

Text: 1 Chronicles 29:10-20

Theme: Joyful and Generous

When David and his people had the opportunity to raise the money needed for building the temple, they didn't run away from that opportunity. They welcomed it with joyful generosity. In 2 Samuel 24, we have a glimpse into David's attitude about giving to the Lord. God had sent a plague among his people because of a foolish thing David had done. To stop the plague, God ordered David to build an altar and make a sacrifice on the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. That piece of ground later becomes the site of the temple. When David asked to buy the piece of ground, Araunah offers to give it to him for free. But David says, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." In other words, how would it be a sacrifice if it cost him nothing? Where would be the joy in that?

It's easy to be generous when it costs us nothing. Have you ever dreamed about winning the lottery and thinking what you would do with all that money? I must confess that I have, even though I don't buy tickets. In those fantasies, I dream about what fun it would be to start a new mission or give an endowment fund to Trinity or to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, or to take every future WELS pastor on a tour of Israel. I must confess those daydreams kind of make me feel good about myself. But is it joyful generosity if it isn't real, or if it costs us nothing?

When David made his gift for the building of God's temple, a temple he would never see but which his son would build, he gave three thousand talents of gold and ten thousand talents of silver. That was 110 tons of gold and 260 tons of silver. That was about five billion dollars. Some scholars say that David gave his entire personal treasury for the future building of the temple. What motivated David and his people to be so generous? Our text shows us that **joyful generosity is gospel driven.**

A heart that responds to the generosity of God

You see what is in David's heart in his beautiful prayer. First, David acknowledges that he isn't really giving something to the Lord. He is only giving something back. Everything he had belonged to the Lord. God made him king. God made him wealthy. God gave him 110 tons of gold and 260 tons of silver. God gave him all this wealth and said to David, "Here, go out and have some fun." So, that's what David did. Giving all this to build God's house was more fun than building another palace, or a seaside resort, or a palace on top of a mountain.

Why was this so much fun for David? Because David's heart was responding to God's grace in his life. **"But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you."** "Who am I?" David asks. Where would David be without the grace of God? He would still be a shepherd tending the flocks, because the youngest son in the family never really got to be

his own boss. He just tended the sheep. Where would David be without the grace of God? He would still be the adulterer who stole Bathsheba from his faithful soldier and the murderer who put him on the front lines to be killed. Where would David be without the grace of God? Where would David be if God had not sent the prophet, Nathan, to bring him to repentance? Well, let David say it in his own words. Psalm 32:3-4: **“When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.”** David would have lived his life in dark despair and with no hope of heaven. He would have had nothing and he would have been nothing but for the grace of God in his life. He would have come to the end of his life and had no future in sight.

Ask yourself this question. Where would you be without the grace of God in your life? The answer is that you would be in the same place that millions of people around you are in right now. You would be living your life without any real purpose in life at all. You would be trying to be somebody by making a name for yourself. You would be checking your Facebook page every ten minutes to see if someone likes you. You would be looking back on all the mistakes in your life, all the sins you’ve committed, and have no relief for a guilty conscience. You would come to the end of your life, terrified in your soul, because you wouldn’t know what was coming next. And if you did know, you would be even more terrified. Where would you be without God’s grace in your life?

Instead God has called you to faith in Jesus and given you a hope you never deserved. David had it all, didn’t he? Don’t you have it all as well? Jesus once said to his disciples, **“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).** He has made you to be kings and priests in his kingdom. He has taken away your guilt and your despair. He gives you the joy of being God’s children. He has redeemed you and made you his own. There is nothing that he withholds from you. He has even filled your purses with gold and silver and says, “Here, go out and have some fun.”

Do you know what Jesus says after he tells you not to be afraid because he has given you the kingdom? He says, **“Sell your possessions and give to the poor.”** For people like David and people like you, giving to help others is more fun than spending money on yourself. It’s more fun to provide a scholarship to a student than to drive a new car. It’s more fun to make sure that missionaries can go to Viet Nam than it is to take a cruise in the Caribbean. Why? Because joyful generosity responds to the generosity of God’s grace. **“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.”** Joyful generosity is a response to God’s generosity of grace, and it prioritizes the kingdom of God.

A heart that prioritizes the kingdom of God

When it comes to Christian giving, motivation is the most important thing. It’s even more important than how much we give. Notice that David doesn’t talk about how much the people gave, but why they gave. They gave with integrity, with a single-minded devotion for the gospel. He thanks God for that and prays that God would always keep this desire in their hearts. Joyful generosity is gospel driven. It responds to the generosity of God’s grace and it prioritizes God’s kingdom. Pray that God would give you such a heart! Amen.

Prayer of the Church

Let us praise God for the multitude of blessings which he bestows on us day by day:

Lord God, we praise and thank you for the wonderful way you have made us and for all the gifts you have given us.

We praise you, O God, for the countless arts and skills which you have given us to serve us in our needs and pleasures. We praise and thank you that you have given us the power to invent and to learn and to put all these gifts to good use.

We praise you, O God, for the ability to make things beneficial and beautiful to satisfy our whole being. We praise and thank you for the discoveries of medical science to preserve and restore human health and for the skills of agriculture to supply us with abundances and vast varieties of food.

We praise you, O God, for your wonderful works, for the sciences that reveal them and the arts that proclaim them. We praise and thank you for the gift of speech and writing by which we share our thoughts and needs with you and our fellow human beings. We thank you for the gift of music that brings joy and comfort to our lives.

For all your gifts, O God, we glorify you today, tomorrow, and always, as we pray the prayer you taught us:

THE LORD'S PRAYER in today's language