

**DON'T JUST GIVE - GIVE BACK**  
**ORIGINS SERIES PART 3 - IT'S NOT ABOUT US**  
**Ben Rudolph**

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Good morning Life Fellowship. It is good to see you here this morning. My name is Ben Rudolph and I am one of the teaching pastors here at Life. And whether you are new here this morning, or this is your church home, I am just thankful that you are here. So let's turn in our Bibles to Acts Chapter 11 this morning, and this will be our last week in Acts Chapter 11.

The story we are going to be talking about this morning is a story about giving. And I was just thinking this morning how often you and I are asked to give to things on a weekly basis. Have you ever thought about that? I mean we are inundated with people asking us for money and resources all the time. When we go to the grocery store, whether it is Whole Foods or Harris Teeter, we will be asked if we would like to give to this cause, or we are asked if we want to round up our dollar for something.

I was at Walmart a couple of weeks ago and even the machine asked me to give a dollar to something. Has that ever happened to you? As I was paying the machine asked me if I wanted to give a dollar to some cause or another. It happens to me a couple of times a week where maybe I am stopping at an intersection and there will be someone there with a sign asking for money. So you have homeless people and then you have schools. Your kid's school, or maybe it is your neighbor kid's school, but they are always having fund raisers for projects.

Then there are charities, and there is so much need. And I promise you this that there is not a week that goes by that Dan and I are not asked at least two to three times to give to a missions organization, or to a missionary that is needing money. And these needs are all real. They are all for a good cause. But then you come to church and what do we ask you for? Money. And for some of you it may just be like '*Would you just stop asking?*'

And sometimes we feel like that. Sometimes we feel like there is just so much white noise. There are so many people that are asking for things, and asking for things, and asking for things. We are asked to give, and give, and give. And so there is a lot of this activity going on around us. And we have all these questions - *How do we give in a Biblical way? And how do we cut through all the white noise to really have a Biblical worldview for how we handle our resources? What we should do with giving? And how do we do it so that it honors God?*

And I think that for everyone in this room I can guarantee that we all fit into a couple of different categories. For some of us it just feels confusing because there are so many opportunities to give, so many different missionaries with needs, so many different projects, and so many different needs in the world that many times we just feel confused. '*What do I do? What do I give to? What is the percent we should give? I hear some*

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*people say we are supposed to give 10 percent and other people say we are not just to give 10 percent, so what are we to do?’* And so there is confusion over what we do with our finances.

And then others of us may not feel confused, but we have cynicism. Maybe we have just been burned a few times by giving to people or things that we find out later are not legit. Listen, this happened to me. I remember when I was a pastor at a Baptist church down in Charlotte for six years. And when I first got on staff there I was the low man on the totem pole so I didn't really handle a lot of the big decisions. Our church was in the Sugar Creek area and we would probably get people coming in off the streets two or three times a week asking the church for money. And after being there a while one of the opportunities I received was these people were to be sent to me and I became the decision maker.

So the first time someone came in my office pouring out their sob story I just really wanted to help them. I went to the business office and asked them for money and I was told that the church didn't give money, but they could have three other options to help them. And then time after time after time I began to realize that some of these people were liars. And I found out that many of these people were just looking for drug or alcohol money. And they did not have really legitimate needs.

And by the end of my time there, when people would come in to ask for money I would be like, *'Yeah, whatever. I have heard it all before. What is the problem now?'* And after dealing with these people over time I became cynical and hard because I had heard it all before. I remember waking up one day and thinking, *'What is wrong with me?'*

And maybe that is you this morning. Or maybe it is not confusion or cynicism, maybe it is just a casual attitude about giving. And you don't really give unless you feel inspired to give. So knowing where we all are in this room, knowing that there are challenges and barriers to us really reflecting the nature of God in our giving, I want to say this. I am not here to put a guilt trip on anyone. In fact I know that because we are under Christ, because we are under the blood of Jesus Christ, we are free to give, and we are free not to give. Okay? Giving money to a church or charity, or any good cause does not make us more or less approved by God. I want to say that up front.

And I think many times people are made to feel guilty because they aren't giving enough. Now I have to be honest with you when I say I hate talking to people about money. But do you know who is amazing talking about money? It is Pastor Dan. Can I get an amen? I mean that dude can talk about money and it just flows out of him. I have never seen a guy who loves talking about money more than he does. And when I ask him

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how he does it, he always just says, *'It is not my money. It is not their money either. It is God's money.'* And he has such conviction about it.

I remember when I was a brand new pastor planting a church, and I did not want people thinking that I wanted their money. I remember after the four years I spent planting this church I realized that I had never taught on giving. But what I was doing was stunting the spiritual growth of our people, because what we do with our resources and what we do with our money is a mark of discipleship. And it is a sign of the love we have for God to give.

So I want us to read this story at the end of Acts Chapter 11. Remember last week we talked about how God wove this story about the brand new church in Antioch. The Spirit of God was working and moving, and people were getting saved. It was both Jews and Gentiles, making it a multi ethnic church. Then there was Barnabas and Paul coming there to teach, and it was a beautiful picture of the gospel.

Now let's begin with verse 27. ***"Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch."*** Let me just stop right there for a minute. If you understand your geography, you know that Antioch is north of Jerusalem. So when they say coming down from Jerusalem, it means Jerusalem was in an elevated place. So coming down did not mean they were going south; it meant they were coming down from the mountain or the high place where Jerusalem was. I just wanted to explain that.

***"Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul."***

This is the story of the church in Antioch, and things were going great. The Spirit of God is moving and they are seeing people saved, baptized, and growing. They were a group where when you walked in the room there was just this energy because the Spirit of God was working and moving. And then someone new comes into the church, and he was a prophet named Agabus. Now when we hear the word prophet a lot of times we think of someone foretelling the future, and that is exactly what Agabus does.

And let me just say this. When you hear about who a prophet is, and what a prophet does, it does not mean that a prophet merely foretells the future. Biblically speaking, a prophet is merely someone who declares the truth of God in a very clear and concise way. Now about ten percent of the time it may be a foretelling of the future. But a lot of times when we hear the word prophet or prophecy we think about fortune tellers,

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or people who can predict the future. But this was a special dispensation that the Holy Spirit had given this man Agabus, and he said there was going to be a famine in the land.

Now why was that significant? It was significant because Antioch was a very wealthy city. It was probably one of the top three wealthiest cities in the Roman Empire. Judea was not a wealthy city. And so what happened was the church in Antioch was in a very wealthy city, and probably most people in that church had means. Some of the places in the Roman Empire were circles known as bread baskets in the Empire. And the people who would get the bread or the grain first were the most important cities, which included Antioch because it was one of those important cities. Rome was never without, but Judea and Jerusalem would probably only get the leftovers.

Not only that but the people who were in Jerusalem were primarily Jews, and in that culture people who accepted Jesus as their Savior would not just leave the synagogue, but it also meant they would leave much of their family. So they would have been left without that security, that safety net they could have relied on to help them in times of need.

And the church in Antioch understood what was going on. Now notice Agabus never said there was a famine coming and that the church people needed to give. That never happened. But what happened was this church became aware of the need because of a famine coming in the land, and they knew they had two things on their side living in Antioch. They had plenty of resources, and they had money. They would have the grain as needed for themselves, and they would have the money to buy more grain. But in other areas they would not have grain, and they also would not have enough money to buy grain.

So they knew they needed to do something. They took a collection and gathered what they could and they sent it to others. Now this is a beautiful picture of how the church of Jesus Christ works. And we see that not just here, but we see it happening over and over again in other Scripture. Remember in Acts Chapter 6 how the church fed the widows, how they distributed the bread to the widows in their church. And in Acts Chapter 4 we studied about how the people were selling their property and giving the money to the church to be used for people's needs.

So we see this over and over again in this early church. And here is the question that I have - why? Suppose I came up to you and said that the Spirit of God had given me a dispensation that there was going to be a massive famine, a massive economic downturn in the land, how many of us would be asking, '*How much can we give?*' We would probably just start saving and start hoarding for ourselves. We would not be

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thinking of how much we could give for other's needs; we would be thinking about how much we could save for ourselves.

So there is this question of why did this happen this way in Antioch. Why was this church so generous to other people? And I believe it is because they understood what it meant to be a part of the Kingdom of God. I want to take you through some verses because the Bible talks a lot about the poor and about giving, especially in the Old Testament. Over a hundred times the Bible talks about the poor, the widowed, the orphans, and the immigrants within the culture of the people of God and how they were to be treated.

This is important to God, so I want you to see these verses. The first one is Leviticus Chapter 23 and verse 22. We are just going to quickly read through these, and you can write them down to study later. *“And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.”*

Listen to this passage in Deuteronomy Chapter 15 beginning in verse 7: *“If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, ‘The seventh year, the year of release is near,’ and your eye look grudgingly on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the Lord against you, and you be guilty of sin. You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, ‘You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.’”*

Here is another one found in Proverbs Chapter 19 and verse 17. *“Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his deed.”* And this is the last one, which is a passage in Isaiah Chapter 10 beginning in verse 1: *“Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who keep writing oppression, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey! What will you do on the day of judgment, in the ruin that will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help, and where will you leave your wealth?”*

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Listen, this has just been a sample of God talking about giving to the poor, and there are many more examples of them to be found in Scripture. I wanted to read some of those verses to you to show you one thing. From the very beginning when God was forming His people to the very end when they were being sent into captivity, God cared about how His people, His Kingdom were responsible for taking care of the poor. It was important to God. He said it over and over and over again.

Now if you are in a relationship with someone and someone says over a hundred times that this is important to them - is it important? Yes, it is. My wife and I have been married for 21 years and one of the big things that is very important to me is I love being early for wherever we are to be. I am a guy who loves to be early whether it is for an appointment, or just going somewhere. I love to be at least 15 minutes early. Can I get an amen from any of you? (*Amen.*) All right.

Now listen, this was a deal breaker for me when I met Liz, because I knew that if she was going to make me late, I would have a horrible life. (*Laughter.*) I am just that OCD about being early. Now she doesn't like to be as early as me, but let me tell you that she never makes me late, and that is just wonderful. But imagine if we got married and she was always making me late. For over 21 years I would always be having big conversations with her over and over about how important it is to me to be early to things.

Some of you are just dying to look at your spouse right now, aren't you? (*Laughter.*) '*You just keep preaching that, Ben. I hope they hear this and we are going to talk after lunch.*' And this is a big deal to God because it is mentioned over a hundred times in Scripture. He is saying that He cares about how we treat the poor. He cares about that. This is important to Him. It was important that the people who became part of the family of God that they understood it was not about a ticket to Heaven. It was about being formed into a people group that would reflect His glory and His love to the nations.

And one of the ways that you best show God's love and God's glory is when we take what we have and we help those who cannot help themselves. That is important to God and if it is important to Him it should be important to us. So you see how God has shaped His people into this. They have been shaped by the Word. This very new church has already been sitting under the teaching of Paul and Barnabas and they are being shaped by the Word of God. And the moment they hear there is going to be a need to feed people, there is going to be a need for the poor around them, their inclination was to do something. This was a church that understood what it meant to be a people of God and to love those around them.

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I am not going to read all these verses, but I want to share the rest of the story. Scripture tell us that Paul for the rest of his career, wherever he went, he was always collecting money for the poor over and over and over again. I just want to read a couple of passages from Romans Chapter 15 beginning in verse 24. And this is Paul writing a letter to the church of Rome and he has never even been to this church. He has never been there, but listen to what he writes to them.

*“I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you.”*

He mentions it again in I Corinthians and then in II Corinthians Chapters 8 and 9. I want you to listen to this last verse in Acts Chapter 20 and verse 35. This was Paul giving his last talk to the elders of the church of Ephesus, a church he helped start and get going. *“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*

See, I believe what happened what this: Paul goes on this journey and he saw firsthand the impact of the gift to the poor. It shaped and molded Paul. He became someone that was driven to do something. Paul was not just planting churches, but over and over and over again we see him as this person who was constantly collecting money for the poor in the churches of Jesus Christ all around the Roman Empire. Paul was first of all a church planter, but his number two job was being a fund raiser for the poor.

Which leads us to this and here is my main idea. You have already heard it before, you saw it as an email this week, but here is the main idea - I don't want us just to give - but to give back. I think for so many of us the way we give, this act of giving we do shouldn't be because we are inspired or not, or whether there is confusion or cynicism about giving. What we need to understand is that we are a people who need to give primarily because we have received something from God. We are a people who have received so much from God. We have received life, we have received resources, we have received so much over and over again. God has given to us everything that is good in our lives. And we need to understand that we are people who have first received and that should change the way in how we give.

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When we give, we think, *'This is mine. I have earned it. It originated with me, and therefore I get to say what happens to it.'* No, what we have received we have received from the goodness of the hand of the Lord. Therefore whatever we give, whatever resource we have, we give back to God who has given to us something so great. I want us to understand there is a difference here. God didn't just give us our resources to exclusively use them for ourselves. There should be a portion of everything that God gives us given back to others. That is the way God's economy works.

So how do we know whether we are just giving or we are giving back? I want to share with you a few marks on how we can know whether we are giving or giving back. The first mark is when you give you know it is just the right thing to do. The motivation for why you give is just because it is the right thing to do. You have been taught that you need to give to charity and you need to give to the poor, but there is really no heart in it.

Sometimes you give because of guilt. Have you ever felt guilty maybe when you walked out of Lowe's and there's the Boy Scouts. And I hate the popcorn. But these kids make me feel bad if I say no. Sometimes I will just be busily looking at my receipt as I walk by them, because I feel so guilty about saying no. Now some of you may have no problem about saying no, but I feel guilty. And my guilt has made me buy those little school cards and I will never eat at any of those restaurants. But that is what we do sometimes.

Sometimes we give because it just feels good. Doesn't it feel good sometimes to give, to feel like you are making a difference and helping someone out? But again that is just being a little altruistic and really only benefiting ourselves. Some of you might give because you do feel some compassion. Like when you are at the checkout line at the grocery store and they ask if you would like to give so that people can eat tonight. Sure we want people to eat tonight. That is a good thing. So compassion is a good thing but it is not the best thing.

Sometimes we give to impress others. Sometimes we give because it is going to look good our resume. This is going to make us look good in front of other people. And when the motivation for why we give is these reasons, what happens is how we give becomes because we feel this dutiful obligation. *'I'm writing this check. I'm writing a tithe check. I don't think about it, it is just what I do.'* And that is just a dutiful obligation. There is nothing wrong with that, but I believe we are missing out on the great joy that God wants us to have when we give. One of the things over and over and over we see in Scripture is when God's people give it talks about the joy that they had.

Another thing we do is give sporadically. We only give when we are inspired. When we feel inspired to do something and then we give, but it is not something that

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flows from the heart or from the Spirit. And when our motivation is because of that usually what we give is what is leftover or nothing at all. You write out all your bills and then if there is anything left after that you give it to God, as opposed to giving the first fruits. When what we need to understand is that everything we have was received from the hand of God. Therefore the first thing that goes out should be to the Lord.

And when we give back it looks differently. And we see this over and over again in Scripture. When we give back we understand that giving back is a response to God's grace. I want to encourage you to read II Corinthians Chapters 8 and 9 when you get home. There is a section in there where Paul is talking to the church at Corinth and encouraging them to collect an offering for the poor people in Jerusalem. This is what he says in II Corinthians Chapter 8 and verses 8 and 9:

***"I say this not as a command."*** He wasn't saying they had to do this. ***"But to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine."*** It is about love and understanding your love for others as well as for God. ***"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich."*** Do you get that? Do you understand what Paul is saying? Paul is saying that when we give as Christians, as believers, as followers of Jesus, we give because of what Christ gave to us. We give because of our salvation.

Here is what I will say. If we are not giving, or giving very little, the problem is not that you have a financial issue, the problem is not that you have to look at your checkbook, the problem is that you don't understand the gospel enough. This is about the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when we understand all that God gave to us, giving is a response to the reality of what Jesus did for us.

Look at the analogy of how Christ who was rich became poor. The Hebrew language has a number of different words for poor, and it is a very picturesque and artistic language. And one of the words the Hebrew language uses to describe the poor is by picturing something like a leaf or a cloth hanging and being blown to and fro by whichever way the wind is blowing. Now why is that word pictured that way? It is because this is the picture the Bible is teaching, that when you are poor you are subjected to the whims of whoever is around you.

And Jesus, who has all the power, all the authority, all the glory in the world came to be beaten and shamed by men. The immovable creator of the world humbled Himself and came to be poor for our sakes. And this is an issue of our response to the gospel. If the giving of our resources, our time, our treasures, our talent is something that we hold onto, then it is not a financial issue, it is not a time issue; it is a love issue, a heart issue

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that needs to respond to the gospel. We need to be fully captivated by the love of Jesus Christ and what He has done for us.

The second way we can determine if it is giving back is this - there is a willing heart. I love what it says in the passage here of the church at Antioch. It says in Acts Chapter 11 and verse 29, ***“So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.”*** It wasn't the authority of the church in Jerusalem, it wasn't the apostles commanding it and telling them they owed them something, they never said that. The disciples in the church at Antioch and the people just decided that they had to do something.

Listen to what Paul writes in II Corinthians Chapter 9 and verses 6 and 7: ***“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”*** Isn't that great? Guys, we are free not to give. What God wants is our heart first. He wants our heart to be completely captivated by His love, and from that when God is the ruler and reigns over our hearts then He gets to decide what we do.

Remember we talked about that last week, how we have to submit to the Lord. Over and over again we saw in the church of Antioch how it was the Lord, it was the Lord, it was the Lord. He was the authority. What we have to do is put under the authority of God everything that we have. And that sounds scary. Put yourself in this church's shoes and this guy, Agabus, did they know him? No, he comes and tells them that there is a famine coming in the land pretty soon.

Do you realize how much faith it would take to collect money to send with these guys to the poor? It would take a lot of faith to say, *‘Okay, we are going to trust God that you are going to take care of our needs. You are going to take care of us in Antioch while we give to take care of others.’* Do you know what we call that? It was a calculated risk. I have a brother who is in the finance world. God gave him all the financial genes in the family. My dad has been a pastor and a missionary. I am a pastor and another brother is a missionary. And I have an older brother, Chris, and he is in the finance world and he helps manage the endowment for Chapel Hill.

And I always ask Chris, *‘Now what do you do again?’* But he helps make decisions on giving tens of millions of dollars to different groups, different organizations and different people. And I wonder how he does that. How does he know how much to give and to whom? Can you imagine having to make decisions to maybe give twenty million dollars to someone or some group? I personally want no part of that. None. And when I talk to Chris I realize that obviously there is a calculated risk in what he does. He

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has to meet these people, and understand how they operate. And when the decision is made he has to understand it is a calculated risk. Is God worth making a calculated risk? Is He worth trusting? Are we willing to give Him a portion of what He has already given us? And will it be from a willing heart?

We know when we give back it brings joy. There is joy in giving back. In my devotions, right now I am in I Chronicles, and I do not advise that for most people. (*Laughter.*) It is not the funnest book in the world. But in my devotions it talks about after David gives all of his gold to the building of the temple he then asks the people to give what they can give with a willing heart. And all of a sudden he collects just tons of gold and silver. And I Chronicles Chapter 29 and verse 9 it says this: “***Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly.***” Do you see the connection between a willing heart and joy? Joy happens when we have this willing heart and we give; it is a joyful thing to do. It is exciting and thrilling.

The next thing we see is it is capacity. We read in Acts Chapter 9 and verse 29 that everyone gave according to their ability: “***So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.***” Listen, God has given every single one of us a different ability, a different capacity to give. Some of us have great capacity to give, some of us have a small capacity to give, but what is most important is that there is a capacity for everyone.

I will never forget a number of years ago when we were getting ready to plant our church out of Northside Baptist Church. And they had this thing that we did every single year called ‘Missionary Christmas.’ We would have a big missions conference for a week and missionaries would be on stage sharing their needs for their missions. And the last Sunday night, after a week of getting to know these people and spending time with them, our church would walk down and lay different gifts at the feet of the about seven or eight different missionaries on the stage. It was one of the best times of the year in our church.

After being there on staff for six years we were getting ready to plant a church in Denver. So my wife and I were on the stage to receive the offerings that people would give to help this new church get started. And man, we got thousands of dollars that day, but I will never forget a young boy who brought up to the stage a bag of change and he laid it at our feet. His mom told me later that when he heard about our starting a church that he emptied out his piggy bank. I have never forgotten that. I learned a lot through that experience as well because I viewed every dollar as sacred. God taught me through that when you are leading you make every dollar sacred, because some of those dollars

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are all that someone has. I have never forgotten that boy's gift and I never will. I pray that I will have that kind of heart. And I want this church to have that kind of heart.

Lastly, when we give back we have a host of commodities to give back. Not only do we have capacity, but we have a bunch of commodities to give. I know we talk about money, but listen some of you are so gifted in your wisdom, others are gifted in your time, and some are blessed with their gifts. We have so many commodities to give back. It is not just about writing a check. Maybe it is our time, maybe it is our treasure, or maybe it is our talent, whichever one of those categories that God has given us, we need to give back.

The one that God might be talking to you about this morning is giving back that which is the hardest for you to let go. And we need to ask ourselves if Jesus is really Lord over that area. For some of you it is your time, so it is easy for you to just write a check. For others it is hard to write that check, but hey, you will volunteer. What I would ask is what area of your life is not under the authority of Jesus.

I want to leave you with a couple of questions. Number one - are you giving or giving back? Are you truly giving back, or are you simply just giving? Are we going to be a church that is ruled by our Lord Jesus? I believe if we can start giving back as opposed to just giving we will see a difference. If that happens and we give back I promise you will never hear from Pastor Dan again about our budget.

Number two - what resource of yours is not yet under the Lordship of Jesus? What is the Holy Spirit saying to you right now about your resource that is not under the Lordship of Jesus? What are you going to do to place it under His authority?

Number three - what is your ability that God has given to you? What is the capacity? Every one according to his ability sent relief. God has given you something to give. He has given you that ability for a reason, and that is for you to give it to reflect His glory and to show that His love is bearing fruit through you.

I don't want us to be a church that gives. I want us to be a church that gives back, because when we give back it is a sign that the gospel is bearing fruit in our hearts. And then we can do things, say things, and sacrifice for things that are beyond what we would do on our own.

Let's bow our heads and close our eyes. Before I pray we are going to have a time of response. I don't know what the Lord is saying to you this morning, but I would ask that you would think about this idea of Lordship that we have been hammering the

**DON'T JUST GIVE - GIVE BACK**  
**ORIGINS SERIES PART 3 - IT'S NOT ABOUT US**  
**Ben Rudolph**

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last couple of weeks. I want to encourage you to spend some time with the Lord asking Him what that might look like for you.

Maybe you want to pray with someone this morning and if so there are people up front ready to pray with you. Maybe there is something going on in your life whether it is health related, work related, or family wise and you just need someone to pray with. There are people here that will pray with you this morning. If you don't feel comfortable coming up here you can go to the prayer room in the back and to the right and someone will be there to pray with you. Maybe you just want to spend some time as a family praying together.

Maybe you want to come up to one of the four tables around this room and partake of the cup and the bread remembering how Jesus who was rich became poor for us. Maybe you want to come to one of the crosses and pray. Whatever it is that God is calling you to do, let's leave here with a willing heart, eyes to see how we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, and with open hands to give.

*Father, I pray that you would work and move in us this morning. God, we don't want to be a church that just gives, that gives from our own whims, gives from our own personal inspiration, but God we are asking you once again for your Spirit to come down and visit us. That God we would not be a church that is shaped by our culture, shaped by our heritage or tradition, shaped by religion, but that we will be a church that is shaped by the Lordship of Jesus. God, I know that you want us to be a church that when we hear something, our first response is - what do you want me to give back to you. Lord, move in us, work in us today. May we give you all of it. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.*

*The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.*