

Giving What We Have

by J.R. Miller

J.R. Miller emphasizes the importance of using and sharing our talents, no matter how small, to serve others and fulfill our responsibilities as stewards of God's gifts.

Scripture: Matthew 25:14, Luke 19:20

Topics: "Stewardship", "Service to Others"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the importance of using our talents and abilities, no matter how small, rather than hiding them away in a 'napkin' of self-doubt or perceived inadequacy. He argues that everyone has something to offer, and we are responsible for using what we have to bless others, as God expects us to be stewards of our gifts. Miller encourages us to recognize that even small acts of kindness can have a significant impact, and that we should not withhold our contributions due to feelings of insignificance. He illustrates that true service comes from understanding and sharing the love and comfort we have received from God, urging us to give freely and cheerfully. Ultimately, Miller calls us to be open-hearted and ready to serve, as we never know the hidden needs of those around us.

Transcript

"And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is your pound, which I have kept wrapped up in a napkin."
Luke 19:20

There always are those who wrap their talent for service, in the napkin of not-worthwhile. They feel that they could not do much, because their ability is so small--and therefore they do not try to do anything. They suppose that they are practicing the much praised virtue of humility, while really they are evading duty and responsibility, and thus incurring blame and guilt!

The truth is, no one, however small his abilities, need live uselessly. God bestows no talents which he means to be wrapped up in napkins of any kind. Of course we cannot give--what we do not have. One who has no money--cannot give money aid to others who need. One who lacks strength--cannot help those who are weak. One who does not know the way--cannot be guide to others in difficult or intricate paths. We must learn--before we can teach. We must understand the way of salvation--before we can make the way plain for our friends. If we have not learned to sympathize--we cannot give sympathy to those who are in trouble. If we have had no experience of sorrow and of divine comfort--we cannot give comfort to those who are in sorrow. We cannot show others the love of God--if we have not received that love into our own hearts. The teacher cannot tell his scholars more about the Christian life--than he knows himself. The

preacher cannot lead his people farther in the ways of Christ--than his own feet have gone.

But we should always give what we have. We are never to say, "There is no use in my giving, for I have so little. It can do no one any good." We have nothing to do with the matter of larger or smaller. We are responsible only for what we have. If it is but one little talent--one little talent is all we shall have to answer for. But we must answer for that, and if we fail to use it, we shall not only lose it in the end--but also shall incur the penalty of uselessness.

Nor do we know what is really small in its capacity for usefulness, or its possibilities of growth. Talents that are used--are multiplied by the using. By giving what we have today--we shall have more to give tomorrow. Many of those who have blessed the world most richly--had but little at first. They did what they could, however, and as they lived and served, their capacity for living and serving increased, until at length they reached countless thousands with the blessing of their influence.

What we have--we should give--we are bound to give. We should never withhold it. It is not ours to keep only for ourselves--God gives nothing for miserly hoarding or for selfish use. Always we are his stewards, and are blessed ourselves in order that we may be a blessing to others. This is true of every good thing we receive. It ceases to be a good thing to us--if we refuse to share it or to pass it on. This is true of our common, earthly blessings. The great law of love for our neighbor requires us to hold all we have at the call of God for human need. The love of God, which is given to us so freely and with such infinite lavishness, blesses us only when we too become loving like God, and love others as he loves us. The divine forgiveness can become ours--only if we will pass it on, forgiving as we are forgiven. We can get God's comfort in our sorrow--only when we are ready to give it out again, comforting others with the comfort with which we ourselves have been comforted of God.

Of all the great gifts and blessings that God graciously bestows upon us--not one is for ourselves alone. What we have--we must give, otherwise we shall lose it.

We are always in the midst of human needs, to which we should minister. It may not seem that those about us need anything that we could give them. They appear happy, and perhaps they have more than we have to make them so. But we do not know what hunger there may be in their hearts, what hidden griefs they are carrying in the midst of the sunshine which pours all about them, what burdens they are bearing of which they speak no word. At least, we should be open-hearted and open-handed in our love toward all men, ready to serve them in any way we can, not knowing what their need may be this very moment.

We are only required to give what we have--not what we have not. When we stand in the presence of a need which we cannot possibly meet--we need not vex ourselves because we cannot help. The thing we really cannot do--is not our duty--but some other person's. We must not conclude too quickly, however, in the face of any need--that we can do nothing to meet it. Perhaps what the person seems to require--is not what he really needs. It may be that we have, even among our scant stores, that which will feed his hunger or relieve his distress--better than if we could give him what he requests of us.

At the Beautiful Gate of the temple, Peter could not give what the beggar asked--but he did not therefore pass on to his devotions, leaving the man unhelped. What he gave, too, was really far better for the beggar--than the paltry thing the man, with his inadequate thought of his need, had asked for. Because we cannot give what our neighbor seems to need--we are not therefore to give him nothing.

The amount of money we have for charity--is not the measure of our ability to help. Money is the poorest of all alms. A great deal of money-giving does irreparable hurt to those who receive it. It makes them less noble in living. There is great harm done by indiscriminate charity, which does not foster manly self-reliance--but a weak and unmanly spirit of dependence. We do not help another wisely--when we do for him the things he could have done for himself. If Peter had given money that day at the temple gate, he would only thus have enabled the lame man to live a little longer in his miserable and useless mendicancy. He gave him a blessing, however, which made mendicancy no longer a necessity, since the man could now take his place among men and provide for himself.

The way we can best help others--is not by ministering merely to their infirmities and weaknesses--but by putting into them courage and strength that they may take care of themselves. We may not have money to give--but there are better alms than money. If we get a discouraged man to take heart again, and to set out bravely to fight his own battles and carry his own burdens--we have done him a far greater kindness, than if we had fought his battles and carried his burdens for him.

We should always give--whatever we have to give. It may be only a word of cheer; but one of the most useful men in the world--is the man who gives a word of encouragement to everyone he meets. His life is a perpetual blessing. Wherever he goes, flowers grow in the path behind him. He does not do anything 'great', anything that men talk about, or that is mentioned in the newspapers--yet he makes everyone he meets--a little braver, stronger, and happier, and that is worth while; that is angel work!

Henry Drummond says that we do not know what ripples of healing are set in motion--when we simply smile at another. The people with the plainest, commonest abilities, have yet something to give--let them give just what they have--and it will in some way sweeten the world's bitterness, brighten its darkness, and put strength into its weakness. We need not worry over what we wish we could give--but have not. That is not our duty; that is help we are not responsible for. But if we would not disappoint God and fail in our responsibility, we must always give cheerfully what we have to give.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jr-miller/giving-what-we-have/>

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