

WEEK 3 - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28

MESSAGE NOTES

WEEK 3 - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28

PART 3 - “SACRIFICE”

MAIN IDEA FOR THOUGHT: God is asking us to give in a way that changes us. Truly doing this requires us to realize that we must sacrifice things we love for some One we love more. What will sacrifice look like for you?

OPENING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is something you would say you have sacrificed in your life? What did that mean for you?
2. What is something that would be very difficult to give up—something that if you were asked to give it up, you’re not sure that you could?
3. Have you ever been changed by a sacrifice that you’ve made?

DISCUSSION GUIDE



A. GIVE FROM WHAT YOU HAVE.

| READ EXODUS 35:20-29; 36:2-7

Give from what you have. The remarkable thing in this passage is the multitude of different types of stored assets that were given for the construction of the tabernacle—jewelry, garments, anointing oil, etc. Whatever each person had to offer, they gave. So much so that Moses had to stop the giving because it was too much! Often at times, our first objection when being asked to give is to say that we can't give because we don't have. Or "if I had more, I would give more." Or "if I had a job that paid better, then I could give." If, if, if. Well, do you still eat? Do you still clothe yourself? Do you tell your mouth and your body that if you had money, then you would eat and clothe? No, you somehow figure out how to do those things with your resources. But then why do you see your giving differently? Why isn't your giving as high a priority as other things so much so that you would see it as something that you would do regardless of your financial picture? "Not having" or "Not having as much" are no excuses to not give. God isn't even asking us to give in that way. He is asking us to give from what we have. What do you have, and are you giving it?

| **Take money off the table for a second.** Think about the other resources that you have purchased or that you have in your possession—your home, your clothes, your electronics, your season tickets for the Badgers or Packers... Do you honor God with those resources? Do you lend your car anytime someone is without? Share what you have freely? What about the stored assets in your possession (stocks, bonds, boats, cottages, savings)? How are you honoring the Lord with what you have?

B. DO NOT GIVE TO THE LORD THAT WHICH COSTS YOU NOTHING.

| READ 2 SAMUEL 24:18-25

Do not give to the Lord that which costs you nothing. As David is building this altar for the Lord, he knows that the sacrifice won't mean anything (and won't even be a sacrifice by definition) if it doesn't cost him something. He knows that it won't be honoring to the Lord and that the Lord won't see it in the same way. When we give to the Lord, sometimes only we know whether it is a sacrifice or not. A person can give a very large amount to the church and it not be honoring to God if it didn't really cost them anything. God wants us to give in a way that changes us, in a way that honors him with giving up part of us. Yes, this is bold and radical. But that's what he's asking of us. He is asking us to care about our purposes less and to care about his purposes more.

| **What would it take in order for you to give sacrificially?** What is holding you back?



C. SACRIFICE IS MORE ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE WITHHOLDING THAN WHAT YOU'RE GIVING.

| READ MARK 12:41-44

Sacrifice is more about what you're not giving than what you're giving. This is such a powerful passage, and Jesus draws our attention to it not because of what the widow gave. He drew our attention to it because of what she didn't withhold. It's not about what the woman did give; instead, it's about what she didn't keep—she gave it all and withheld nothing. That is what's so remarkable about this story. She kept nothing for herself and gave all that she had to live on. When you give, stop and think about what you aren't giving and why. If someone looked at the other xx%—the percent of what you don't give—and asked you why, would you have a good reason for it? If the poor widow in this story Jesus told asked you about your remainder, would you feel confident in sharing your story with her?

God is asking us to view our devotion to him in totality, not in fractional terms. He doesn't care about percentages or amounts. He cares about the heart. The condition of our heart is not found in 10% or even in 20%. It's found in what we do with 100%. That doesn't mean we're supposed to give all that we have. That's not the point. But we are supposed to honor God with all that we have so that we could say to him that we have pleased him with how we spent the other xx%. Could you say that? Or are there some changes to be made?

As you think about what you're not giving and why, does this cause you to want to rethink some of your spending? What areas immediately come to mind that you would not feel comfortable "explaining" to someone when asked why you didn't give that portion?



D. SACRIFICE IS DYING TO SELF AND IS NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART.

| READ 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-12, 16-18

Sacrifice is dying to self and is not for the faint of heart. Staying financially afloat isn't easy in this world we live in. Particularly when other people are involved like a spouse or children or even other friends, parents, or relatives to consider, money can often at times cause our relationships to go sideways quite quickly. It becomes an unhealthy measure of so many things—success, worthiness, security, admiration, indebtedness. The way our life is entangled with this thing called money can beat us up from all sides sometimes. But as Paul shares, “Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” Do not regret how you handled your money. Do not stand before the Lord later in your life and have him ask you questions about what you did with your resources and wish you would have done it differently. Do it differently now. It isn't easy. If it were easy, then Jesus wouldn't have talked about it so much in the Scriptures. He knew it would be hard. But it's that important. Don't miss this. It's one of the key markers of how much we value God above ourselves—our ability or inability to be selfless and give ourselves and our lives over to him.

Some choices we make are large, and others are small. There may be a large choice that you've made in your past that you need to revisit or reverse having to do with a home purchase, a car purchase, or some type of investment purchase. Is there something you feel is preventing you from having true, sacrificial giving?

Other choices are smaller and yet their impact over time (sometimes even a short period of time) can make a large difference. Things like choosing not to go out to eat as often, not purchasing new clothes for a period of time, or choosing to make other spending allocations more judiciously, are all things that can reflect our choice for our giving to be sacrificial. List below some of the smaller—let’s call them ‘daily’ instead of small because their impact is not small—daily choices that will make a sacrificial difference in your giving.
