

Sunday, January 26, 2020

2 Corinthians 8:7-15

Matthew 6:19-21

Mark 12:41-44

The New You Financially

The New You- this has been our theme for the last couple of weeks. But who is the NEW YOU? The new you is the you God intended. The you God created you to be, the you that God desires for you to become. We have reflected on the New You- spiritually, physically, emotionally and yet the one that stresses us out the most and in many situations is the new you financially.

A poll of things that stress us out as a people indicates that #3 is job/career/work; #2 is personal relationships and #1 which tends to stress us out twice as much as number 2&3 combined is finances. Many of us are stressed out financially and yet we want to do more with what we do have that this causes us to stress even more! Just think about your financial situation right now=- Is this where you think God intended you to be in this moment in your life?

For many the answer is no=- God wants to bless you so therefore this also includes your finances; he doesn't want you to drown and yet we also must realize that God is not responsible for the financial stress you might have either. God wants you blessed not stressed and so God gives us principles by which to live and relate to others so that we might live. When you listen to God and honour him, God will bless you because God loves you. The blessings we receive from God are both tangible- touchable and intangible. And it is up to us to do what God wants us to do with all of them.

Paul writes to the church at Corinth and encourages this young church in its faith to carry on sharing the story of Jesus and to be generous as they reach out to help others. We read in 2 Cor 8 "Since you excel in so many ways in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm and your love from us, I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving." Why is this important? God wants you to excel in all that you say and do—faith, speech, love, knowledge and generosity because when you do so in God's name, it honours him! It puts you in a position where he can bless your life, where you can become the new you financially.

People have asked me do you know about finances of the church? No just what is shared in our monthly financial statements. And what I give to the church is known only through the treasurer and God just the same as each of you. Only you and God knows how generous

you are and this is something you pray about and discern on your own. What I'm sharing today is why we give and how our finances define us as people of faith, people of God and as a community where love is shared and shown no matter our gifts.

God blesses us and in turn we want to help others because we are loved by God. We want to pay it forward so that love will be given and will continue. Canada Helps.ORG is an organization which discerns the health of Canada's charitable sector and how this ties into the health of our country. When we look at how much Canadians give to charities we might be overwhelmed because 34% of all families give an average of \$450 per year as they claim a charitable deduction. But an average families gave over \$1300 in 2015. This situation is changing however because people overall are giving less because they have less to give. So what is affected by all of this? Social programs, religious groups and churches and how supporting those in need in our own city is changing the face of our city.

Hearing these statistics and knowing in your heart that you are giving of yourself how does this all help your new you financially? Jesus states in Matthew 6:21 "Wherever your treasure is there, the desires of your heart will also be." That is, where your money goes, shows where your heart is. It shows what matters most to you. So giving shows where your heart is. It draws you closer to God. Only you can answer where the desires of your heart truly lie.

For those sitting here this morning- our desires are in growing in relationship with Jesus because he died and rose from death for our sakes. Glenwood Church is our church family and as we share together we grow together to give back because we have been blessed. To share and show others what it means to love God in word deed and action. IT means Jesus has touched your heart and changed you and you are continuing to become the person God wants you to be—a new you. God has blessed you and now you want to bless others and we do this in many ways. Including budgets—for our families- all the costs of having a home—whatever sort that is, if children at home—costs associated for their specific needs, then we add in incidentals, entertainment, clothes, food and fun. All these things add up very quickly but the main thing is you are in control of the blessings you receive so what do you do?

Our reading from Mark 12 is a story of Jesus observing people in the temple. At this temple there was a collection box as people came in to pray at different times of the day. There would have been community gatherings at set times as well but in this story the collection box is where Jesus was sitting. The people coming and going were dropping in their money as Jesus watched. Jesus watched the rich people put in large amounts. And then he saw a poor widow

who diligently walked up to the box herself. How did Jesus know that she was a widow? She was the one who had the money in her hand and she put it in. Remember that at this time, women were not seen openly unless looking after children. Men were the ones who took care of financial matters as well. Anyway Jesus watches as this woman dropped two coins into the box. Then he called his disciples to him and said, "I tell you the truth: this poor widow has given more than all the others who were making contributions. For they gave a tiny part of their abundance, but this poor woman, has given everything she had to live on."

Jesus does not pity this woman. Jesus does not chase her down and try to repay her gift. No, he lifts her up as an example of one who has found joy in giving. Jesus holds her up as a model of faith and generosity. Are you a model of faith and generosity to others?

2 Cor. 9:7 gets at the heart of a generous giver. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure, for God loves a person who gives—cheerfully. We are called to be responsible with all the blessings and gifts God gives to us. We are to be reflective of our personal needs to live each day and we are to know that God knows your position, your present circumstances and God blesses you where you are. It is up to you to respond by faith and to know how to be in control of the financial blessings you have. This is part of becoming a NEW YOU!

PRAYER:

God of love talking about finances and giving and paying expenses seems so difficult to do yet Jesus pointed out a poor woman who out of poverty gave to support your ministry. Help us to remember the Gift you gave to us when Jesus was born. Help us to remember why he came and how he gave his life for us so that we need not sacrifice any longer but confess our sins and receive forgiveness. God we thank you for Jesus your son. Help us to always bring our best to you so that we too will become the best person you intend for us to be. Help us O God to fully understand how we might grow financially responsible as we seek to fully live for you. We are your creation and we begin anew life through you. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.