

*1 Chronicles 29:10-20 & Luke 21:1-4*

**Sermon preached at St. Michael & All Angels Church by Emma Hodge on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2023.**

**Theme: Generosity (slides included in sermon)**

*May the words of my lips and the thoughts and meditations of all our hearts be always acceptable in thy sight O Lord our strength and our redeemer.*

Today we finish our sermon series about stewardship.

The first week in October we looked at Creation and Jane talked about the stewardship that we have in caring for this wonderful world which God has generously given to us.

Last week we looked at thanksgiving especially as how it relates to Harvest and the gifts that we give and John encouraged us to consider where giving is in our financial priority list,

Today's theme is Generosity.

Before we look at the readings in detail I want to start by asking you a question

**What does Generosity mean to you?**

**1 Chronicles 29:10-20 & Luke 21:1-4**

Which is more generous?



A large amount of money?

If the money from the previous slide was actually the blue part of the pie? Which is more generous?



A large proportion of something?

Many people might have identified in the first slide that the one with the large amount of money was generous, but if we turn that around and look at it in proportion, then we get a different perspective and I am sure some of you have already seen a link to our gospel reading.

Our gospel reading was about Jesus observing people putting money into the temple funds.

## **1 Chronicles 29:10-20 & Luke 21:1-4**

He draws our attention to two different groups giving money

The first was the rich people putting in money from their wealth into the temple

The second was a poor widow who put in just two copper coins and in the King James version of the bible these coins were known as Mites.

Jesus highlights an important point about generosity in this story, he draws our attention to the fact that the rich people were giving out of the abundance, they could easily afford what they gave, they had a lot of money. They gave a smaller percentage of their income

But he highlights the attitude of the widow, financially she put in a lot less, just two copper coins but these were all she had so she gave sacrificially. While the amount she gave was small the percentage of the money she had was a massive contribution.

In telling this story Jesus draws the attention away from the actual amounts of money given (although if you do have a large amount to give we would welcome it) but rather to the attitude of the giver. The widow is generous, she gave a far larger percentage of her money to the temple.

As Jesus draws our attention to the attitude of the giver, and the generosity of the widow, he also reminds us that God knows our situation and that God knows what is in our hearts.

I started by asking you to consider what generosity means to you but now I want to ask you another question, is generosity only in terms of money or can you be generous in other ways and other resources such as time?

## **1 Chronicles 29:10-20 & Luke 21:1-4**

If we turn now to our Old Testament reading we see an example of giving in a very different context; The old testament reading was from the 1<sup>st</sup> book of Chronicles.

Before we come to our passage which is about the blessing of the temple which King Solomon will build in Jerusalem, a bit of background.

King David, Solomon's father, wanted to build the temple but the Lord had said no, it wasn't time. King David is still on the throne and Solomon is now an adult. Solomon will build the temple as instructed by the Lord.

If you read the passages before you will find out that the financing of building the temple came from King David and leaders of ancestral houses who provided the materials for the temple to be built and had identified the priests who would serve there but it was Solomon's temple.

The gifts that people gave was both financial but also people.

We then come to our passage which is shortly before the temple is to be built. The passage is not about praising David or the families who had given the money and resources so that the temple could be built but instead it is focussed on God.

Our reading is a prayer of King David

Throughout the prayer, it is acknowledging that God has given us everything, let me read you some of these verses again

Verse eleven contains these words **for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours;**

Well that's simple everything belongs to God. Everything, nothing is ours, only God's; our sermon series on Stewardship started looking at

## **1 Chronicles 29:10-20 & Luke 21:1-4**

the wonderful world of creation and here we are reminded that this is God's world and everything in it. If we want some more examples, then verse 12 continues **Riches and honour come from you,**

Riches and honour, two aspects which in our world today which a lot of people want but they don't always acknowledge who provides them with riches and honour, and there is another sermon in these words about worldly values compared to God's values and what is honour but that's a sermon for another time.

The prayer of King David goes on to acknowledge that both he and his people give freely back to God, with these words that will be familiar to a lot of us; **For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.**

The prayer reinforces this shortly later with verse 16 where it reminds us that God has given us everything and the abundance of Solomon's temple **O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own.** And while this may seem like saying that we have a lot so we can afford to give, in the next verse it reminds everyone that we can give because God knows our hearts and searches them **I know, my God, that you search the heart, and**

And shortly later we are told that King David saw people giving joyously to God **now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you.**

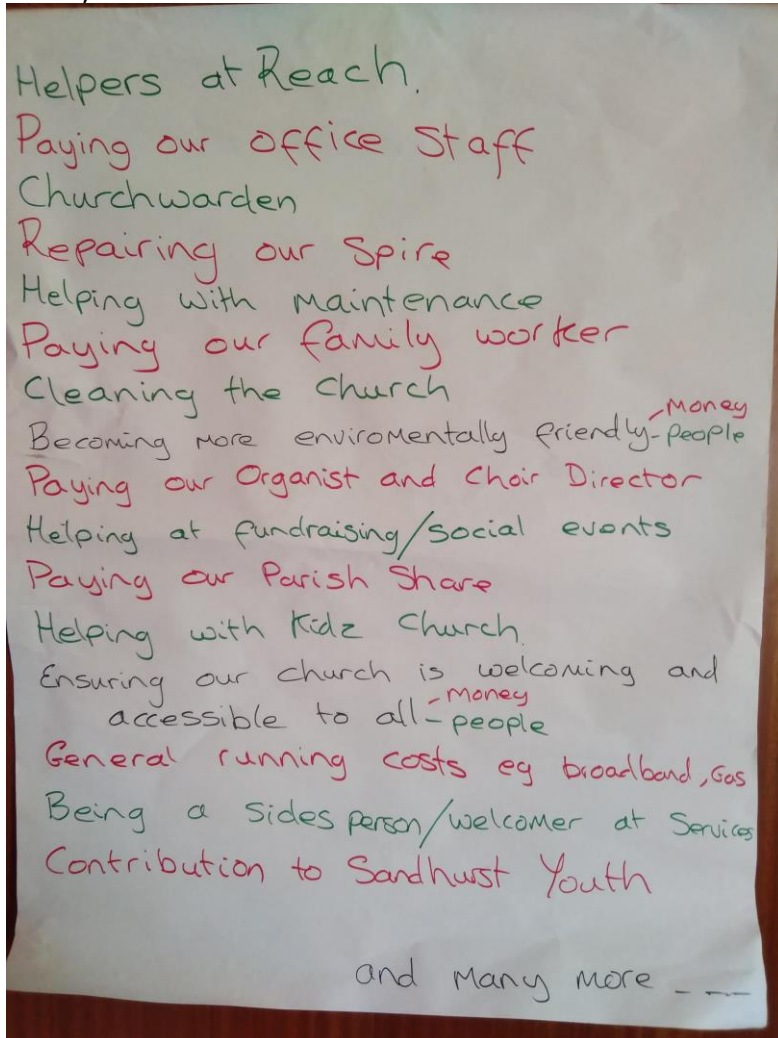
The prayer continues asking God to help to keep everyone's hearts focussed on God.

In this prayer of King David's he was acknowledging that not what was given (which was a lot) but that everything was only possible because of our wonderful and generous God. The God who gave everything to the people.

**1 Chronicles 29:10-20 & Luke 21:1-4**

The attitude of the people who gave is acknowledged, they gave freely and joyfully to God because they realised that it was his to begin with.

Our old testament reading has many parallels with our life as a church today as a church we have multiple opportunities to respond with both money and people to the life of the church; our church has multiple needs, some of them are listed here



## **1 Chronicles 29:10-20 & Luke 21:1-4**

- We need helpers at Reach, Kidz Church, fundraising and social events, cleaning the church, churchwarden,
- We spend money on paying office staff, our parish share,
- We want to make our church more environmentally friendly so we can work towards being net Zero
- We want to make our church welcoming and accessible to all including those who have visible and invisible, short or long term disabilities.
- As well as repairing and maintaining the building and pastoral centre.

We started by looking at attitudes towards generosity and then we have looked at how the temple that Solomon was built and acknowledging that the people who gave both money and people gave because they realised that they were willing to support the temple and make it happen both with time and money because all they had wasn't theirs to start with it was God. God has given us and blessed us with so much,

I'm going to end with a verse from a hymn written by Frances Ridley Havergal. We will sing the hymn shortly and I want to draw your attention to one of the verses, which bring us back to being generous, and giving everything The first two lines of this verse, refer to money, and the mite is those cooper coins that the widow put in the temple treasury but also consider the last two lines, the generosity here is not money but our talents that we have been given.

*Take my silver and my Gold  
Not a Mite would I withhold*

*Take my intellect and use  
Every power as thou shalt choose*

*Amen*