

How God Taught me to Give (Video)

by Oswald J. Smith

This sermon emphasizes the concept of a faith promise offering, illustrating the principle of giving generously and trusting God to provide abundantly. The speaker shares personal experiences of stepping out in faith to give beyond his means, leading to spiritual growth and blessings. The sermon highlights the impact of faith promise offerings on missions work and the importance of aligning giving practices with biblical principles.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:24, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 9:6, Philippians 4:19, Luke 6:38

Topics: "Faith Promise Offering", "Generosity and Trust in God"

Description

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Transcript

■■ ■■ Turn with me, if you will, tonight to the book of Proverbs, the 11th chapter, verses 24 and 25. Now, I do not understand this verse. I never have been able to understand it.

All I know is that it works, and for the last 45 years, I've seen it work all over the United States of America, and all over the Dominion of Canada. It's a paradox, and you'll realize that as I read it. The 24th verse of the 11th chapter of Proverbs, there is that scattereth and yet increaseth.

How are you going to understand that? How can you give away what you have, and then have more left after you have given away than you had before you gave away? That's exactly what it says. There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. You hang on to more than you ought to hang on to, and the result may be poverty.

The liberal soul shall be made fat. Now, I don't interpret that literally. It means the liberal soul shall prosper.

The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. If you were to come to the People's Church during the days of the annual missionary convention, which has always lasted for four weeks and five Sundays, how would you like to attend missionary meetings every day for four weeks

and five Sundays? That has been our experience for more than ten years now in the People's Church in Toronto, Canada. I say if you were to come during those days, you would glance up at the walls of the church, and you would see the walls of the church covered with great missionary mottos.

I have some thirty-five different mottos that I use in connection with my missionary conventions, and these mottos I place on the walls of my church, and for one solid month the people sit there and they watch them and they read them, and those mottos do something wonderful during the days of the convention. Now I want to give you just one of these mottos this evening, and if you forget everything else that I say, I trust that you will not forget my motto. Here it is.

Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving. How do you like that motto? Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving. In other words, you square with God, and God will square with you.

You can't beat God giving. God will be no man's debtor. Give and it shall be given unto thee.

Square with God and God will square with you. I was a minister of a large Presbyterian church in the city of Toronto, Canada, in my twenties, a church seating some eighteen hundred people. After a few years had passed, I resigned from that church, and I became pastor of a church that held an annual missionary convention.

Now I had never seen a convention in my life. I didn't know anything about it, and I became pastor on the closing Sunday of that convention, and I sat there behind the sacred desk, and I watched the ushers as they walked up and down the aisles with these faith promise offering cards, taking up the faith promise offering. Suddenly, one of those ushers had the audacity to walk right up the aisle, step right up onto the platform, and hand me, the pastor of the church, one of these cards.

I had never seen one before in my life. I held it there and looked at it. I read it.

Independence upon God. I will endeavor to give toward the missionaries of the church the amount checked each month for the coming year. Then I closed my eyes and I started to pray.

I said, Lord, you know that I can't give to this offering. This church is only paying me twenty-five dollars a week. The First World War had just ended.

Prices were sky high. I said, Lord, I do not have two cents to rub against each other at the end of the week. I have no money in the bank.

I have no money in my pocket. Therefore, I cannot participate in this offering. Then God started to talk to me.

Now, I didn't know that that morning God would teach me a lesson. I said, Lord, I can't participate. I can't give.

I haven't got the money. I can't take part of this offering. Then I heard the voice of God.

I'm not asking you for what you have. What, Lord, I said you're not asking me for what I have? No, I'm not asking you for what you have. Well, then, Lord, what are you asking? I'm asking you for a faith offering.

How much can you trust me for? Well, Lord, I said that's different. I've never given that kind of an offering in my life. How much can I trust me for? You'll have to tell me.

I don't know. I thought God might say \$5. Because once in my life I had managed to give \$5 to missions during the year.

I didn't know what God would say. I'm not going to try to tell you that God spoke to me in an audible voice. But so far as I was concerned, it was an audible voice.

For suddenly the Spirit of God spoke to me and said, \$50. And I opened my eyes and I gazed around amazement. \$50, Lord! Two-week salary.

How can any mortal man give two-week salary to missions, let alone a minister of the gospel? But God never changed the amount. Again, he whispered, \$50. I can remember his order yesterday, although this happened some 50 years ago now.

I took that card. I took out my pencil. I signed my name.

I wrote in my address. And then I checked the amount. \$50.

I'd never done anything like that in my life before. I'd never given such a fortune before. That morning, as I filled in that card, I continued in prayer.

Presently I hand the card to one of the ushers. Every month from then on, every month I had to get alone in the presence of God. I had to agonize in prayer.

And I had to ask God for \$4. And every month as I exercised faith and as I agonized in prayer, God answered my prayer and sent in the \$4. So that at the end of the year, I had paid in every cent that I had promised of the \$50 promised 12 months before.

I had never done anything like that in all my life. It was a new experience for me, something I'd never known anything about before. It was a faith promise offering.

At the end of that year, and this is what I want to get over to you, I received such a spiritual blessing. I received such a spiritual uplift. God so wonderfully increased my faith.

God so marvelously undertook for me that at the next convention I doubled the amount, my faith, and I made it \$100 for the year. And again I had to pray. And again God answered.

And once more it was sent in. Where it came from, I don't know. I never will know where it came from.

All I know is that God sent it in. At the next convention, by faith I doubled the offering again and made it \$200 for the year. And then there came a day when I was able to double it once more and make it \$400 for the year permissions.

And then, then the church raised my salary from \$25 a week to \$40 a week. Now I was on millionaire roll. Now I had a super abundance.

Now I was really able to give. And so at the next convention I doubled it again and I made it \$400 for the year. And now I've got thousands upon thousands of dollars in the bank of heaven.

And if I'd waited until I had the cash, I never would have had anything to send on ahead because I never would have had it. I gave it when I didn't have it. I gave it when I didn't know where it was coming from.

I gave it when I had to pray for it. I gave it when I had to trust God for it. I gave it when I had to exercise faith.

And God met my faith. And God sent it in. And I wouldn't go back to the old method for all the money in the world.

Ever since then, I've been giving a faith promise offering. And all over the United States of America and all over the Dominion of Canada, I've been holding missionary conventions in churches of all denominations, teaching those churches how to give a faith promise offering. And their missionary giving has increased 10 times over as a result.

I think of the great Park Street Congregational Church, Boston, giving something like \$3,000 a year to missions at one time and now giving over \$300,000 a year. I think of my own church in Toronto, Canada, the People's Church, giving the first year I was there \$3,500 a year to missions, now giving \$400,000 a year to missions for at our last convention, that was the amount God enabled us to give. And we have a church of working people, ordinary working people, professional people, but a church that has caught a vision of missions, a church that is on fire for world evangelization.

And as a result, we've been able to take on 100 new missionaries this year and give \$400,000 for missions, a total down through the years of \$7 million for world evangelization. That's what happens when a church holds an annual missionary convention and takes up a faith promise offering. But now, what is a faith promise offering? Let me, in my closing remarks, say three things about a faith promise offering.

First, a faith promise offering is not a cash offering. It is not a cash offering. You do not have to have one single cent in your purse or in your pocket in order to give a faith promise offering.

All you have to have is faith. And if God gives you faith, then you can give a faith promise offering. And God will enable you to send it in month by month until the entire amount that you have promised will have been paid.

A faith promise offering, I say, is not a cash offering. Suppose I have a dollar bill in my pocket. All I have to do is to tell that hand to go into that pocket, find that dollar bill, take it out, and place it on the plate.

And that's the end of my giving. I'll never have to pray for it. I'll never have to trust God for it.

I'll never have to exercise faith for it. I've got it. All I have to do is to give it.

That's a cash offering. And then there's another reason why I never take up a cash offering for missions. During the entire period of our annual missionary convention, one solid month, we hardly ever get more than \$7,000 in cash.

Now, what could I do with \$7,000 and 404 missionaries to take care of? What could I do with \$7,000? I would have to tell the various missionary societies to send most of our missionaries back home. But during the same period, during the same month, we can get \$400,000 in faith promises. \$7,000 in cash, \$400,000 in faith promises.

You think I'm going to spend my time taking up cash offerings when I can only get \$7,000? If I can take up a faith promise offering and get \$400,000? Why, there's all the difference in the world. And I believe this is God's method. Therefore, we do not take up a cash offering for missions.

We take up a faith promise offering. A faith promise offering is not a cash offering, second. A faith promise offering is not a pledge offering.

Now, unless you differentiate between a pledge offering and a faith promise offering, you're going to miss it altogether. Many a church that objects to a pledge offering will be quite willing to take up a faith promise offering. A faith promise offering is between you and God.

Nobody will ever ask you for it. Nobody will ever write you about it. Nobody will ever demand it of you.

It's a secret transaction between you and God. And third, and last, a faith promise offering is a Bible offering, a scriptural offering, a Pauline offering. And I like to do things according to the Word of God.

A faith promise offering, I say, is a Bible offering. And that's why God blesses it, as He blesses no other kind of an offering, because it is a scriptural offering. You remember the kind of offerings the Apostle Paul took up? You remember he would go to a church? He wanted an offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

He knew it was no use taking up a cash offering. He realized that the people did not have it. Therefore, you remember, he took up a faith promise offering.

He said, I'm going to leave you now, and I'll be back in one year, 12 months from now. And then, I want you to have your offering ready, so that I can receive it, and then take it to the poor saints in Jerusalem. And then he left them.

About three months before it was time for him to return, you remember he sent Titus to that church to remind the church of the promise that had been made when he had been there, and to warn the church that he himself would be coming back at the end of the year to collect it. And then you remember, at the end of the year, the Apostle Paul returned to that church. He collected the amount that had been promised 12 months before.

He went to Jerusalem. He took care of the needs of the poor saints there. That was the way the Apostle Paul took up his offerings, a faith promise offering, not a cash offering.

You say, Dr. Smith, where do you get that? Where do you find that? Have you ever in your life read chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians? If you have never read chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians, let me suggest that when you go home, turn to chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians, and as you read those verses, you'll discover, beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt, that the Apostle Paul took up faith promise offerings, and that's why God blesses it. You see, you don't need any faith to give a cash offering, but when it comes to a faith promise offering, you're giving something you haven't got. You're giving something that you've got to trust God for, and that's why you grow spiritually, and that's why your faith increases.

You remember the last world war? France had fallen. The United States had not yet come in. Great Britain was standing alone with her back against the wall, expecting almost instant invasion.

So Winston Churchill, the prime minister, decided to speak directly to the American people. I was driving along the highway with my wife. I drew my car to the side of the road.

I turned off the engine. I did not want to miss one single word. I tuned in London, England.

The prime minister only spoke for two or three minutes that day, but never to my dying day will I forget what he said. Speaking directly to the American people, Sir Winston Churchill said this, Give us the tools, and we'll finish the job. And now, speaking to you, I want to say, as I've said to so many others, while we think of our missionaries in the regions beyond, I want to say to you now, Give them the tools, and they'll finish the job.

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