



Mark Woodward

Sunday 4th February 2018

Vision Sunday 4

Sermon Notes

Contribution

2 Chronicles 31:2-21

Charles Finney, the Great Revivalist in his book of sermons 'How to Experience Revival'

'The very idea of being a Christian is to renounce self and become entirely consecrated to God. A man has no more right to withhold anything from God that he has to rob or steal. It is robbery in the highest sense of term...I mean, for a man to withhold from God is a higher crime than what a man can commit against his fellowman. God is the Owner of all things in an infinitely higher sense than a man can be the anything of anything.'
Pg126

life in all its fullness

John 10:30

Vision Sunday 4—Contribution

Investing in Leaders

Growing our ministry of Welcome and Hospitality

Welcoming buildings and facilities for mission and ministry

Big Question

How does Hezekiah know that the real spiritual change has happened in his people?

It comes in practical giving, of their finance, possessions and treasures.

1. Why do they have to give?

They have to give to support the ministry of the Temple, to support the Priests and the Levites.

V2 – Hezekiah assigned the Priests and Levites to their duties

V4 – He ordered the people to give the portion due to the Priests and Levites so they can devote themselves to the Law of the Lord.

If they are not maintained physically and financially they cannot devote themselves to the Law because they will have to find work elsewhere to support themselves and their families.

King Hezekiah leads the way

V3 – The King gave his own money, treasures and possessions and he led the way in giving.

The example of the King is to give from his very own wealth to enable this to happen.

The people follow suit and they give generously to the Temple and the work of the Lord.

V5 – as soon as the order went out the Israelites generously gave the

first fruits

Israelites – all Israel again is included
Generously – it's not a half hearted approach to giving. I genuinely thought that £1 per week was enough. Pathetic wasn't it?
Firstfruits – this was the very best, the first of what they had was given to the Lord (not the last bits and pieces, the money that we can spare after everything else.

3. Spiritual Organisation

All of these huge offerings had to be ordered and arranged in some way. Praise God for Treasurers and Administrators!

V11-19 – we see a great organisation of the gifts and offerings.

It is important, even spiritually important, that the offerings are managed well.

We must be good stewards of what we have been given.

What about your giving?

Your giving and what you do with your money shows the true state of your heart and what is most important in your life – your bank statement tells a lot about what is important to you.

Giving money flows out of love for God.

Jesus said 'where your treasure is there your heart will be also'
Apart from the KOG, Jesus spoke about money and how to handle it more than anything else.

Why? Because he knew the spiritual power that it can have over us.

Things to do during the week/at Life group

1. Do I REALLY trust God with my financial affairs?
2. Read 2 Chronicles 32 in preparation for next Sunday's teaching

Questions for discussion

1. Why was it important for King Hezekiah to invite all Israel, to give generously to the ministry of the Temple? What would this truly show about the state of heart amongst Judah and Israel? (vs2-5)
2. Why was it important for the King to lead the way in giving (v3)?
3. I love the story of how they stored up 'heaps' of offerings—truly generous and with an overwhelming support for the ministry of the Temple. What does this show about the true state of heart in Judah, bearing in mind where they have come from in their previous pagan worship?
4. Look at vs 9-10. What is the reason that the Chief Priest Azariah give for the large amount of food given?
5. Look at vs 11-19. Praise God for Treasurers and Administrators! Why is it spiritually important to handle our church (and personal) finances in a good and godly manner?
6. Look at vs20-21. Is it really possible to live our lives in the way that it is described that Hezekiah did in the 21st Century? What changes might we have to make in our lives to do so?
7. Do you feel that it is really practical and possible to give generously and to give of our 'first fruits' as Christians in this generation? Or is this something that should be relegated to Old Testament times?
8. Look at the quotation from Charles Finney on the front cover. Do you think that he is right when he says that if we do not give as we should, we are robbing God? Why, does he argue, are we robbing God if we don't give generously?
9. Pray together as a Life Group for our church finances, for Jo Lamberth (Treasurer) and Jackie Marsh (Book Keeper) for godly handling of our

finances and generous giving to mission

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