

GOD'S BLESSINGS – OUR RESPONSE.

INTRODUCTION

Thank you to those who have spoken about God's blessings in their life today.

From the Kids Time we have seen that our God blesses us in different ways. The 'it' in the verse the kids learnt (Luke 6:38) is not about money but about blessings.

GOD'S BLESSINGS

So what are the blessings that we can experience?

- 1/ The blessings of nature
- 2/ The blessings of others
- 3/ The blessings of Gods provision
- 4/ The blessing of Christ.

OUR RESPONSE

God has given us so much. What is our response?

Jesus said in Act 20:35, "There is more happiness in giving than receiving."

Our response is to joyfully give.

Rick Warren talks about the 7 benefits of being a generous giver.

1/ Giving makes us more like God. God is a generous giver. John 3:16 tells us that He gave us His only Son. "God so loved the world that He gave..."

Everything we have is a gift from God. Did you know that you can give without loving but you cannot love without giving - giving our time, our talents, our skills and our treasures. It is good for us to learn to become generous givers.

2/ Giving draws us close to God. Jesus says, "Where your treasure is your heart will be also." Matt 6:21

Where is your heart today? Does it focus on family, career, house, business? These are not bad things but where does God fit into this? Where your treasure is your heart will be also.

Every time we give to God it draws us closer to Him. God is much more interested in raising disciples than he is in raising dollars. In the words of Brian Kluth, “It’s not what God wants *from* you, it’s what He wants *for* you.” He wants to pour out His blessings on you.

Giving draws us close to God.

3/ Giving is victory over materialism. There is a lie around, and you see it on the TV, you hear it on the radio, and that lie is that happiness can be purchased. This lie says that if you could just get this certain thing you will be happy. It’s my experience that once you get that certain thing then you want more. It’s just like the Jeep ad – Dad comes home with a Jeep and the little boy says, ‘Now we’ll need a bigger boat.’

Once upon a time officers arrived in their new appointment with a suitcase and some books. Now the huge removal van comes, loads up – is full, and takes the goods to the new appointment. I am sure it is not only officers who have so much stuff! Is it time to de-clutter and give some ‘stuff’ away?

We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give. Every time we give it breaks the circle of materialism. We are to put our hope in God not things. He will supply our needs. Let us trust Him. Deuteronomy 14:23 says, “The purpose of tithing is to teach you always put God first in your lives.” Living Bible.

Let us make a life by giving. We can have victory over materialism. It’s contrary to what the world tells us. I encourage you to make giving a part of your DNA – make it a part of who you are.

4/ Giving strengthens our faith. When we give of our money it strengthens our faith. Take a look at the widow and her mite. It’s not about the size of the gift but the size of her faith. She gave all that she had. How was she going to live

for the next few weeks? She gave and then she trusted God to provide. She shows us the example of giving and her incredible faith.

Giving the tithe is the only place in the Bible where it tells us to 'test God in this'. Malachi 3:10. (If appropriate tell your tithe story and how God supplies your needs.)

5/ Giving is an investment for Eternity. Have you heard the saying, 'Shrouds don't have pockets.' We can't take it with us BUT we can send it forward. Matthew 6:20 tells us to "Store up treasure in Heaven." How you ask? We can do this by showing generosity to our church, to others, to charities.

Paul wrote to Timothy and said, 'Command them to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of life that is truly life.'

6/ Giving blesses us in return. Proverbs 22:9, "A generous man will himself be blessed." No person is honoured for what they receive in life, they are honoured for what they give.

What generous people do you know? Andrew Forster was in the news in Oct 2013 for giving \$65 million to the Western Australian Uni. In 2013 at the Sydney RSA launch he said he would give \$1million to the RSA if those in the room raised \$1million. It happened and he gave \$1million to the RSA.

A generous man will himself be blessed. What we give out will so often return. God is no person's debtor.

The law of life is – we sow and reap and what we sow we reap. Sow generosity!

7/ Giving makes us happy. We said at the beginning that Jesus said in Act 20:35, "There is more happiness in giving than receiving."

God will teach us to be generous people. Our nature is to think of self. Some people are more generous than others.

