

SCRIPTURE TEXT: 1 Chronicles 29:2-3, 6-9

SERMON TITLE: How Do We Give?

You may have heard: Our congregation is looking to build, remodel and renovate. Our goal is to raise \$1.2 million to construct a new education building, to remodel the current Education building to provide more office and adult classroom space, to renovate the Family Life Center, and to increase our parking capacity. The theme of our campaign to raise these funds is *Honoring Our Past, Building Our Future*.

We kicked-off this campaign three-weeks ago with a sermon entitled *Why Build?* Last week I posed the question: *Why Give to Build?* The question for the next two weeks is: *How Do We Give?*

Now to this morning's scripture lesson: Our text is 1 Chronicles 29:2-3, 6-9. King David has assembled representatives of the people of Israel. He has told the people that his task is to provide for the construction of the Temple while his son Solomon—David's successor to the throne—will actually build this dwelling place for God. As David continues his address to the people, I invite you to listen for the word of God. **SCRIPTURE READING.**

David's dream was to build, but he needed resources to build so he gave of his own wealth and he invited the leaders of the people to follow his example. He called them to make a free will offering above and beyond their obligatory offerings under the Law of Moses. These gifts were sacrificial because people had to choose to diminish their wealth--to get by on less--so that they could give more to make the dream a reality.

And their response was overwhelmingly generous. They didn't give equal gifts, but everyone that gave, made some kind of sacrifice. The result is described in verse 9: *Then the people rejoiced, for with single mind they had offered freely to the Lord; King David also rejoiced greatly.*

So how are we to give? The text suggests that our giving be done freely—not under compulsion. And if we choose to give, we’re asked to make an offering above and beyond our regular contributions to the church. In other words, it’s sacrificial giving. We’re not all being asked to give equal gifts, but each of us is being invited to share in the sacrifice of building for the sake of expanding Christ’s work in and through this church.

Now for the Israelites, David set the example by giving from his substantial wealth; but sometimes, smaller gifts sacrificially given—make all the difference. Let me tell you the story of Hattie Mae Wiatt. On one Sunday morning in 1884, Hattie Mae went to a small church in Philadelphia, PA for the first time. She wanted to attend Sunday School, but she was told that there was no room for her in the crowded classroom.

Well, Hattie Mae started crying and about that time the pastor walked by and she told him what was wrong. The pastor noticed her shabby, unkempt appearance and he figured out pretty quickly the real reason she had been turned away. She was poor. So the pastor took this little girl by the hand, he led her inside the church, and found a place for her in Sunday School. Hattie Mae’s heart was so touched by this experience that when she went to bed that evening, her thoughts were of the children who have no place to worship God.

Some two years later, Hattie Mae was found dead in one of the poor tenement buildings of the city. Among her belongings was a worn and crumpled red purse with a note and 57 cents inside. The note was in Hattie Mae’s handwriting and it read: *This is to help build the little church bigger so more children can go to Sunday School.*

For two years Hattie Mae had saved this small bit of change—a veritable fortune for one so poor. On the day of her funeral, the pastor who had befriended her carried this little girl’s note and her cracked, red pocketbook to the pulpit. He then told the congregation of Hattie

Mae's free will offering given from the heart. And he challenged the leadership of the church to get busy and raise enough money for a larger building.

Well, a newspaper published Hattie Mae's story. It was read by a realtor who offered the church a parcel of land worth many thousands of dollars. When told that the church could not possibly pay what the property was worth, the realtor lowered his price to 57 cents.

This motivated the congregation make large pledges for the new building. Checks came from far and wide. Within five years this little girl's gift had increased to \$250,000—a huge sum of money for that time. The building was built—the church prospered—thousands of people received ministry every year—and the building, named the Wiatt House, provided space to begin what would become Temple University. A poor little girl's sacrificial gift paid huge dividends in advancing the ministry of Jesus Christ. (Jim Kane, sermoncentral.com)

Now when it comes to wealth, Hattie Mae didn't have much in common with King David. But when it comes to sacrificial giving, Hattie Mae and King David set the pace--and people responded.

And people are responding to our campaign. I want to call on **Joel Roehling (8:15)/Terry & Sharon Issleib (10:45)** to offer a statement of support.

I guess the question for us this morning is: How will we respond?