But the supreme dedication of the life, the placing on the altar everything a man has and owns is always God's requirement. In many cases God leaves the stewardship with the individual, and we need to recognize that principle. But the fact that stewardship is left with the people in no way lessens God's claim, in no way lessens the sacrifice we are supposed to make.

All this is coming again. I read:

"The experience of apostolic days will come to us if men will be worked by the Holy Spirit" *A Call to Medical Evangelism*, page 22.

Would you like to see a lame man leap? Would you like to see a dead man get up? Would you like to see the sick healed? Would you like to see thousands of people converted in one day? Well, it is coming. The experiences of apostolic days will come to us if men will be worked by the Holy Spirit.

"The Lord will withdraw His blessing where selfish interests are indulged, but He will put His people in possession of good throughout the world if they will unselfishly use their ability for the uplifting of humanity. His work is to be a sign of His benevolence" *Ibid*.

If you and I will yield our lives to the unselfish spirit of Jesus, that love will flow through us in a tide that will sweep away the covetousness and selfishness. It will take away our means, and the means will flow into the channel of benevolence, and with it will come the mighty working of God to bring in many souls into His church and finish the work.

With that I want to put an interesting promise that the Lord's messenger wrote:

"The Lord has made men His stewards, and has entrusted to them the means to carry forward His work. When the poor have done all they can do to advance the cause, the Lord will bring in men of means to carry on the work" *Gospel Workers*, page 298.

Why do you suppose God lets the poor people give first? There are several reasons you can think of. The Spirit of God is very sensible. Not everybody is to do the same thing at the same time.

"I saw that a sacrifice did not increase, but it decreased and was consumed. I also saw that God had not required all of His people to dispose of their property at the same time; but if they desired to be taught, He would teach them, in a time of need, when to sell and how much to sell" *Early Writings*, page 57.

Can people be taught of God? Yes. That's what Jesus says:

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me" John 6:45.

Where is the place for my property? On the altar. Who is to tell me when to sell it? God is. Who is to tell me what to do with it when I sell it? God is. They shall all be taught of God.

Would God do that for me? Would He do it for anybody else? Yes, He will. This question of handling money can be a sweet, precious fellowship with you and God, if you are willing for it to be.

Peter recognized that. After the people sold their property and laid the money down at the apostle's feet, Ananias and Sapphira made a pledge. But when it came time to pay it, they had a change of heart. Instead of telling frankly, they lied about it. Peter says:

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" Acts 5:3,4.

It was Ananias' own decision. The Holy Spirit had moved upon his heart, and he was unhappy about it afterwards. But Peter recognized that it wasn't required for everybody to sell their sell their property at the same time.

If Peter and the Lord's messenger recognized that, wouldn't it be a good thing for us to recognize it? And remember that once you admit it, you recognize that you are not suppose to settle up for anybody else, and you recognize that you are

supposed to settle it for yourself. You are to get wisdom and guidance from God as to what you are to do with your property. Even if your property is only a thin dime, you are to look to God to see what He wants you to do about it.

The God that rules all creation, all space, is willing to teach me what to do with whatever He has put into my hands. God doesn't want us to press poor people to give the money they need to take care of their family.

"Our God is not a taskmaster and does not require the poor man to give means to the cause that belongs to his family and that should be used to keep them in comfort and above pinching want" *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3. page 411.

This is not talking about the tithe. It is talking about offerings. Everybody should pay tithe no matter how poor he is. After all, we don't give tithe. We pay it. It belongs to God. He didn't give us the responsibility of giving tithe. He gave us the responsibility of handling it to see whether we are honest. The tithe tests our honesty, and the offerings test our gratitude.

While God wants the poor man to pay tithe and offerings, when the Holy Spirit moves on a poor man to give all he has, let him do it. But let him be sure that the Holy Spirit is moving on his heart.

It isn't necessary to bring pressure in order to raise gifts for God. All it is necessary to do is to do what Moses did. He proclaimed that there was a need to give, and then left it with the people. It worked all right then. It works today.

"Some workers are so situated as to be able to lay by a little from their salary, and this they should do, if possible, to meet an emergency" *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, page 293.

God wants to teach us a balance. He wants us to be generous, and He wants us to have good sense. He wants us to use business judgment, and not be stingy and negligent. This whole matter of handling money is a part of character development. And the development of the mind, the powers of reason and intelligence.

All right, well we've found these cautions there, first that God doesn't require everybody to sell and give, some took the same time, He will teach everybody the list. Second, the purpose is not to give what they need to keep their families from pinching walls. Third, those people who can are encouraged to put by a little for emergency. Now with all those cautions before you, I want to give you some other cautions.

And you should think of what I am about to say, every time there is a call for means, remember this, I want to you to think about all the other calls for need. I put it this way, suppose you had a family and children, and you have a kettle here of stew, and there's one of the babies that starts crying. They say, oh yes, babies cry,

so you start to put the stew in the bowl for that baby. Would it be a good plan to see how many other bowls there were on the table? Would it? Yes. Even if all the other children weren't crying right then. They might cry if the kettle of stew didn't get clear around the table. Mightn't they? That's right. And so whenever you hear of a call for means, think about all the other things that you may need to think about. Now I'm going to make a call in a few minutes but I'm going to tell you first of quite a number of other things that you want to think about.

First of all, every person should think about his tithe in the sense that something separate is with already says, but should you remember that the ten percent of all your increase. That's right. That's right. So if your income should increase this year, remember, ten percent of it's already earmarked. You don't have that to meet these calls for means. Am I right? That's tithe. All right? Then I want to ask you about some other things. What about the foreign mission program and the home-nation program? What about Sabbath school? What about in-gathering? What about the week of sacrifice? Are all those to be considered? Yes.

And many of us have formed the habit of just giving, giving, giving as those various offerings are taken. Is it a good habit; continual giving starves covetousness to death we're told. Now beside that, there is special appeals; for instance, two weeks ago, we took up offering for religious liberty in the *Liberty* magazine. Well thank the Lord because people here responded with over \$200. Aren't we thankful for that? Yes. Well, next January that will come again. So we'll be glad again to respond and make it possible for people to have that wonderful magazine.

Our conference is beginning to build an academy now. Some of you have already responded, some of you will be given an opportunity to respond to the appeal for funds to build an academy down at Reeds[?]. The Georgia-Cumberland Conference, that will be a special appeal and it will take a special debt over quite a period of time, all of these things are to be thought of. Then besides all these offerings for the foreign mission field, the home-nation field, church expense, missionary work, and these special projects, let me tell you one more thing that we mustn't forget and that is the poor. The poor. Around us are poor people and there are going to be more. This book says, He that has pity has poor lendeth unto the Lord. Notice this wonderful promise over here in the 41st Psalm about the man that looks after the poor:

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble" Psalm 41:1.

So are we to consider the poor? Yes. And in Volume 1, page 194, you read the warning about man that give large gifts to the church and forget the poor right next door to them. So you see friends, we are to keep all these things in mind. Well now after we've gotten all through that, is there any room for me to make another appeal for something else tonight? What do you think? Well I'll have to leave that with each one of you.

But you know, 53 years ago, when a little self-supporting school was getting started on the banks of the Cumberland, up near Nashville, the servant of the Lord out at St. Galena sat down and wrote a little message which was printed in the four

page track. If any of you don't have a copy, I'll be glad to put one in your hand. And in it, the Lord's messenger put down these words concerning the self-supporting school which was destined as that track said to train students to go out and start other self-supporting schools. Some of the people trained there are here tonight, thank the Lord.

This is what the Lord's messenger said. Every means possible should be devised to establish schools of the Madison order, and those who lend their support and means to this work are aiding the cause of God. I'm instructed to say to those who have means, help the work at Madison. That was the purpose. That was her purpose in writing that track and sending it out. Was to encourage people to put money into that work, to train students to go out and establish other schools of that kind.

Thank the Lord friends, those appeals were listened to by many people over the country. Why for a number of years out there in that valley where Sister White lived, she and her neighbors used to gather dried fruit and send it down here to the south to help the people at Madison and the little self-supporting schools. The prophet of God encouraged that. Some of the prunes came from her own prune orchard.

But it wasn't just prunes that came, it was money friends. Money. And more money. It took money to get it started. Its taken money to make it go forward, and in this work here at Wildwood, thank God through the years. God has moved upon the hearts of people to put money into this program, this wellness here laborers, and I ask you this. If God moves upon the hearts of people that aren't even here to put money into this, to put up these buildings, make this equipment possible, if God moves upon the hearts of people far away to do that, do you think it would be any strange thing if he moved upon our hearts whose lives are right in the program? Ah, no, nothing strange about that. In fact friends, if my life is in something, I'm glad to have my money in it too. If it's worth my toil, then it's worth my money.

And so I'm thankful that from time to time to tithe, you and I have had the opportunity along with laying down the offering of our lives of this program, to lay down gifts of love. Gifts of money. Now tonight, since our work is extending, instead of putting before you one object, as I did two years ago, or two objects as I did last year, I'm going to give you three things. Next year it may be four for all I know. We still have the opportunity of giving, but there are three things that I'm going to tell you about tonight. In fact, I was intending to bring you four things tonight, but when I was talking it over with Brother Resh, Brother Resh said to me, yes, we need to raise money for the new sanitarium, but he said, there will have to be so much money raised for that and that will doubtless come largely from the people of the world. He said, I think you better let the folks tonight have the opportunity of giving for some of these other projects. And I think that was both a generous and a wise statement from Brother Resh, our sanitarium manager.

Now the three things that I want to give you an opportunity to give forth tonight. One is, the little chapel that our New England group were hoping to build down at New England, most of you heard about that, haven't you? Last year in the providence of God, we were able to buy a lot down there and several dollars have

been raised for it, the footings have been poured, but now we need money to go on up with the walls and put the roof on and finish it up this year. This year. I'm really expecting brethren that well, I won't try to set a date for I'm not a prophet, but I'm expecting before many months go by to see a beautiful little chapel standing there in that cedar and pine grove down there in New England. How many of you have been down there? May I see your hands? Oh yes. Well, when we get started with the meetings down there, you will all want to come down but you mustn't all come the same day maybe. At any rate, I know that the Lord's going to move on the hearts of some of you who want to have a part in that tonight. And we're going to take pledges for that for the New England chapel tonight. Do you like the sound of that, Brother Wilson? Yes. Well I do too.

Now we have another project that we want to remind you of. You remember that two years ago we took up an offering for the tabernacle that's to be built here upon these grounds. You've all been here, most of you have times when people were standing in this chapel. Why? There's no more room for them to sit down. And if we need a place of meeting, where instead of scores of hundreds of people can come to hear the message, is that right? Now thank the Lord, we have several dollars toward that. That was raised last year and the year before. We still don't have enough to build a tabernacle. We need several thousand dollars to build that tabernacle that we don't have. And God is going to impress somebody here tonight to have a part in it. And if that's the particular thing that God tells you to put money into friends, let me tell you that's a glorious opportunity to move sisals[?] in the Kingdom of God because of it.

Now the third thing that I want to give you an opportunity for has to do with the coming of the refugees. You've heard about that, haven't you? You know that last year, about this time, we presented that matter and we took up pledges for the building of a home up in the hollow. Well that's not a dream anymore, it's up there and it's nearly finished. But we still need several hundred dollars to complete the payment for the material that's going into that building and there's still a bit of work to be done in finishing it up.

But that's only half the story. We need some more and we have already laid plans to build another home this year for some more refugees. Because they're coming, friends. They're coming. And we want to build another home, simple, well built, but economical where people can be brought and be blessed and helped and trained. Oh friends, I'm thankful for the challenge of the coming of the refugees, aren't you? And so I want to bring you those two, those three projects tonight. The New England chapel, the tabernacle, and the new home for the refugees. Those three projects.

Now I want to give you two different ways to pledge on this. Some of you would like to give a lump sum for any or all of these projects I've mentioned. Some of you would like to give a lump sum; it might be a dollar and that might be as big a gift as the poor widow gave that tithe. That might be all you that could give. It might be less than a dollar. It might be ten dollars. A hundred dollars. A thousand dollars. Ten thousand dollars. I don't know what God has entrusted you with, I don't know what God's going to impress you to give. All I can say is friends, I've

read you God's promises tonight that you can be taught of Him. Taught of God and we're going to have prayer here.

And ask God to tell us what to do and I believe He will if we let Him, what do you say? Yes. And you may want to give a lump sum, again, you might want to make a monthly pledge; now January's gone, we're in February. So we're going to take pledges for 11 months. We're going to take pledges for February, March, April, and so on through December. And if you gave five dollars a month for eleven months, that would be how much? Fifty-five dollars. If you gave \$10 a month for 11 months, that would be \$110. That's right. And if some of you children should give 10 cents a month for 11 months that would be how much? A dollar and ten cents. That's right. And so the Lord is going to impress our minds on that.

Now we're going to kneel down and pray here together and just ask the Lord, we're going to spend a moment or two in silent prayer, then I'm going to ask Brother Jensen if he'll pray on behalf of all of us that the Lord will move on our hearts, just a short prayer. Then when we get up from prayer, I'm going to have these cards passed out and we'll let the Lord help us write down on the paper what He's written down in our hearts while we pray. Let us pray.

Oh hear how the message can come and learn how to live what the ... is. Is that right? And then you know about the sanitarium that's in the offering, that's where some of the people that come to hear the message in the tabernacle will have to be brought so the doctors and nurses can care for them, is that right? Be praying about that. I'm sure of this, we're going to have to get enlargement of the heart in order to take care of all these matters, what do you say? That would be a good of kind of hypertrophy. Now I wish we could hear that ... again.

There's a church in the valley by the water... [congregation sings]

Now before we go home, just this closing word. You know when a person goes out today, on the highway from here to Chattanooga, he never knows for sure he will come home. Is that right? And I've traveled several thousand miles before I'll see you again on a Friday night vespers service. I just like to leave you this closing word. While we can't make an appointment for sure to meet back here, we plan to be together of course again, we all plan that way, there's one appointment we can make dear friends and be sure to meet it. And that's to meet in the chariot on that seven day trip through space. That's the only space trip that's certain, isn't it? And that's eternally certain. Thank God we can meet there.

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