



This week at Magdalen Road church we finished off the first 'half' of Chronicles from chapter 29. We noted the way that at the heart of this passage are two topics that are tied together in an unusual way. The topic of giving and the topic of joy.

It's a chapter about 'giving' because we've reached the point in Chronicles where God's people are giving to fund the construction of the temple. It's a chapter about 'joy' because their response in being able to give to this project, is that of joy. This means it is a countercultural chapter for us as we often think joy comes from receiving rather than being able to give.

We noted 2 halves to the chapter:

#### 1. v1-9: God's 'all-giving-king' leads the way in generosity.

In v2 we see David uses his resources as King to provide for the temple of God, then of course, this was Israel's money – he was giving from the National Treasury! And yet if we think he's not really behind this project, we noted that in v3 and onwards he gives of his own personal treasures. We noted that this is something of a personal contingency fund saved in case of disaster. This makes our comfortable Western ears feel uncomfortable. It's a challenge! David loves and trusts the Lord enough to even spend that! Remember at the heart of Chronicles the writer in part wants to show us what faithful obedience looks like and so this is meant to be a challenge.

And yet God wants more than just money! The challenge from King David in v5 is for the people to 'consecrate' themselves to the Lord. It's the idea of giving ourselves entirely to him, holding nothing back (including our wallets and savings pot...).

We noted here, that whilst David is an example to consider, Jesus is The one to whom David really points. Jesus, The one who made himself nothing, humbling himself and becoming obedient even to death on a cross. Jesus poured himself out for his people.

David's example was imitated, and the leadership follow suit - generously giving and then finishing this section with rejoicing. Generosity towards the Lord leads to joyful praise.

At this point we noted 4 applications to begin to consider:

1. The Old Schoolhouse is not our temple, rather the temple is the church family. Whilst we are in unusual season for the church seeking to acquire and develop a building for the future, our church family ought to be the priority - the building of people rather than the building of bricks and mortar (see Eph 2v11 onwards).
2. The idea of 'consecration' (v5) is also a challenge for us. Just as David did, and just as Jesus gave himself entirely to the will of the father so it's right that we consider whether we are consecrated to the Lord in every last aspect. Are we consecrated to Him?
3. It's right that we consider whether our view of savings has been shaped by the scriptures. Do we just have savings because that's what everyone else does, or is God in charge of them?
4. If you're a stingy Christian the cure is for us to consider God's generosity to us in Christ. Meditate upon the way in which Jesus generously gave his all and let this be transformative...

If you're asking the question - how is David able to be this generous...?, the second half of the passage shows us that it's because David knows what God is like.

#### 2. v10-22: God's 'self-giving-character' means that we can give.

David's rejoicing in v9 transitions to prayer to God, but in front of the people. David rejoices not in the generosity of the people but rather he rejoices in who God is, bubbling over as he remembers what God is like.

We made a number of points

A) it is appropriate that we tell God how amazing he is, because it's the relationship that we were made for. To adore him is a good thing! Our daily danger is it the inward bent of our hearts means that we forget this and so our prayer can easily simply become about prayer lists rather than spending time to adore him, remembering what he is like.

B) as David praises God he "ransacks the theological dictionary" in v11-12. Enjoying the perspective of God's sovereign power. The natural bent of our hearts though is to think that we are God - 'ours is the greatness the power of the glory of the Majesty in the splendour...!' Pray for a fundamental posture of humility thankfulness and praise.

C) because of who God is, and especially because he is a giver, so we are to be givers. David rejoices that the people of God are able to give as generously as they have (v14). It wasn't really ours in the first place, but rather it was entrusted to us for us to then steward wisely.

D) David longs that this perspective would continue after he has gone.  
 - Perhaps there is a sense in which the temple can bring an air of permanence and stability followed with pride?  
 - Perhaps he knows the way in which money can deceive us and lead our hearts astray?  
 - Perhaps he is concerned Solomon will not follow through and build the temple as planned?

E) the account ends with more rejoicings and joy from v20 to 22, Concluding with the people rejoicing in the presence of the Lord.

When it comes to generosity and joy do you see how different God's way of doing things is? Instead of being a burden, in bible terms, giving is in fact a great privilege. Instead of bringing a sadness or like we're missing out it actually results in joy.

Here are a few questions to help you get to grips with this passage and what it means for us

- How is God portrayed in this chapter? Is this how you see him?
- Where do we see the generosity of King David? How is it personally costly for him? What do you make of David giving away much of his 'savings'? Do you have a Christian, biblically informed view of savings? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to consecrate yourself? Have you done that? What does it look like?
- How does the example of David point us ahead to Jesus?
- Unpack how God is described within David's prayer. Why is David so excited about who God is?

How is this applied?

- Why does David rejoice in this chapter?
- Why do you think David is so concerned about the future at the end of this passage?
- What does this passage mean for us? Do you ever tie generosity and joy together?
- What 2 key things should you take away from this chapter?