

Book of Acts Series - Part 34 | the Miracle Called Giving

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of giving, hard work, and humility, and warns against the dangers of greed and laziness.

Duration: 45:27

Scripture: 1 Samuel 12:3, Matthew 6:33, John 3:3, Acts 20:35, 1 Corinthians 13:13, 2 Timothy 2:12, Revelation 22:20

Topics: "Book Of Acts"

Description

In this sermon, the pastor emphasizes the importance of giving and helping the weak. He compares the spiritual law of giving to the physical law of gravity, stating that when we give and love, blessings will come back to us. The pastor challenges the notion of only giving to those who are deemed worthy, reminding the audience that God gave to us despite our unworthiness. He also highlights the joy and blessing that comes from giving, quoting the words of Jesus that it is more blessed to give than to receive. The pastor concludes by emphasizing the importance of being part of a community and not being a loner, as God places us in a family when we become Christians.

Transcript

Continuing in our study on the Book of Acts, we are finally gonna get out of Chapter 20 where we've been parked for quite a while. Why? Listen to me, all you first-time visitors. The Book of Acts, written by the only Gentile writer of any book in the New Testament, man by the name of Luke, who was a doctor, he wrote a very careful historical record of the birth of the Christian church.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are called the Gospels. Gospel mean good news. It's the good news about Jesus.

And in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we learned about Jesus, his birth, his life, the miracles he did, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension back to heaven, proving he was no ordinary man. Then the Christian church now is born. They start in a prayer meeting.

The Holy Spirit, who Jesus promised would come to help them, descends upon them, and now, something called the Ecclesia in the Greek, the called-out ones, the church of Christ, begins to meet together. Converts start being made. They start sharing this message about Jesus, God so loved the world that he

gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him would not perish, but have the gift of eternal life.

Even when they die, they'll keep living. This was the message. Your sins can be forgiven.

Your conscience can be made clean. You can sleep at night. You don't have to be afraid of death because Jesus said, he that believes in me, she that believes in me, though they were dead, yet shall they live.

The message goes out, and churches begin to form all over, not only in Israel, but now up into what we would call Turkey, north and northwest of Israel, and missionary journeys are taken by the apostles, especially one called Paul, the apostle, and he goes out on a bunch of missionary trips, founding churches, sometimes being persecuted, sometimes being in jail, sometimes staying a month or two, sometimes staying a year and a half, sometimes staying three years in a city called Ephesus, and he makes several journeys over a decade, 15 years. The part of the Book of Acts that we're in now, he has completed his third missionary journey, and on his way back to Jerusalem and to the home church that he came out of in Syria, he stops in a city, town, called Miletus, and he calls for the leaders, the bishops, the presbyters, the pastors, it all means the same thing, the shepherds of the churches in and around Ephesus, whom he appointed, so these are people who have been watching and have been under his ministry for three years, and he put them, recognized God's gift in them and put them in leadership because everything has to have a leader. He calls them because he knows somehow, we learn, through the Holy Spirit, that he's never gonna see them again.

He's gonna die before he can ever get back there. He has this discourse, this last sermon to them, which is very applicable to people like me and other ministers who have been given the privilege and awesome responsibility of being leaders in the house of God, and many ministers read this whole thing in Acts 20 and study it, but it's not only for me, it's for all of us because what it's doing, ladies and gentlemen, is giving us a picture of how Christianity worked, and what's very important for us is my friend, Deacon Lincoln Fritz, he was born and raised in Trinidad, I should say, and his wife is from the Midwest, so, and you were born where you were born, and she's from Holland, and you're from Japan, and people are from Brazil, and we all grow up in different church atmospheres, but why we have to read this carefully is we have to remember this is the real deal. This is the model that God gives us of Christianity.

This is the way a church is supposed to look. This is the way a minister's supposed to act, not what you're used to and what I saw growing up. God put this in here so we would read it with a humble, teachable spirit and say, Lord, help us to do your church the way you want your church to be done, because remember, it's Jesus' church.

No church belongs to a man. No church belongs to a denomination. Every Christian church belongs to Jesus.

He's the one who died for us. He's the one who told us how he wants his church to be. Jesus never told, for example, me, I will build your church.

That's never found in the Bible. He never said, you will build my church. No, that's not found.

He said, I will build my church, and I will use people that are available to me, but it has to look like my church. I don't want an American-style church, Jesus is saying to us. I don't want a black church.

I don't want a white church. I don't want a Brazilian church. I don't want an Asian church.

We're all gonna have our cultural distinctives in a way, but spiritually, the church has to look like what we see in the Bible. That's why we read this so carefully today, and now he's come to end of his speech. It's gonna get real emotional now, which is a lesson to us, so let's just look at it.

This is the end of Acts 20, the end of his talk. I'm gonna pick it up with the verse that we read last week, which was the text for the message. Let's look at it.

So now I commend you to the care of God. I'm not gonna see you again. I commend you to the care of God and to the message of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you the blessings God has for all his people.

I have not wanted or coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. He wants to let them know that. You yourselves know that I have worked with these hands, and he probably held them out, these hands of mine to provide everything that my companions and I have needed.

I have shown you in all things that by working hard in this way, we must help the weak. We must help the weak. Remembering the words that the Lord Jesus himself said, and this is the only sentence of Jesus that's not found in the Gospels.

It must have been well known, and Paul was reminding them of it, although it's not found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. There is more happiness in giving than in receiving. We're reading from the Good News translation.

That is so much better to me than even it is more blessed to give than to receive, because blessed is not a word we use very much, but blessed in this context means there's more joy in giving than in receiving. When Paul finished, he knelt down with them and he prayed. They were all crying as they hugged him and kissed him goodbye, and in the Greek, it means they kissed him over and over again, through their tears, kissed him on his neck, kissed him on his cheek, and hugged him because, as we're gonna read, they were especially sad because he had said that they would never see him again, and so they went with him to the ship.

And now he takes off, and chapter 21 begins, and we'll see where that leads us in the weeks and months to come. So what can we learn about this? Let's just review it in our minds. He's finishing his talk, and he says to them, I commit you to God and the word of his grace, and remember, I never wanted any of your silver or gold.

I didn't covet that. I didn't want your clothing. That would be costly apparel.

And you know, as he held out his hands, we'll learn about this in a moment, I worked with my own hands, not only to support myself, but my companions, and I gave you an example. I didn't give you sermons, I gave you an example. The loudest sermons are not what we say, it's what we do.

People watch parents that are just dedicated to children. The kids are gonna hear what you do louder than what you say. That's just the way life is.

You know the old saying, I can't hear what you're saying because your actions speak so loud. You know that I supported myself and my companions, giving you the example that we have to work hard, why? So that we can help the weak. Gotta help the weak.

Remembering the words of our Lord Jesus, who said, there's more joy in giving than in receiving. And then he knelt down and he prayed with them, and then they started hugging him and kissing him. You know, this was their spiritual father, this man had so much influence on them.

And then finally, when he tore himself away, they wouldn't even let him go, they walked with him to the ship. Wouldn't hear any last word he might say. Get one last look at his face.

It's like a boyfriend, girlfriend kind of thing. Except it's a godly kind of love and appreciation. So what can we learn from this? First of all, I'd like to point out, these are just asides, I want to get to one major point, but on our way to it, let's see if we can pick up a few nuggets.

Number one, notice that Paul said, just remember now before I leave, I don't want any of your money. I wasn't after your money. I wasn't after your silver or gold or your clothes.

I didn't covet that. That is in keeping with Samuel, the prophet in the Old Testament, because when he was about to retire, he said to the people, anybody speak up that I ever hit on you for money, silver or gold for myself or clothes? He said, no, I didn't do that. So now Paul is saying the same thing.

So that's not just for me, that's for all of us. Whenever there's any minister who's always talking about money and you have to send it to him, you got to be very careful. That is not in keeping with the ministry of the New Testament.

Sometimes I turn on Christian television, many times I either get depressed or angry as I watch it, because it's depressing at one time and then other times it's angry. I know some of these characters and the degree of acting that goes on is just like Broadway. How could you preach week after week after week after week all about money and not the cross and the blood of Christ and the fact that you need to be born again and the greatest of these is love and Jesus is coming again and if we suffer with him, we'll reign with him.

There's a lot of subjects in the Bible. How can you be teaching on nothing but money? And the only way that you're promising more money to the people is if they send the money to you. It's never send to your favorite missionary, send to your local church.

No, you must send it to me. So I just want to tell all of you because there's naivete among Christians, you got to be very, very, very careful where you send your money. And anyone who's always talking about money, be doubly, doubly, doubly, triply, whatever fourthly is.

Be very careful. I read one time years ago, some one of these guys is what he is, a religious con artist. He said his newsletter went out but he never wrote it.

I researched it. I found out through people that knew him. He has some people in Arizona or New Mexico who write these letters and then they get a percentage, a kickback on what the money comes in.

He said, there's a new anointing for this year. God has a new anointing for you. No thought of how you're living.

Are you living with someone who's not your wife? Are you lying, stealing on the job? No thought of those things. Just there's a new anointing for you. If you send me \$33, you will get that new anointing.

That's close to blasphemy, wouldn't you say? At the end of the newsletter, I read it to the whole church back in the other campus. There's a special though this month that if you send me \$99, you will get a triple anointing and blessing for the new year. Now that's a crook.

Preaching godliness is gain. From such, turn away. So enough said about that.

I just wanna say to all of you, always be careful when someone's talking money, money, money, money, money, and always to them. Silver and gold, I never coveted your money. I didn't want your money.

I wanted your spiritual growth. I want you. When you have children that you love, do you want their money or do you wanna see them grow and be strong and successful? Do the children save up for the parents or do the parents save up for the children? Parents save up for the children.

That's what the Bible teaches. And then, to prove this point and to show the example that he wanted them to follow, I know this is strange for some of us, because we have grown up, and some of us in certain cultures or Christian atmosphere, where the man of God is this remote figure dressed in special clothes and all of that, that is never found in the Bible, and people have to stand when he walks in and all that other stuff. That's not at all the Christian ministry.

In the example of Jesus Christ who washed the disciples' feet, leaders are supposed to be servant leaders. We're supposed to serve you. You're not supposed to serve us.

We're supposed to wash your feet. He holds out his hands and he says, amazing thing, which is because it's extra biblical. He says, you know, look at my hands.

I killed myself. He mended tents. All Jewish men growing up had to learn a manual trade, no matter what else they did.

If they studied Torah or whatever and were religious pursuits, they studied and they learned a trade because labor in that Jewish culture was esteemed as a very high thing, work, labor. Paul's trade was he made tents. So it seems like that most of the time he was in Ephesus, he supported himself.

Why? We don't know. We know one thing, though. In other places in the Bible, he says the labor is worthy of his hire.

In another place, he says, those that preach the gospel should live by the gospel. And we know in other places, other people supported him and gave money to him so that he could be free to preach the gospel and visit people and do what God called him to do. But for some reason in this case, he said, I'm gonna forego my privilege.

I have rights as a minister, but I'm gonna forego them and I'm gonna work, not to be a burden to you. But yo, elders of Ephesus, bishops of Ephesus, remember my example. I work with my, look at the calluses on those hands.

I work with my own hands, not just to support myself, but to support myself and my other fellow ministers. So remember, don't be greedy and act like some dictator. But remember, be ready to do whatever you have to do for the people because the people go first, not the minister.

You're not saying amen. Don't you agree with these things? They're in the Bible. And then he said, follow my example, that I worked hard.

We should all work hard. Labor is part of life. God, when he created men and women, said six days you'll labor.

Then you'll have a day of rest. That's in the old covenant. There's something wonderful about working hard.

Whatever you set your hand to do, do it with all your heart. Do you work in an office? Work hard every day. Do you teach? Work hard every day.

Are you an executive assistant to someone? Work hard every day. Are you a farmer? Work hard at it. Scamming a system and not working hard is not a godly thing to do.

Paul says, I never wanted your stuff. I try to do the best to support myself, not to be a burden. But remember, we gotta work hard.

Everywhere in the Bible, people work hard. Paul says as an apostle, even though God has to do the work when we do ministry, he says, I worked harder than all the other apostles. God never blesses laziness.

I think social services and welfare is a wonderful thing because there's so many people who need help who can't work hard. They're in situations they can't work, and I think that's a godly thing. But we all know that whatever system you set up, there are people ready to scam the system.

They're gonna scam that system. Why? Because they don't wanna work. So they're gonna find a way to get into that.

Or unions over-protecting people so they don't have to hardly work at all. Otherwise, the union will pull everybody off the job. We all know how that works.

We live in New York City. Remember, we're not New York City people. We're Christian people, right? And whatever you do tomorrow, if you read the Bible, read it with all your heart.

If you go to a job, work with all your heart. I don't care if the boss is looking or not looking. God is watching.

It doesn't matter what your neighbor is doing on the job. If you work at a church, when you have a choir practice, please kill yourself in the practice. Work hard.

God never blesses laziness. And I don't care if no one says amen. I am enjoying this message so much.

This is so good. Is it not good? Give me some props here, brother. All right.

You gotta work hard. There's nothing worse in life than a half-baked anything. I was just this week in Erie, Pennsylvania, speaking for the Billy Graham Association to a large group of pastors north of Pittsburgh a couple hours.

And I said to them, whatever you're gonna have a meeting, whatever you're gonna do, if you're gonna study, you're gonna preach, whatever you're gonna do, do it with all your heart. There's nothing worse than watching something half-baked. I love to look up at the choir because almost 100%, when you watch up, they're singing with all their heart.

That's why they're a blessing. They're not just looking at their nails and going, yeah, I'll sing along. No, it's for God we're gonna sing.

When we worship God, when we lift our hands, when we clap our, whatever you do, do it with all your heart. Work hard at it. Let's put our hands together and thank God we can do that.

Charles Spurgeon, the great English preacher from London, said, every minister who's lazy should be washed out of the ministry immediately. Because everyone has different gifting and some don't have as much gifting as another. But to be lazy is unforgivable.

Because we're working for Christ. We're working for Christ. We're gonna serve the Lord, what, half-heartedly? When he was in the garden in Gethsemane, was he doing anything half-heartedly? When he was on the cross, what did that cost him? A little or a lot? So then what are we gonna do? Be casual followers of Jesus Christ? No, let's do it.

If you're gonna do it, do it. If you're not gonna do it, I remember playing basketball in college or in high school at Erasmus. When in college, sometimes the coach would come in to practice and we'd be running drills.

He'd say, I was the point guard. I'm thinking of my senior year when we went to the NCAA tournament, March Madness, happening right now. He walked into the practice one day.

He said, Jim, run the drills. Run this system and that system and run about four or five plays. So what happens when you're practicing and the coach is not there, you start just doing it half-speed.

You throw, you cut, you move over here, you set a pick, another guy comes, and then you're doing it like half-speed. Not the speed that you're supposed to do it at the game. I remember him coming in one day.

He said, what's this? And he blamed me. What's this going on? Everybody, get back. Then go in the locker room.

You don't wanna practice? Then get out of here. We're either gonna practice or we're not gonna practice. If we're gonna practice, practice hard.

You don't wanna play? Go back to, and I remember us arguing, please let us practice. No, you don't wanna, then get up, take a shower and go back to your dorms. And that's right.

Whatever you do, do with all your heart. And we live in a whole society. Come on, let's talk, do real talk.

We live in a whole society today in America. Everyone's looking for a way to get out. Come on, am I right or wrong here? Everyone's looking for a way to get out.

Everyone's looking for a way to scam the system, whatever the system is. I was in Israel with the missionaries that went out from our church. And two of the boys grew up and they served in the Israeli army.

And both of them, but one particularly, worked with dogs. The dog is your partner. So you're dealing with terrorists, you're dealing with bombers, suicide bombers, you're dealing with a lot of stuff.

This was about eight, nine years ago. So I'm there talking to one of them and they're telling me about their dog. They sleep with their dog, they eat with their dog, and they train every day with the dog, whether they're in action or not.

Because that dog keeps them alive. It's amazing. And they have these German shepherds that are trained, especially bright dogs.

And they're trained so that they go into a building 200 yards away and they have an earpiece on them and the soldier talks to them, go to the right, and the dog goes to the right. Go dig down. And he can understand orders because he's looking for somebody.

And that's 200 yards away, so they don't have to walk in and get bombed. And the dog is lighter, scenting things, and all of that. He was telling me how incredibly bright these dogs are.

When they come back from a mission, these guys hug their dogs. Some soldier from Middle East War, American, just was reunited with his dog. I saw it on the news last night.

Because he had said, if he's still alive and he retires, I want to adopt him. And they sent him back to the soldier who now is back home here because they have a bond. That's your lifeline, that dog.

He told me these dogs are so smart. You train them every day. They're incredibly smart.

He said, they're too smart. I said, what do you mean they're too smart? He said, you know what happens sometimes? You're doing your drills, you're doing your drills. And suddenly, the dog just takes off and runs.

And then makes, turns around a corner, and you don't know where, you know, like what did the dog do? I didn't give that order, what's he doing? And then you walk around, and the dog is just laying, chilling against a wall. He's scamming the system. He's chilling on the job.

He went behind a wall, he knows you can't see him. He's just laying down there like, yeah, this is nice. Can you imagine how smart they are? Gold-bricking on the job, even the dogs.

Why do we have to work hard? Because we have to help the poor. Not poor, really, the word is help the weak. What weak? Not heal the weak, help the weak.

Not heal the poor, help the poor. Christianity is all about action. Christianity, true Christianity, is about philanthropy.

Christianity is about giving to help people who don't have. Or help them in the area where they're weak. Weak how? Weak in their body.

Weak in their mind. Weak in their emotions. Weak in their faith.

I'm spending some time later today with a young lady who's being attacked in her mind, and she's cutting herself, and she's in college. She's weak right now. Someone's gonna help her.

The idea that Christianity is about learning Bible verses and singing praise and worship songs on Sunday and that it ends there, that's totally foreign to anything the Christians in the New Testament would know about. It's action. God didn't save me to go to church.

Does that make any sense? No, he saved me to keep up the work that Jesus started. Jesus went about doing good and healing all of them that were oppressed by the devil. We have to help the weak.

And you run into weak people every day. ADD, weak in their mind. Weak in their emotions.

Weak in their focus. Weak in their education. Weak in their social skills.

Can't get along with people. There's weak people all around us, and we're weak in certain areas ourselves. So Christianity, Paul says, remember, we're working hard.

We gotta do this, why? Because Christianity is practical. It's not about going to church. It's about helping people who are weak.

Isn't that what Jesus did? So I wonder, asking all of you, whatever concept you have of Christianity, when was the last time you lived a day looking for who you could help who was weak? Oh, no, I go to the Brooklyn Tab on Sunday. Yeah, I know, that's great. But we were raised up by the Lord to help those who are weak.

Paul said we must help those who are weak. If you see someone suffering, and you say you love God, but you don't help them, how is the love of God there? Am I right, isn't that what the Scripture says? So that's a challenge to all of us, because a lot of us have developed in the concept of Christianity that is totally removed from helping the weak. It's all about us.

How you feel? I am feeling so good today. Okay, well then let's pray, and we'll help you. But then you gotta get strong enough so you can help the weak.

Who's gonna help the weak if we don't? You think society cares about them? Think the movie stars care about them? Think the big athletes care about them for the most part? No. So Christians have to follow in the steps of Jesus who went about helping weak. You know, his friend was Simon the leper.

Mary Magdalene, demon-possessed, little children. How about all the kids that are growing up with no dad? Come on, men, I'm asking you. How about all the kids, somebody else's kids? No dad in the house, the mother's overwhelmed.

Who's gonna help them? The Board of Ed? Come on. So that's what we're light and salt for here on Earth. We're supposed to help the weak.

I know it's quiet now because God's searching all of us. A lot of our Christianity is about me, myself, and I. Christianity in America has, you talk to people, it's all about Jesus and how I need him and how you gotta help me, and maybe even a praise report, but the thought of living a day just looking to help people who are weak, that is not the agenda of most people. It's about us.

And those of you listening on the website, I know that comes across as rather challenging, but I'm challenging myself. I'm not looking down at you. I wanna help people who are weak.

Now, just before I close here, I just want you to notice this thing of helping weak and coming together with other people. Before I give you the final thing I wanna talk about, I want you to notice that when he got done with his speech, he knelt down and prayed with them. Wouldn't you have liked to have been there and heard that? He wasn't gonna ever see him again.

And then they jumped on him and hugged him. The Greek is, in the original Greek, it's a very strong picture that's presented to us of hugging and kissing repeatedly. And that reminds me of the fact that when you become a Christian, God automatically puts you in a family.

You cannot be a loner. You cannot be a loner. And I felt inspired last night.

I don't wanna spend a lot of time on this, but in prayer, I felt inspired to tell somebody here today, there's great pain in being a loner. They just have been doing some studies to try to turn around the idea of isolation or solitary confinement in prisons. And I visit a prison regularly down in Louisiana, and I help, by the grace of God, to lead a man to the Lord who had been in the same eight by 10 cell for 32 years.

23 hours a day, one hour out. That one hour out, some of them are shackled. They go and take a shower, and then they can go to the yard to exercise.

But the yard is barbed wire, and they're alone in that little segment. In fact, the yard that, guys, the yard that I was in was like two of these carpets, that length, and the guys were running. They were doing push-ups, sit-ups.

Then they would use this exercise. One had a basket. Guy had a basketball, and he was shooting.

But there's fences, barbed wires. You're all alone. Now, you can shout out to another guy a little bit away, but otherwise, you're alone.

Then you go in your cell for 23 hours. 23 hours every day, three, six, five, for 30-some years. So now what they're saying is that the pain of loneliness and isolation in terms of what the brain looks like is worse than the pain of inflicted punishment physically.

Do you get it? The pain, and what happens to your mind, the pain is deeper when you're isolated and alone than if somebody would whip you on the back. And that's why Jesus sent the disciples out two by two, and that's why he put us in a community. You can't be alone.

Choir members, you can't be loners. I know, but Pastor, you don't know what someone did to me. You don't know what happened at that other church.

You don't know how that guy walked out on me. You don't know what my parents did to me. Listen, I don't, I don't.

But God wants you to have friends, and some of you have grown up, you're loners for whatever reason. Please don't be a loner. The pastors are gonna be standing up here at the end with me at the end of however we end this service.

If you need a friend, we'll try to be your friend, but you can't be alone. That's painful. You gotta mix with people, laugh with people, hug people, kiss people, because that's what they did.

The church wasn't everybody just stiff and mechanical, and then you go home because that's not my business. They were hugging and kissing, it was family. And some of you don't have a family intact.

God's given you a family. Come on, do I get an amen here? He's given you sisters and brothers, and mothers and fathers. He wants you to have, but you gotta open up, and you gotta say, I need to meet people.

It breaks my heart when I meet people who have been coming here for 11 years, and they don't have one good friend in the whole church. Well, then who are your friends? Well, I don't have any. Well, why? Well, you don't understand how I've been hurt.

Don't you get it? The enemy's gonna use that to isolate you. And that's painful, and it makes you weak spiritually. We get strength from each other.

Iron sharpens iron. A three-strand rope is stronger than a single strand. You gotta have people you gotta talk to and pray with.

And now, as they come to play, I wanna just end with this thought, my main thought, but I won't take long with it. We gotta help the weak. Remembering the words of our Lord, who said, there's more joy in giving than in receiving.

It's more blessed to give than to receive. I already took the offering, so these remarks have nothing to do with some collection, because I wanna talk about something far transcending money. It is more joyful, there's more joy in giving than in receiving.

How will the weak be helped? Someone has, look, watch. Someone has to take something of theirs and transfer it to the weak person. That's what giving is, in every sense.

Weak giving is, I have something, time, intelligence, a word, money, love, and it has to leave me and go out towards someone who's weak. That's the only way you can help them. Words, time, something has to leave me.

When you do that, there's more joy in going out than in coming in. There's more joy in going out to someone. Now, I feel the resistance invisibly already now in your minds, because the world teaches the exact opposite.

The world says, you're a chump if you give. There was a Greek proverb that went along the lines of the fool is the one who gives, the smart one is the one who receives. But Jesus' religion is just the opposite.

This is why so many people are not so happy, because they don't live giving lives. Oh, but pray for me, I want more joy. Well, listen, there's more joy in giving than in receiving.

If your life is nothing but taking in and you don't go out to anyone, I would have to violate scripture for you to be happy. Some of you right now, your life is centered around you, what you need, your family, everything is in, in, in, what do I need, and the other guy you walk by, the other woman, the people around you that God has you run into, there's no thought of taking something and going out to them. What do they need? I have to help the weak, because I'm a follower of Jesus.

Now, here's what I've learned. Not only do unbelievers not understand that it's more joy in giving than in receiving, but baby Christians and immature Christians and unspiritual Christians, this makes no sense to them. Some of you are just like, like, what are you talking about? What are you talking about? What are you talking about, giving, receiving? I want to get, life is about getting, life is not about giving.

What do you mean? What do you mean there's more joy in giving than in receiving? Christians don't even get it. Their lives are just me, me, I know that because I was there. Me, me, me, me, what I need, my thing, my thing, my Carol, my Chrissy, my family, me, me, me, me, I know that.

And there are a lot of Christians who speak in tongues and understand the Bible and all of that, and they haven't even learned the fact that there's no more joy in giving than in receiving. They haven't. It's all about them.

It takes growth, it takes pain, it takes maturity to realize that what life is about, you only really own the things that you give. You only enjoy the things, not that you have, that you give. I know that sounds totally nuts to you, but it's true.

And then people feel no fulfillment, no joy, and they're wondering, what's wrong? I'm reading the scriptures. Yeah, but you've isolated yourself in a two-by-four compartment. There's more joy in giving than in receiving.

May God mature us so that we become more of a giver. I wonder who has a reputation here. I wonder who in the choir has a reputation on their job.

I wonder who in the church here has a reputation. Oh, she's a giver. I don't mean money only.

I mean, how are you doing? What can I do for you? What are you going through? Can I give a prayer? Can I, oh, you need some money? Or can I give you a lift to church? Where do you live? How long does it take on the subways? Let me see if I can arrange for someone in the church to pick you up. Out. Away, out.

And some of you have grown up and you think you understand Christianity, and in this area, we have very little clue. It's all in. I want more power, more joy.

For what? If you're not gonna go out, why would he give you more power? Why would I get more power? Why would he trust me with power and blessing if it's only for me? Listen, that's why, secondly, Jesus said this. Luke six, look, verse 38. Give to others and God will give to you.

Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping poured into your hands, all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you. Listen to me, hear me, hear the word of the Lord.

Give to others and God will give to you. How? Don't worry about it, he'll do it. Give to others and God will give to you.

Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping. Maybe there's people here in need that God wants to help, but you just won't give something away so that God could then fulfill his word. If you would just give, it would come back.

There's a law, just like gravity. Look, if I take my glass case here and I drop it, it's gonna go down 100 out of 100. Why? There's a law of gravity, 32 feet per second per second, this thing is falling.

100 times, it'll never go up. There's another law that God says in the spiritual realm. If you go out and give and pray and love and do that, as you do it, something will be coming back to you.

Can we say amen to that? You say, pastor, I would like to give to people, but it's so hard to find someone who's worthy. Well, wait a minute, if that's the case, then why did God give it to us to begin with? You're checking who's worthy and God gave you things? I don't know about you, but I can't find anyone unworthy because God gave it to me, the most unworthy. And those of you watching on the webcast, oh, that God would touch you today and your life would turn around, you start going out, out, not in, out.

You go out, now God says, oh, you're gonna go out and bless in my name? Then you're gonna get everything you need. Shaken together, rolling over, you won't be able to handle everything. Listen, that's

true, not just for an individual, it's true for church.

God watches all the time. Last word, so I have so little to give. Pastor, you don't know my situation.

Here's what I've learned about giving, this law. I'm seeing it now clearer. God give me more insight.

I don't care what you have today, why don't you give some praise to God? Why don't you give some thanksgiving to God? Did you know that's what opens up the windows of heaven? Why do you think the Bible says he inhabits the praises of his people? Because anytime something goes out from a person in the right spirit, not just to humans, but to God. One day I was at the end of my rope. My daughter was many years away from God.

My heart was broken, my wife wasn't feeling good. She was not right hormonally, which affected her mind. She had had surgery.

I was all alone in the living room and I was crying so desperately. The tears were so hot coming down my eyes, my cheek. I see myself in that living room on Gaskill Road.

And God spoke to my heart and said, do you believe I'm gonna do this? You believe I'm gonna help you? And I said, yes, God, you've always helped me. I believe it. Then praise me.

Give me some praise. Give me some thanksgiving. And I went, but nothing's happened yet.

No change has happened. My wife's still not feeling good. My daughter's still away from us and God.

I know, but give me praise. Give me thanksgiving. Don't wait till anything happens.

See, when we give and something goes out from us, it makes the road ready for us to receive the thing that we need from God. Can we all just put our hands together and say amen to that? We give you praise. We give you praise.

So today we can give praise. We can give God something. Let's just pray.

Father God, so many things we've learned today. But we wanna ask you to help us focus on it all, but especially this. That there would be no lonely, stranger-like people in the body of Christ.

But that we would love each other and protect our brothers and sisters. And we understand that there's weakness in people. And I know that because there's weakness in me.

I grew up in an alcoholic home and there's repercussions still in my personality from that. And we need each other. We need to love each other.

We need to help each other. Help our church to love one another more. So visitors will come in and not mention the choir or my preaching ability, but they will say those folks love each other.

I felt the love of God in that place. We pray that we will work hard at whatever we do. There'll be no lazy people among us.

Let the people who don't know Jesus scam the system and scam their jobs, but not us. We're gonna work hard. Because we're not working for the boss, we're working for Jesus.

You said that in your word. Not doing eye service for the supervisor, but working as unto the Lord. And finally, Lord, would you teach us that there's more joy in giving than there is in receiving? Would you mature us to the place where we break out of the confines of our little selfish world and we start seeing people the way you see them and their weakness and their needs and this girl cutting herself and all the things happening around us? Because joy is not in getting a check and going on a vacation, getting a nicer apartment.

That is not where the joy is. The joy is in giving to others in the name of Christ. Help us also to understand by faith that as we go out in any way, shape, or form to others, it shall be given back to us.

That God, you said, you stand behind that word. Give to people and God will give to you. You stand behind that.

You've never failed at once. God, I testify, and I'll have greater testimonies hopefully in the future to share with the people of God that you are not giving to others. You are never in debt to anyone.

Anyone who gives, any church that gives, anyone who does that, their time of reaping will come. And even though we don't have, not gonna take another offering, we can give you something right now, Lord. We're gonna give you praise.

We're gonna give you thanksgiving from our heart. We're not asking you for one more thing now. We're just gonna give you praise.

Father God, let your face shine upon your people and give us peace. Give everybody a beautiful day. Now, putting this sermon into action, help us to love each other.

You know what, as our eyes are closed, ladies, when you hug one another, give someone a kiss. And men, you give, well, we'll skip the kissing, but give somebody a good hug. For we dismiss in the name of Christ and everyone said, amen.

God bless you. Hug each other.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25436.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/book-of-acts-series-part-34-the-miracle-called-giving/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net