

TAKING TIME TO THINK

Michael Jordan, the greatest basketball player of all times goes back to visit his high school. It would be easy for the students to have nothing to aim for. They're never going to match his records, achieve what he achieved. What's the point of even playing?

Watch his response:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PH8nTfxwByY>

Jesus taught many parables on money and giving, perhaps because he knows how hard it is for us to get our thinking and our actions aligned to the standards God sets for his people. 11 of his 39 parables are about our attitude to money.

Read Luke 12: 13 – 21

Here are some questions to think and work through.

- From what we have learnt so far, what mistake does the farmer make when viewing his harvest?
- If you were to advise him, what would you be saying to him that he should be doing? What questions would you be encouraging him to ask himself?
- In what ways are the mistakes he makes so costly?
- At the end of this passage, Jesus appears to imply that he has fallen under God's judgement. How seriously do we take this warning?

Time to think and pray things over:

God wants us to be generous, and to go beyond our obligations. He wants us to do this cheerfully, so that in our returning to him we model his generosity to us.

What has been the most important thing you have learnt over these last four weeks? In what way will you change as a result?

A prayer to pray:

Thank you for the good things you give.

Thank you that we can give these gifts back to you.

May your church grow strong through what we offer,

And may we grow strong through offering it. Amen

christ church
little heath

Living God's Love



Resourcing God's Mission

Week 4

Do you know the worship song 10,000 reasons by Matt Redman? Listen to it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtwIT8JjddM> It includes the lines *“For all Your goodness, I will keep on singing Ten thousand reasons, For my heart to find.”*

Last week we thought about what we we had received, this week we will be thinking about the best things we give.

We’re going to begin with the Story of Hannah and Samuel.

Read: 1 Samuel 1:10-11, 20-28;

- ❖ What was the gift that Hannah wanted more than any other?
- ❖ What difference would receiving this gift make?
- ❖ Why did Hannah want to give Samuel to the Lord? Why pray so hard for something to happen, only to give it away?
- ❖ If you were Hannah would you have offered God a second child to be dedicated to him rather than your first and perhaps only child?
- ❖ Does God expect too much of Hannah?

Hannah’s giving to the Lord is generous and costly. In a story which reminds us of Jesus teaching on the widow’s mite, she gave all she had, of her very best.

When Jesus talks about money and the cost of following him, he is very clear. He calls for an all or nothing approach.

Read: Luke 14: 28 – 33

There are some really challenging words here. Jesus asks us to look clearly at what it means to be a disciple. He has already taught that following him is about picking up our cross.

- ❖ What does it mean to you to put Jesus first?
- ❖ In what ways have you been enabled to put Jesus first in your life?
- ❖ In what ways might He be calling you to put him first as you continue to walk with him?

Time to think things over:

It is good to take a moment to think about whether we are willing to be challenged by God’s Word. Take a moment to look at all that the apostle Paul suffered (he lists his sufferings in 2 Corinthians 11:21 – 29). Then go on to read 2 Corinthians 12: 9 & 10. How does Paul view difficulty and hardship? Could we have the same attitude when it comes to giving?

The church in Corinth are preparing to give, and to ensure that they understand why and how they should give Paul gives them some practical suggestions.

The latter verses of this passage remind us of much that we have thought about already:

- *Everything comes from God (verse 10)*
- *As Christians we are encouraged to be generous (verse 11)*
- *We give because as Christians we are to meet the needs of those around us (verse 12)*
- *Our generosity is a testimony to the state of our hearts and our thankfulness (verse 13)*
- *We are called to give, because God gives to us (verse 15)*

The way Paul teaches this with almost no expansion of his teaching would indicate that this isn’t new teaching to them, but that Paul is reminding them of things they should already know. Think through some of the really practical things that Paul suggests to help you review and assess how you give to God

- Paul encourages them to set aside their giving at the start of the week. This enables them to put God first. What does it mean for us to put our giving to God first? (*A helpful slogan – do we give what is right or what is left?*)
- Last week we thought about tithing and giving 10% of our income. It is possible to do this reluctantly, almost resentfully. How can we ensure that when we give, we do it because it is right **and** because we want to? How does God help us in this?
- We are familiar with the idea of going the extra mile (Matthew 5:41). What does going the extra mile mean for us in terms of tithes and offerings when we consider the call to generous giving (verses 6 & 9) ?
- How is giving good for us (verses 10 & 11)? Have you seen evidence of this in your own life or in the life of others?

In the light of these verses, are there things you need to reconsider?