

Text: 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."*

There was a man who was fairly well to do. He built luxury homes in the 80's so things were pretty lucrative. His offerings were substantial but just as the church went into a building project; things began to dry up for him. You might remember that things were a little tight in the early 90's. During a congregational meeting, the head of the board of stewardship asked that everyone make a substantial gift to the project. The contractor's wife took out the checkbook and wrote a check that almost emptied the account. He said to her, "what are you doing?" and she said to him, "don't worry about it, you can't out give God."

The next day he was invited to bid on a multi-million dollar home. He was awarded the project. In the end, he picked up several referrals based on his work on that project and within a few years, he had made millions of dollars on those projects and he will tell you that it all started with that check that emptied the account. You just can't out give God. He invented giving.

Jesus promises that we will never lose through our giving, but actually receive much, more in return. God promises to bless us when we choose to show Him honor through our giving? Now obviously, the amount that you and I can give is minuscule in comparison to what God gives us. As our loving Father, He graciously and willingly provides for us daily, but the text today assures us that our offerings, as meager as they might be, will never go unnoticed.

Jesus reiterates the importance of giving throughout Scripture. Last Sunday, we read Jesus' words: *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."* Today's text goes into greater detail about that blessing. He says that what we give will be returned to us, and more. Our gift will be measured out, like flour in a cup, but then He will press it down, He will shake it to allow it to settle to make room for even more, and then He will continue pouring till that blessing runs over our cups and fills our laps. The more we give, the more we will receive. You can't out give God.

On the other hand, if we give in order to receive, we will be disappointed because God does not make deals. He's not the local godfather who requires tribute in order to grant favors. Love is his motivation. Love is the foundation for his giving and our giving. The Apostle Paul writes, *"If I give all I possess to the poor . . . but have not love, I gain nothing."* You can give without loving, but you can never truly love without giving. Love is always the primary motivation for everything Godly that we do, because it is God's motivation in giving His ultimate gift for us. *"For God so **loved** the world that He gave His one and only Son."*

In fact I think it may be impossible to separate truly loving and giving. Where there is true love, we just can't help ourselves, sometimes even to a fault. All of us have heard of the word co-dependence. Sometimes we love someone so much that we facilitate their poor choices. Of course God never does that because he knows the difference between love and co-dependence, but it is an easy line for us to cross because we so want to give to the ones we love. Likewise when you love Christ, you just know no limits in giving. After a while, you stop keeping track and giving becomes your lifestyle.

Each and every day, God gives and gives. It started the minute we were conceived when an allotted amount of time was given to us, followed by parents and other adults to nurture us, teachers and pastors to guide us and friends and family to support us. In the end we respond to what God has given us with commitment and devotion to him. We inventory the many blessings

he has poured over us and we give back to him of our time, talents, and money. But, as our text in Luke states, our giving results in once again receiving, and receiving even more than what we have given. Whenever we give something in love, we always receive more in return. You just can't out give God.

If we spread love, joy, or truth, we still have it and even more of it. What we give to our Savior, He accepts, uses, magnifies, and returns to us enhanced in value.

There is a medieval story that illustrates this truth. An announcement was made that the king was going to make a tour throughout his kingdom on a certain day. Great preparations were made for the occasion. Roads were repaired, bridges built, houses painted. The people got out their best holiday attire. If they cared to, they were encouraged to express their loyalty and love by making some gift to their king.

Now, there was a poor lady living all alone in her little cottage. She had no gift fit to give a king, nor had she suitable clothing for such an occasion, so she decided she would just stay in her little house on the great day. Oh, she might just peep through the curtains and get a glimpse of his majesty as he passed.

The day came. The people gathered by the hundreds along the highway. The lady looked out her window and saw the multitude. She looked down the king's highway and saw the procession coming. She heard the festivities and the people shouting and cheering. The old woman could not stand it. She grabbed her old black bonnet and put it on. She picked up her bag and ran out into the big crowd. "Oh, he won't notice me," she said to herself, but, just as the chariot approached her, it stopped. The king looked right through the crowd and into her face. The old woman thrust her hand into her bag and took out the only money she had, a big copper coin, and put it in the hand of the king.

The king smiled and said, "My dear good woman, you can't afford to give all that gold to your king."

"O king," cried she, "don't poke fun at a poor old woman. I know that copper coin is not fit to give a king, but it was all I had."

"Here," said the king, "take it back." And when she took it back, it had been turned into pure gold!

So it is when we give our best to our King, Christ Jesus. He accepts it, blesses it, changes it, gives it back and our copper is turned to gold. Two of the fundamentals of life are get and give.

We get in order to give and as we give, we begin to live abundantly and to help others live abundantly. God warns us of the danger of becoming a receptacle, rather than a channel. In Proverbs 11:24, we read, "*One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly but comes to poverty.*" There are unpleasant consequences for refusing to share our love and our blessings with others, but rewards beyond measure come from giving.

Love gives and delights in giving and the Lord gives us many opportunities to delight him every day. I invite you now to bring your commitment forward. This is your tangible promise to God to continue giving from the bottomless well of his provision and to step out in faith and give more than you think you can. You can't out give God. I dare you to try. AMEN.