

# Numbers Chapter 7

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you'd like to open your Bibles to page 599, we're going to start off by reading Psalm 90, the first four verses.

Page 599, Psalm 90. I just want to remember who it is we've come here to worship.

So starting in verse 1. Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born, you were brought forth for the whole world.

From everlasting to everlasting, you are God. You turn people back to dust, saying, return to dust, you mortals. A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

I just wanted to point out really just the comparison between who we are and who God is. And I think as we come here to worship God, we need to remember who he is.

[ 1 : 07 ] He's the eternal one. His dwelling is from eternity. And it says our lives are fleeting. A thousand years in his sight, they're like a day.

So he's the eternal God. And not only is he the eternal God, he's the one that knows us completely inside out. Verse 8, it says, You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins, in the light of your presence.

So he's a God who sees everything about us, even our deepest secrets, even our secret sins. But it doesn't end there, because it ends with a cry for mercy.

In verse 13, it says this, Relent, Lord, how long will it be? Have compassion on your servants.

Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. And I think we need to be thankful that we have a merciful God. And he's shown that in Jesus, in sending Jesus for us.

[ 2 : 15 ] So we're going to open with a hymn, number 493. And it's really, it's a song about God's mercy. How deep the Father's love for us. Number 493.

We'll just commit the service to the Lord in prayer.

How deep the Father's love for us. How vast beyond all measure. That he should give his only son to make a wretch his treasure. Father, we sing those lyrics.

And we thank you that while we were unlovely, while we were still sinners, you sent Christ to die for us. While we were enemies, you loved us. And we ask that you'd help us to remember this.

We thank you, we praise you. Forgive us when we build ourselves up in our own minds, when we don't remember who you are. When we put ourselves first.

[ 3 : 32 ] Which we do so often. Forgive us when we turn away from you. We forget the one who created us, and the one who bought us. And we ask now that you'd give us humble hearts, hearing hearts.

That we'd hear what you'd say to us. We ask that you'd speak to us. Show us who you are. Reveal yourself to us. Speak through Peter, we pray. And through your word.

And teach us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're in Numbers chapter 7. That's page 141 in your Bibles.

So Numbers chapter 7. We'll start in verse 1. We'll read up to verse 17. When Moses finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed and consecrated it all and all its furnishings.

He also anointed and consecrated the altar and all its utensils. Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of families, who were the tribal leaders in charge of those who were counted, made offerings.

[ 4 : 44 ] They brought as their gifts before the Lord six covered carts and twelve oxen, an ox from each leader and a cart from every two. These they presented before the tabernacle.

The Lord said to Moses, So Moses took the carts and oxen and gave them to the Levites.

He gave two carts and four oxen to the Gershonites as their work required, and he gave four carts and eight oxen to the Merarites as their work required. They were all under the direction of Ithamar, son of Aaron, the priest.

But Moses did not give any to the Kohathites, because they were to carry on their shoulders the holy things for which they were responsible. When the altar was anointed, the leaders brought their offerings for its dedication and presented them before the altar.

For the Lord had said to Moses, Each day one leader is to bring his offering for the dedication of the altar. The one who brought his offering on the first day was Nashon, son of Aminadab, the tribe of Judah.

[ 5 : 59 ] His offering was one silver plate weighing 130 shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing 70 shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with the finest flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

One gold dish weighing 10 shekels filled with incense. One young bull, one ram, and one male lamb, a year old for a burnt offering. And two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs, a year old, to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering.

This was the offering of Nashon, son of Aminadab. And now the offerings are the same. It's repeated for 12 days for the 12 different tribes.

So if you go across two pages and we'll pick up again in verse 84. So that's verse 84. These were the offerings of the Israelite leaders for their dedication of the altar when it was anointed.

12 silver plates, 12 silver sprinkling bowls, and 12 gold dishes. Each silver plate weighed 130 shekels and each sprinkling bowl 70 shekels.

[ 7 : 13 ] Altogether, the silver dishes weighed 2,400 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel.

The 12 gold dishes filled with incense weighed 10 shekels each, according to the sanctuary shekel.

Altogether, the gold dishes weighed 120 shekels. The total number of animals for the burnt offering came to 12 young bulls, 12 rams, and 12 male lambs a year old, together with their grain offering.

12 male goats were used for the sin offering. The total number of animals for the sacrifice of the fellowship offering came to 24 oxen, 60 rams, 60 male goats, and 60 male lambs a year old.

These were the offerings for the dedication of the altar after it was anointed. When Moses entered the tent of meeting to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim, above the atonement cover on the Ark of the Covenant law.

In this way the Lord spoke to him. Please would you turn back to that reading in Numbers and Chapter 7.

[ 8 : 24 ] Thank you, Joel, for leading us so helpfully in our worship. Just, while you're turning there, I just ask you to remember in prayer, a dear friend of ours named Heidi. Heidi, if you remember, was with us for about three months in the autumn, as a friend of Helen and Mark, caring for them while Mark was undergoing his chemo and radiotherapy, and it was a great joy to have Heidi fellowship with us at that time.

Now, Heidi was due to be here this coming week, but unfortunately her son, her son of 10, was taken to hospital with appendicitis, and we do need just to pray for him and for the family there as well.

Let's do that very briefly as we also pray for the Lord's help as we come to his word. We thank you, Father in Heaven, for your great love and care for us.

We thank you for the way that you intercede into our lives and act in our lives with blessing, and hear us when we cry and look to you in prayer.

Thank you that we recognize again that our plans are not always your plans, and yet, Lord, your way is always best. Pray for Heidi at this time, and especially for her son, that you would heal him from this operation that may have gone well and that he may make a full recovery.

[ 9 : 46 ] And we pray, Lord, in your own good time, we pray that, Lord, you would make it possible for Heidi to be here again. Bless her, Lord, as she serves you in the Philippines.

Encourage her and do her good. We pray, Lord, because we need your encouragement too. As we come to your word this evening, we ask that you would speak to us and open our hearts, our minds, our thoughts to your truth and apply it to us with the power of your Holy Spirit, that, Lord, we may know that you have spoken and dealt with us.

For we ask it all in and through. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. Well, I wonder what you thought as Joel was reading through Numbers 7.

Probably the same thing that if you're here regularly, you thought on several occasions when we've read through parts of Numbers. What on earth is this all about? And what on earth has it got to do with me? It seems so distant, so strange.

The names are strange. The language is strange. But, again, dear friends, let's always remind ourselves this is the very word of God and it is practical and applicable to our lives.

[10:57] And I hope that it will be the case for us again this evening. Now, I know some people have recently moved house. Pam and Alan, we had a couple here this morning, just recently moved into Whitby.

George and Janet, perhaps others as well. Moving house is an ordeal, isn't it? There's no doubt about it. It's not a nice thing to do. It's not an easy thing to do.

But even before you actually move house, pardon me, before you actually get into the new house or even leave your old house, there's such a lot to do, such a lot to prepare for. You have to get in touch with your service providers, energy and telephone and so on.

Give your forwarding address to the post office so any posts can be forwarded. You've got to send out letters to people, relatives and friends. Give them your new landline number.

Give them your new address and so on. And that's even before you start packing the boxes, emptying the loft, which actually you filled with the stuff from your previous house and it's never come down from the loft since then, and ordering the moving van.

[12:03] Well, when we get to Stumbus in chapter 7, we get back to the story, as it were, the events of God moving his people on their journey to the promised land.

And we were looking last week particularly about God's blessing upon his people, a wonderful blessing there in verse 22 and 27. And up until that point, the tabernacle, this wonderful elaborate tent or system of tents, which was to be used for the worship of God and the offering of sacrifices. It was the very central point of the camp of God's people. They all, as it were, camped around the Lord's dwelling place, the tabernacle.

It was the sign and symbol to them that God was present with them. That's been finished, we're told here, chapter 7 and verse 1. And Moses has anointed it and consecrated it and all the articles to do with it, the altar and the furnishings and the tables and so on and so forth, so that it's ready for when God's people move, move to their promised land.

And that's what Numbers is about, the journey. And we'll get into the journey in a few weeks' time, I hope. Well, not actually in a few weeks, in a few months' time by the time we get there. And we'll see how God takes his people forward.

[13:31] But here's the problem. You've got this whopping great big tent, which it was, massive place. How are you going to move it? How are you practically going to get it to the next campsite?

Now, of course, as always, God has a problem in mind. God has provided, as he does, for the needs of his people and for the needs of his worship.

And so we get there, verse 2, and we're told about the leaders, how they had brought along these special carts, two covered carts, 12 oxen, to provide transport for the tabernacle sections.

And so the Lord tells Moses, verse 4, to give these carts to certain tribes. If you remember, the Levites were divided into their families. The Levites were the servants of God.

They were to do the practical undertaking of putting up the tabernacle, taking down the tabernacle, looking after the whole of the worship of God.

[14:41] And some were given these carts. The Gershonites were given carts. And who else was given a cart as well? Merorites were given carts, but the Kohathites were not.

And if you remember, the instructions that God gave when he looked at Exodus was that the Ark of the Covenant and certain parts, holy parts, special parts, of the tabernacle were not to be just put on a cart.

They were to be carried on the shoulders of the Levites as they went along, a symbol of their special place in the worship of God because they, again, represented the very presence of God amongst God's people.

But then we're told that more giving was to take place, not only for these carts and oxen, but then we have this long procession, 12 days of giving.

And I hope you don't feel cheated that I didn't get Joel to read all 84 verses of day 1, day 2, day 3, through to 12 because apart from a change in the names, they all brought exactly the same gifts.

[ 15 : 55 ] The silver gifts, gold gifts, oil, grain, and various livestock. Well, what's all this got to do with us? It's all historically interesting.

It'd be great if Peter could put up some pictures to show us these carts and what they would look like and that sort of thing. But what's it got to do with us? Well, again, dear friends, we're coming to the Word of God and God has always dealt with His people in very similar ways.

And the things that He teaches in His Word convey principles, truths, that are timeless. And in fact, of course, when you, as you know very well, when we did an introduction to Numbers, we looked at how Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 10 and says, all these things were written for us as an example to help us in our Christian life today, back then in the first century, and that's true for us in the 21st century.

And I put it to you that chapter 7 particularly has a lot to teach us about the matter of giving, of giving. As Christians, as those who are the Lord's people, we are to bring gifts and offerings to God. We are to be givers as we are also receivers. And the first thing I want us to notice and the first thing I want us to recognize is this, that our giving is a vital part of our worship.

[ 17 : 28 ] When we sing, we are worshiping God. When we pray, we are worshiping God. When we serve one another, we are worshiping God. And when we give, we are worshiping God.

Giving is a fundamental part of the life of God's people. Whether it be Old Testament Israel here, whether it be the church of the Lord Jesus Christ today.

We are all to bring gifts to God as part of our relationship with Him. Our fellowship with Him. Our worship with Him. Well, that's natural, isn't it?

In any relationship, any human relationship that we have, there is always a giving and a receiving. Whether it's a married couple, whether it's parents to children, whether it's in our friendships, whether it's occasionally even with our neighbors, in all our relationships, we receive from others and we give to them.

That's just the way it is. That's part, that's the way we express, isn't it? Fellowship. That's the way that we sort of secure, if I can put, friendship by the giving and receiving of gifts.

[ 18 : 38 ] It would be very strange then if in our fellowship with God we were purely recipients from God and we never gave anything to Him. It would be a one-way relationship.

But the wonderful thing is in the Christian life that we are in this two-way relationship with God. This giving and receiving.

Well, we know that we've received a lot from God. We know that we are people who have received through the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul tells us, every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

We are people who, again and again, God has poured out His goodness upon us. Now, we can never repay God for what He's given us and we must never think that we can.

In fact, isn't it very sad that for many religions in the world, there is that sort of thought that somehow you can buy God's love or somehow repay Him for what He's done for you.

[ 19 : 44 ] Somehow earn His favor. That, of course, is never the case with the Lord God of the Bible because He has always been a God of grace.

A God who gives freely, gladly and willingly to us and He does not, if I can put it this way, expect or think or consider that we can repay Him the debt that we owe.

In the giving of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the most lavish love gift in the whole of time and history. There's no way we can repay God for giving that precious gift of His Son.

Every gift we receive, He gives us freely and joyfully and if we think in some way we should repay Him or can repay Him, in one sense we insult His grace.

So actually, when people do things for God, in some way to please Him or appease Him or to somehow repay Him, what they are doing is actually insulting the grace of God because He gives freely and willingly and gladly.

[ 21 : 01 ] It's a bit like somebody, you invite somebody, or, I don't know, I'm trying to think of an illustration. Somebody buys you a present for your birthday and you're really thrilled with this present and it's just the right thing.

They know you, they know the sort of tastes you have, they know that this is something that's going to give you some pleasure and they've given a lot of thought to it and they give you that present and you're in rapidity. I'm absolutely delighted with this and you reach in your pocket and you get out your wallet.

Let me pay you back for that gift and that must have been about 50 pounds. Let me give it to you. No, no, no. Oh, I insist I've got to pay. Well, it's not a gift then, is it? And in fact, it would get to a point where actually the person who's bought the gift would rather get very embarrassed and say, well, I wanted to give it to you.

I wanted to express my love to you. So it is with God. We don't give to God to repay. We don't pay. And we don't give to God because somehow we think that God needs what we've got to give him. Sometimes you get that with some folk who might come to church or visit church or in some way and they sort of come and they sort of say, well, of course, you need the money, don't you?

[ 22 : 15 ] So we're going to give you some money because you need it. No, we don't need it. We don't need it because God doesn't need it. We cannot give to him in some senses which he depends upon you and I.

In which some sense, well, if it wasn't for your giving, if it wasn't for what you did for God, God would be in a bit of a sticky place. God needs you to do his work.

God needs your money to finance his mission. The reality is that God is completely, utterly, independent and self-sufficient.

He doesn't need us. He doesn't need you. He doesn't need me. He doesn't need the things that we can bring to him or give to him. They're not a necessity for him.

It's not that God lacks anything because, of course, we know that everything in this whole universe he created. Everything comes from him. Here's what Paul says as he preaches in Athens, Acts 17.

[ 23 : 21 ] God is not served by human hands as if he needed anything. And he goes on to say, in fact, it is a God who has given everything. He is a life-giving God.

Everything we have comes from him. So the important thing for us to grasp at the very beginning is this, that our giving is an act of love.

our giving is an act of worship. Our giving, which we are to do, should be the natural overflow of hearts that love God.

It's part of our relationship. It's part of our fellowship. God didn't receive from the other nations around about anything. It was only from his own people that he received the gifts that they brought. in fact, do you remember right back when Abraham rescued the people a lot and his family and one of the kings came to him and said, oh, let me repay you back for all that you've done, Abraham.

[ 24 : 26 ] He said, look, I don't want anybody saying that you have made me rich. It's God who meets all my needs. I think there's, I don't want to harp on about this to one degree, but I think it's important for us to realize I know we should never, dear friends, get involved in the lottery.

I don't know churches have done that and said, well, the lottery, we'll get a grant from the national lottery so that we can restore our building or restore the mission of the church or whatever it may be.

I think we've got to be so very careful as Christians about what we receive. That's a separate matter. So, back to ourselves. Are you a giver as a Christian?

Do you give to the Lord? Do you see it as being a natural part of your relationship with Him? Notice again that it seems a bit of an overkill to have every single tribe one day after another after another after another but ultimately what we're being told is this, every single one of God's people gave.

There's no exceptions. Christians, every single tribe gave. They all were in a relationship with God. If you're a Christian, then it is part of our life and relationship with Him that we give.

[ 25 : 45 ] Now, the next thing I think which is important as well to see is this, that our giving comes out of what God has first given us. I know I've already sort of said something like that but that's an important thing for understanding.

Look at the gifts that they brought, verse 13. Silver plate weighing 130 shekels, silver sprinkling bowl weighing 70 shekels, filled with flour and olive oil and so on, a gold dish weighing 10 shekels and so on.

Every day these gifts were brought, silver and gold and oil and wheat and animals and so on and so forth.

Where did they get them all from? Thought about that. Where did they get all this gold and silver and all these and the gold we're told we add it all up at the end and we've turned there to the end of the chapter and we're told that there was 120 shekels of gold and if you look down and probably if you've got the bottom of your page it'll tell you how much.

There was 1.4 kilos of gold that's about 3 pound that's a lot isn't it? How much is it an ounce now? About 500 pound an ounce.

[ 27 : 06 ] Don't ask me to do the maths. And then silver 28 kilos 61 pounds of silver. Just think back a minute. These people were all slaves in Egypt.

They were the bottom of the rung. They were the poor. They were the downtrodden. They were the despised in Egypt. These were not the rich people of Egypt. These were not the high flyers and the businessmen of Egypt that had all this sort of gold hanging around.

13 months previous to this they'd still been in Egypt and they'd been all slaves. Where'd the gold come from? Well it was the Lord who'd given it to them.

Do you remember when we looked at Exodus what happened on that night when they were driven out of Egypt when the Passover had taken place and all the people left something happened didn't it?

They were given gold and silver and all sorts of things by the Egyptians. Here's what happened. Don't need to look to it. Exodus chapter 12.

[ 28 : 13 ] The Lord sorry the Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. The Lord had made the Egyptians favorably disposed towards the people.

They gave them what they asked for so they plundered the Egyptians. And it's the same with all the cattle and livestock and oxen. Verse 38 many other people went up with them and also large droves of livestock both flocks and herds.

All that they gave is what they'd already been given. It seems a simple enough thing doesn't it? None of us have anything. As Job remarked we enter this world with nothing and we leave this world with nothing.

Everything that you and I have has been given to us by God. We are merely stewards of God's gifts. So you may have the biggest house in Whitby and the flashiest car.

You may have all sorts of gold and silver in your safe. Let me say this to you. It's not yours. It's not yours. And whatever I've got in my safe or my billions of gold is not mine.

[ 29 : 31 ] It's the Lord's isn't it? Because he's given it to us. He's provided it for us. He's given to you the good things that you and I enjoy. And we are to be stewards of those gifts.

Whether that be finance or property. Whether that be possessions or whether it even be our own time and energy. Because remember this. The strength that you have to do the work that you do is what God has given you.

The brains that you have. At times I'm tempted to say things that I shouldn't say. So I won't say them tonight.

The brains that we have collectively and that the Lord's given you that you might be able to do the job that you do and to do well in your job or however it may be to teach or to train or to work or to account and so on.

It's all from the Lord. everything we have is on loan to us from God until the day we die and then we have to hand it over to somebody else.

[ 30 : 46 ] That was poor Solomon's problem wasn't it in Ecclesiastes. He says what's the point of gathering all this gold and money and all this accumulation because when you die you have to pass it on to somebody and they may not use it very wisely.

and as we often are told you can't take it with you. So really dear friends what we have we're to invest wisely in the kingdom of God.

We're to invest it so that we might have more dependable treasure. In 1 Timothy chapter 6 Paul has something to say to the rich people of his day.

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth which is so uncertain but to put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

Command them to do good to be rich in good deeds and 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 they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

[ 32 : 05 ] Remember how Jesus spoke didn't he from time to time to say don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth build up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

The parables that he taught remember that parable of the talents we call it when three men were given varying amounts of gold and the lord went off the king went off and when he came back he would say to those who had invested and used that talent wisely well done good and faithful servants you've been entrusted with little now you should be given much you may feel that what you have whether it be financially intellectually physically is very little but how we use it and share it makes all the difference in the world it's not the amount it's the way that we give we're to give what God has given us so it's no good us complaining and saying lord if only I won the lottery and had a million pounds I'd give it all away to mission what are we giving now what are we sharing now of our time of our labors and so on so our giving comes from our relationship with

God our worship of God our giving comes from the fact that he has given us but also our giving must come from a cheerful heart therefore and should do there's that wonderful verse isn't it 2 Corinthians 9 7 God loves a cheerful giver now we're not under the law dear friends as Christians we're not under the law of the Old Testament where they were told they had to give a tithe or a tenth of all that they had rather we are as the New Testament tells us under the law of the spirit which means that we are to give not from legality but freely from the heart with joy not begrudgingly or out of a sense of guilt not because we think that somehow if we give to God he will give to us if I can put it this way we cross his palm with silver so that he will give to us an answer to our prayers I put an extra tanner in the offering that must be good at least don't we sometimes think like that though on the times as well if we're honest we begrudge giving of our time or the giving of our finances or the giving of what the Lord has given us don't we have sometimes that sense and we know it because there is a sinful nature we're still wrestling with it says this is mine belongs to me rub our hands like Ebenezer Scrooge inwardly and it can be hard to give see later on we get into another part of the Old Testament we find that God's people became very very begrudging of giving to God their tithes and their gifts so much so that what they did was instead of giving to God the good things they gave him just the off casts the bits and pieces they didn't like the sheep that were lame and the goats that were blind and the oxen that were well past being eaten or whatever and God in Malachi chapter 3 accuses them of robbing him and they say Lord we haven't robbed you but they had because they hadn't given from a heart of thankfulness and joy it's a real joy to be had in giving Paul when he speaks to the elders in Acts chapter 20 reminds them of the words of Jesus he said it's more blessed to give than to receive now actually we know that we know this we know that when it's Christmas or birthday and we bought a present for somebody and we give them to them and there's a smile on their face we feel good don't we we feel great oh it's lovely to give you counted a joy that you can give to the Lord you see again go back to this if God doesn't need anything from you or me if he doesn't need which he doesn't why does he call us to give why does he give us the example to give what does he teach us to give because again and again all of [ 37 : 05 ] God's commandments are for our good for our blessing he wants us to give because there's blessing in the giving there's joy in the giving there's delight in the giving he wants us to give because he wants us to be blessed and so much of the time we have allowed ourselves to take on that wicked mentality of the world that says God just wants your money the church just wants your money God gives wants us to give because he wants us to delight in and enjoy giving well that's some of the things I think that we come out here in Numbers and chapter 7 perhaps there's more to it to say than that but I want us just to think for a few moments as we close practically because I think for some of us it can be a problem you talked about this I agree with the principle Peter but I'm not sure how I should go about it if you're saying I'm not under law and I don't give a tenth necessarily then what do I do how do I give well let's just think about it in this way again from the teaching of God's word first of all we are to give with a great deal of forethought and prayer here's what

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 9 7 each of you should give what you've decided in your hearts not reluctantly or under compulsion so we're to give after we've prayed about it if you're saying well I know that I should be giving my time or my finances whatever what should I do how should I give how much should I give remember when I was in the very first church I was the pastor of one of the one person in the church came up to me and said in the bible it says I've got to give a tenth is that gross or net in other words before tax or after and I thought well if you have to discuss that and find out what it means and clearly you haven't got the right heart to begin with determine in your heart pray about it think it through don't make a rash promise and say well I'm going to give

I'm going to give I'm going to give 20% of my income to you Lord I promise that I will and then find yourself in a place where you can't afford to do that Bible warns against making rash promises and then having to go back on your word we must always of course remember that our priority before the Lord is to provide for our families that's scriptural very much so if you're a parent or if you have elderly parents who need care and provision then your priority is them in fact Paul goes to say that if we neglect our families and don't provide for them he says we're worse than unbelievers and there was a problem remember in Jesus his day there were the Pharisees who thought that if they gave lots of things to God it would make them right with God and so Jesus had to challenge them and say will you believe the commandment that says honor your mother and father and so on but you say if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father and mother is korban which means a gift dedicated to God then they no longer have to do anything for their father and mother hypocrites he says so we're to be thoughtful can I don't be foolish and say well I can't afford this but I'm going to give more than I can afford

God doesn't want you to give more than you can afford he doesn't want you to think about what you give it may be 10% it may be more than 10% maybe less let's not get wrapped up with figures the heart is what God is concerned about secondly as well there is giving which includes giving I like this bit giving to God's servants so they can serve him well there's a sense here isn't it in that passage in Numbers in chapter 7 that these things were given to the Levites given to those who were God's practical servants the priests and so on and as you go through the Old Testament you see that that was the case that they were to receive from the service that they gave and people brought food and they brought meat and they brought all sorts of things it means this that our giving is to be used to enable others to live for God and to serve him we're to give to mission we're to give to evangelism we're to give to those who seek to serve God and his ways here's again

Paul teaching in the New Testament 1 Timothy in chapter 5 17 and 18 the elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour especially those whose work is preaching and teaching for scripture says do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain the worker deserves his wages I'll say it again and I've said it before this church is wonderfully generous in its care for me as its pastor I want you to know that I am thankful to God for the care and the provision that you make for me that I can give myself to the teaching of the word I'm so grateful and I'm so thankful to God for that sadly other churches have the idea that if you keep the pastor poor you'll keep him trusting God that's not the case that should never be the case it's unscriptural then finally here dear friends I've sort of intimated this all the way through I hope we're to give not only financially we're to give of everything that

[ 43 : 12 ] God has given us so we're to give of our time we're to give of our service we're to give of hospitality we're to give of food we're to give of practical help and we're to be generous when we give it as well now some of us may not be able to give financially we may be living on the breadline if in one sense that we can't afford to give financially but we've got love to give and we've got time to give we've got prayer we've got so many ways that we can give to God and to serve him and his people and this is really what Peter says in his letter 1 Peter 4 10 each of you should use whatever gift you've received to serve others notice this faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms in other words sharing out the good gifts that God has given you to others in all sorts of different ways and so he gives a couple of illustrations for anyone speaks they should do so as one who speaks the very words of

God anyone serves they should do so with the strength God provides so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ and he brings this blessing to him with the glory and power forever and ever whatever we've got is received from God and whatever we've got God wants us to give as part of our relationship and love for him and thankfulness for him and I'll close just with this wonderful promise from Luke chapter 6 verse 38 listen to this promise it's a misused promise sadly in many parts of the world but it's a promise nonetheless give and it will be given to you a good measure pressed down shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap for the measure you use will be measured to you it's blessing in giving well let's sing our final hymn this evening reminds us again in this hymn that the one who has given us so much is the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven you came helpless babe entered our world your glory veiled 821 we'll stand as we sing 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 we thank God for his indescribable gift amen