

## "What's in Your Wallet?"

### 1 Chronicles 29:1-9

Then King David said to the whole assembly: "My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. <sup>2</sup> With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities. <sup>3</sup> Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: <sup>4</sup> three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, <sup>5</sup> for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now, who is willing to consecrate themselves to the LORD today?" <sup>6</sup> Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly. <sup>7</sup> They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the LORD in the custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. <sup>9</sup> The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.

### Introduction

(Brief video clip of Capital One ad & PPT Slide – What's in Your Wallet?.) Most of you are probably familiar with this. Capital One has spent millions of dollars every year to get us to consider the question, "**What's in your wallet?**"

Today we think about this question in light of the 1 Chronicles 29 account. **What's in your wallet?**

### Offerings Given for/to the Lord

Have you ever built a house – whether you did it yourself or had someone build it for you? A lot of planning goes into it ... lot's of steps ... lots of decisions ... lots of money ... unless your building a shack or she-shed. Imagine building a temple for God for which God had specified all kinds of expensive details.

This is where we are today with God's word. For over 400 years the center of worship for Israel has been the Tabernacle – a portable tent facility. Now it's time to build a temple for God. King David wants to build it. But he is at the end of his 40-yr. reign and God has told him that he is a warrior king with much blood on his hands. God told David that his son, Solomon will build the temple. But Solomon is still a young and inexperienced man – maybe 20 yrs. old. So even though King David can't build the temple, he is going to use his traction strengths to get things doing.

He starts the fund-raising campaign. "**With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God ...**" It appears that these resources were out of the national treasury. "Typical of government," someone might say, "It's easier to spend someone else's money than one's own." But David shows his personal commitment to the project. "**Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple ...**"

Something special to note about David, is his focus. For whom is he doing this? "...**this palatial structure is not for man but FOR THE LORD GOD.**" It's for the Lord, isn't it? David isn't doing this to look good, to make a name for himself, to grow support, or anything self-centered like that. He's giving for or to the Lord.

When he encourages the leaders of Israel to join in the temple offering, note their mindset. V. 9 indicates, **“they had given freely and wholeheartedly TO THE LORD.”**

When you give your offerings, you view it as a personal interaction between you and God? Do you think, **“This is for the Lord? I’m giving to the Lord?”**

“Of course I do!” you say. If so, great. But could it be at times that our sinful nature which is not God-centered but self-centered can derail our thinking when it comes to giving? The result is, “I’ve got to give to keep up the church and pay the bills.” “We’ve got to keep things going at school because I want my kids and grandkids to have Christian education.” “It’s my obligation ... I’ve got to do my part.” “It will help with my tax deductions.” All of these thoughts can be godly if they don’t get in the way of the main reason for a Christian to give offerings - “I’m giving to the Lord.”

You see, if we leave out the “for the Lord” or “to the Lord” our offerings become I or me centered. This is definitely true if we give to look good or enhance ourselves in the eyes of others. When we leave out of our thinking “for the Lord” and “to the Lord” when it comes to our giving, we put ourselves before God and violate the first commandment – **“You shall have no other Gods.”**

To help you with this to and for the Lord, think how he fearfully and wonderfully made you. You are unique. He gave you the package of personality, talents, abilities with which to live life. Everything is God’s. Every day out of love he gives you life, breath, and blessings beyond your comprehension. Even though you came into this world with sin and sin every day, God still loves you. Focus on his great love in Christ. God did not spare his own Son but gave him up to save you. Now you are forgiven and saved from hell and hopelessness. Ponder how God put his Holy Spirit in you to faith. What a difference this makes for time and for eternity! Think of how the Lord is here for you and gives to you.

In answer to the question, **“What’s in your wallet?”** Let your answer be, **“Offerings for / to the Lord!”**

### **Devoted” ... “Wholehearted” ... “Willing” ... .. “Free” ...”Rejoicing”**

There are other things we learn from this account. Note other attitudes of King David and his leaders.

David said, **“...in my devotion to the temple of my God.”** The he challenged his leaders as to their devotion to the Lord. **“Now, who is willing to consecrate themselves to the LORD today?”** This is the idea that before they gave offerings to the Lord they first gave themselves to the Lord. It was like they were saying, “I’m yours, O Lord.”

Is this your attitude in giving offerings? God wills that it is. If it isn’t talk to God about this. Think about what God says in his word. In 2 Corinthians 8:5 Paul wrote about the Macedonian Christians and their giving. **“They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will.”** Paul also wrote, **“You are not your own, you were bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:19).”** Christ lived and died to make you God’s.

Focusing on the love of God and God’s wholehearted devotion to them, moved King David and his leaders to devote themselves to God and then wholeheartedly give for the building of the temple.

They also gave willingly and freely. God didn’t show David his lightning maker and threaten him so that David gave himself to the Lord and gave the Lord offerings. God showed David love – sparing his life, rescuing him from danger, forgiving his sins, and more. This moved David to love God and willingly and freely give.

Likewise, David didn’t bring out his special forces and threaten his leaders with death if they didn’t generously give for the temple. David wrote, spoke, and sang about the love for God. The result was that his leaders loved God and not only gave themselves to God, but willingly and freely gave offerings.

Note the effect on the nation. The people rejoiced. King David rejoiced.

Giving to the Lord with devotion of self, wholeheartedly, willingly, and freely involves a struggle. My new man says, "I'm devoted to God." My sinful nature says, "I'm not!" My new man says, "I'm willing to give." My sinful nature says, "I'm not." My new man says, "I give freely, without compulsion." My sinful nature says, "I don't."

But those who study non-profit giving indicate that in protestant and evangelical churches, 37% who attend worship give nothing. A sad fact here at St. Paul's is that there are a significant number of families – 40% of our giving units - who as far as we know give nothing. Some may be shut-in and not control their finances. Some may not come to worship which is another issue. If this is you, repent! This is not godly! This is not good!

It's only through keeping our focus on God and his love that we win the battle. John wrote, **"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 Jn 4:10)."** ... **"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9)."** ... **"Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1-2)."**

Also pray. Pray that God help you to stay focused on his love and help you in your battle with the sinful nature. And remember, when we give to the Lord – wholeheartedly, willingly, and freely – it causes others to rejoice.

What's in your wallet – focusing on God, his love, and his goodness to you, let your answer be: "Offerings for God given out of devotion and willingness to give."

### **Generous Offerings**

Did you notice the amounts that King David and the Israelite leaders gave? If we translate the talents darics into tons and pounds and use today's values for gold, silver, and brass, King David gave about \$5.6 billion from his own possessions in addition to what came out of the national treasury. The Jewish leaders gave about \$9.2 million in addition to the value of gems and jewels. That's generous!

God wills that we be generous givers. In 2 Corinthians 9:6 he says through Paul, **"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously (2 Cor 9:6)."**

Generosity, however is relative. If I make \$100,000 a year and give a \$3,000 gift and someone who makes \$14,000 a year on social security gives \$1,000, wouldn't you say that the former is not so generous and the latter?

Think of the account of the widow giving two small coins, let's call them pennies, to support the temple. **"Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. <sup>44</sup>They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on (Mk 12:43,44)."**

God also emphasized this through St. Paul, **"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made (1 Cor. 16:2)."** Have a pattern or discipline for giving – every week, every other week, every month, etc. – and stick to it whether you can make it to worship or not. Look at how the Lord is blessing you – big income, enables big offerings; little income, enables little offerings.

This last year if we put our general fund offerings together with offerings for MVL, WELS, and the school project, we gave about \$2 million. That's a lot of money. Consider, however that the average household income in New Ulm is \$55,000. Conservatively figuring 900 households, we have a total annual income of about \$50,000,000.

This figures out to 3% for ongoing ministry and 4% overall. In addition, there are members who give generously to other charities and ministries. But wouldn't you say that we probably have room to grow?

God helps us to grow with his promises. He says, **"God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work ... <sup>10</sup> Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. <sup>11</sup> You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."**

Let's grow in the use of word and sacrament with the result that seeing God's devotion, goodness and generosity to us, we devote ourselves to the Lord and willingly, freely, and generously give to him. Let's grow in prioritizing and structuring our money management better, in practicing more self-control, and putting the Lord first in our lives. Let's grow so that in response to the question, "What's in your wallet?" we can say, "Generous, wholehearted, willing offerings given to the Lord!"