

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 24 July 2022
Services: *Across the Diocese*
Series: Giving – one off
Title: Joy and praise in giving
Passage: 1 Chronicles 29:1-20
Outline:

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|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. The need | 1. The need |
| 2. The call | 2. The call |
| 3. The response | 3. The response |

I wonder when you last gave generously to a cause – a charity – a mission organisation – your local church – and then took time out to give thanks to God for the absolute **privilege** of being able to **do** that?

Today is a one-off sermon on joy and praise in giving – and just before you switch off because “he’s going on about money”... I want you to tell you that this is not just about **money**... but the fundamental call of God to give of ourselves **entirely** to **him**.

You remember the two great commandments don’t you – that we are to love the Lord our God with ALL our heart, soul, strength and mind and love our neighbour as ourselves?

In some churches – those verses are read every week

Have you become immune to it so that you don’t hear it any more...?

...or when it is read... do you remind yourself again that in response to the riches of God’s grace to us in Jesus... we give of ourselves **entirely** to **God** and **others**...

That’s the call upon **every** Christian...

...to offer ourselves to God as a **living sacrifice**... many churches say **that** every week too – and the Bible says that actually **THAT** is what worship is **about**

You want to **worship God**?

Then give yourself entirely to him... that’s **worship**!

...and that means – that what we do with **all** our **resources** – our **time** – our **gifts** – our **work** – our **holidays** – our **property** – our **money** – will be **impacted**...! //

Let’s explore 1 Chronicles 29 this way...

1. The need
2. The call
3. The response

First,

1. THE NEED

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This amazing passage from the Old Testament book of 1 Chronicles was written when David was King...

...and his heart's desire was to build a temple for the glory of God.

that task itself was given over to David's son Solomon; but not before David had rallied God's people to give generously to the project.

Now – a little aside: the Old Testament temple was NOT like our churches.

There was only ONE temple for Israel – in Jerusalem... and the presence of God was uniquely there...

Our church buildings a more akin to the synagogues of the 1st century – literally – gathering places - where God's people to meet to hear his word and sing his praise

The **temple** on the other hand was a place for **sacrifice**... where **atonement** for sin was made by the **priests**.

But of course, following the **one true sacrifice for sin** by our Lord Jesus – we have no need for animal sacrifice – and therefore no need for a **temple**... in fact Jesus describes **HIMSELF** as the temple as **HE** is the place we go now to meet with God...

However, at the time – it was a big deal for Israel to build a place where God dwelt, and sacrifice was made – a replacement for the portable tabernacle.

So David makes the need known to God's people for what is required: the gold, the silver... right down to the weight of each material required...

And lest the task seem overwhelming to Solomon, David gave him this charge back in ch 28: - *"Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished."*

So the **need** is made known, and then, David calls the people to give **generously** to meet the **need**....

2. THE CALL

But here is how he does it: the end of v5 – after he's laid out the extent of the way he himself has given to the project – he turns to the people and says – *Now, who is willing to consecrate themselves to the LORD today?*

Isn't that a **fascinating** way to put it...?

He doesn't say – we need **this** much money by next **week**; he doesn't ask for **pledges**, he doesn't hang out a **thermometer board** on the wall indicating how **much** has been **received**...

...he **simply** – but **profoundly** – invites people to **consecrate themselves** to the **Lord**.

For when God's people **consecrate themselves** – that is – consider themselves **set apart** for **God's purposes**... then they understand that **everything** they **have**... is the **Lord's**!

So that's the **call** – **who** will consecrate themselves to the Lord...?

And let's see third

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3. THE RESPONSE

v6 Then the leaders of the 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. 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

remember the call? *Who is willing to consecrate themselves to the LORD today?*

And the **response**? They **gave generously** to the work of the Lord in the **construction** of the **temple**!

And then I want you to note what happened next....

V9 - 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.

...and then went on in v10 to joyfully praise the Lord....

Let's have a look

V11 – Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours

It's all yours Lord from start to finish

V12 specifically – wealth and honour came from you... you're the ruler of all things...

V13 Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name

But that's not all David thinks on the matter – or says to the Lord

V14 I can imagine this comes with tears – he seems so moved by all that has been given – But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this?... our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. v16 Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you're a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.

I know God that you test the heart.... All these things I gave willingly... and now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you.

What a **beautiful picture**...!

...to understand that **all we have** is from **God** – a **gift** of his... and to understand that it is actually a **privilege** to have as **much** as we **do** so that we can give **back to God**.

Is **that your** take on **giving**? // Is that how you react after you've transferred your offering, or put it in the plate?

I think for me sometimes – giving is a **chore** not a **joy** – a **duty** – not a **delight** – to my great **shame**...!

And we tend to think that all the stuff we have is a result of our own hard work or cleverness – not from God!!

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How **appalling!**

We are the **Lord's**

All we have comes from **him**

All we **have** remains his

And from his **own** do we give in response to the call to give of ourselves **entirely** to **him!**

What a **perspective...**! what **truth** in all that for us...!

We need to open our eyes to **see** this **reality...**

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice...

What are you thinking as you **say** those **words?**

I want to you think – ‘we consecrate – we set apart – ourselves for service’... thereby setting apart all you are and all you have for his work – **his honour** – his **glory...**

...and in turn // you will know a **great and deep joy...** you'll see the **privilege** of **giving** to the **Lord...** and you'll **praise** him for that **privilege!!! //**

Now – as I finish.... I want us to think in very practical terms about what this might mean for us in the life of your church – and our diocese.

And I want to use again those same headings...

The need – the call – the response....

1. THE NEED

You don't need me to tell you about the need in our churches or diocese

The last decade has been devastating due to the court case and redress

In local parishes, most are no longer able to afford a full-time minister... some – none at all.

Over the last few years, the rises in insurance premiums and utility charges have been crippling

And with ageing of our congregation has come decrease in numbers of people attending and decreased capacity to give.

Thank you to those who have continued to give sacrificially to the work your church... please don't hear any of what I'm about to say as 'having a go' at you – or lack of appreciation for what is already happening.

However... that being said... if we want to reach central and western NSW for the Lord Jesus...

...than we need to support godly leaders to be our **ministers** – our **shepherds...**

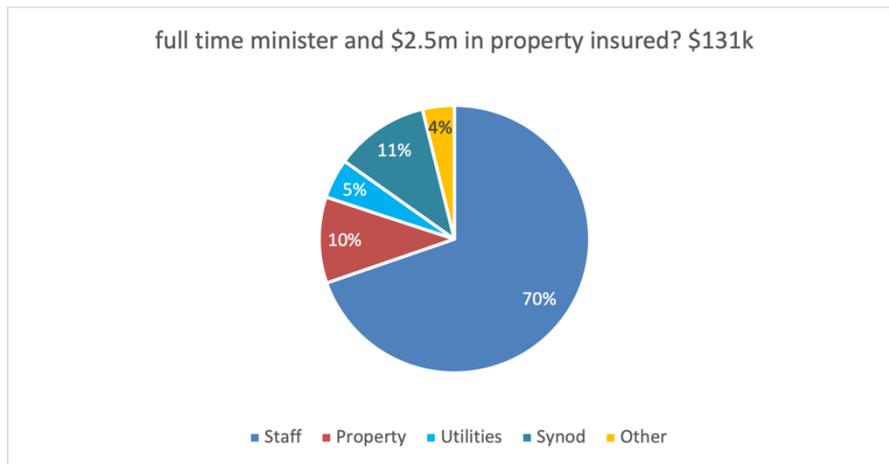
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Our ministers are not paid an hourly rate for their work.

They are given a **stipend** – an **allowance** – to free them up for ministry without having to work a job which would keep them from ministry.

So let's take a quick look at a church finances....

Here's pie chart of a church has a full time minister.



It costs \$131,000 a year to run this church

70% - stipend

11% - contribution to the diocese (that would have to be twice as much if it were not for the generous gift from Sydney diocese)

10% property costs – including insurance

5% on utilities

4% other

\$131,000 = \$2,500 a week is needed

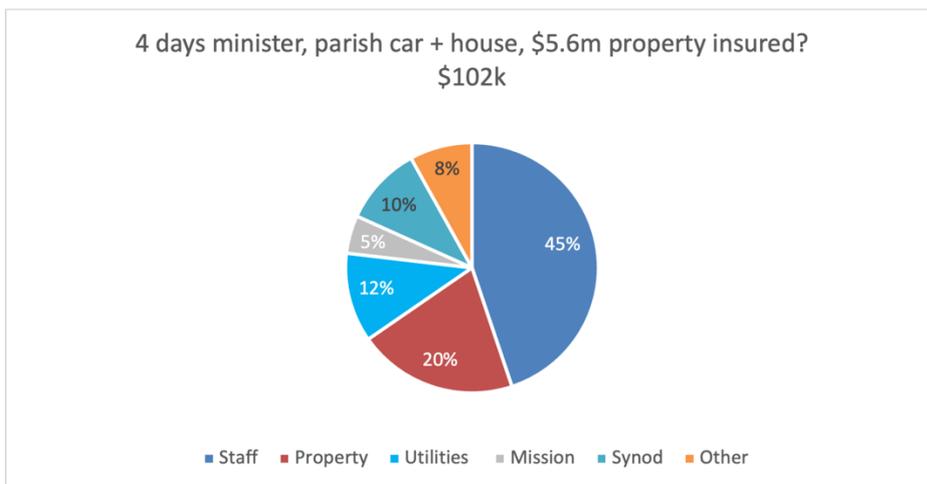
For an attendance of say 50 people – well – you can do the maths – but that means an average of \$50 a week per person... for that church to keep going.

“Average” reflects that some on fixed incomes – will only be able to afford \$20... while others - \$100.

But that's a pretty average church...

Let's have a look at another one...

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This parish only has a 4 day a week minister

It costs \$102,000 a year to run this church

45% - stipend

10% - contribution to the diocese

20% property costs – including insurance

12% on utilities

8% other

5% mission

\$102,000 = \$2000 a week is needed

For an attendance of say 40 people – well – that still needs an average of \$50 a week per person... for *that* church to keep going.

That again is a huge ask for some isn't it??

But for some... that *won't* be difficult...

So that's the need... sobering... challenging... yet... exciting to see how the Lord provides....!!

2. THE CALL

Here's my call...

...same as King David's...

who is willing to consecrate themselves to the Lord today?

That's my call

It's not to **give** more

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Not to do more **fundraising**

Not load you up with **guilt** or **obligation**

But to exhort you to **consecrate yourself** to the **Lord**...

...so that in response to the **riches** of God's **mercy** to us in the **gift** of his **Son** – in the **life, death, resurrection** – of his **Son** – you give **yourself** – entirely to **him**. //

Again on a practical note... what might that mean for your generous giving to the work of the Lord?

I don't know how you consider your giving... but I've shared before that as my stipend or Susan's salary comes into our bank account, we carve off a certain percentage into a different account – we call our 'giving account' – and that is fixed and non-negotiable

...so that our giving is **sorted** – committed - before any **other costs**...

And that has meant – especially in our earlier years when we were raising our kids - that we've gone without some other things – as we've **prioritised giving**...

Brothers and sisters – **consecrate yourselves** to the **Lord** – offer yourselves as **living sacrifices** – love the Lord your God with all your **heart, soul, strength and mind**...

...and see **how** the Lord will work in your **heart**.

3. THE RESPONSE

Well – this is the part of the sermon I can't write... can I??

Or at least – not for a year or so

I can only commit us all to prayer...

But wouldn't it be great if in a couple of years' time I could write this section and say something like....

In response to the Bishop's call in July 2022, that across the length and breadth of the diocese, everyone in our many churches, consecrate themselves to the Lord...

...then leaders and people gave of themselves willingly.

They prioritised the work of the Lord

They became passionate about the Lord Jesus and wanted others to know him

And they gave of their resources...

So that churches which were struggling to meet budget found they were in surplus

Churches with part time ministers were able to afford full time ministers

Some who had no stipended clergy for years, were able to help support someone half time

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Maintenance on church buildings which had had to be put on hold, was now able to be addressed

Wouldn't that be wonderful!??

That through generous giving, through our strategic plan launched next Saturday, through prayer, through a deepening relationship with God, by an increased understanding of his Word, there was a renewal – a revitalisation across the diocese and in all our churches!!

And of course – the joy – and the praise – and thanks to God for the sheer privilege of giving to and sharing in his work – would follow! ///

And now the question remains...

Who is willing to consecrate themselves to the LORD today??