

Do you need some ideas for sermons on giving? Here are three sermon starters:

Sermon Starters 3

Giving: A Delight For Us

"I want each of you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your own mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and arm-twisting. God loves it when the giver delights in the giving." [2 Corinthians 9:7, The Message]

*Put the verse in the larger context.

- Read 2 Corinthians 9:6 - Remember: A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop.

- Read 2 Corinthians 9:8 - God can pour on blessing in astonishing ways so that you're ready for anything and everything; more than ready to do what needs to be done.

- Paul is addressing the church in Corinth which was one of the richer churches. In the proceeding chapters, Paul tells the Corinthians how the much poorer churches of Macedonia have already given large offerings to go to the church in Jerusalem, and Paul is encouraging the church in Corinth to stay true and honor their commitment to do the same.

- In 9:6, Paul reminds the Corinthians of an ancient saying that was common in both Greek and Jewish cultures that basically taught the truth that in life we receive as much as we are willing to give. The crops we grow depend on how much we are willing to spend on planting the seeds.

- In 9:8, Paul reminds the Corinthians that what they have to give ultimately comes from God and when they are willing to give, God will make sure they have more than enough to meet the need.

*According to Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:7, what we give is not something that we should decide based on the emotional response we have to emotional pleas of other people. Similarly, what we give should not be determined by how much other people think we should give or what others might pressure us into giving.

*Invite your congregation to imagine how they would feel when it came time to make their offering or pledges, you asked each person to determine how much his or her neighbor to the right should give to the offering or pledge that supports the needs of the church. What internal struggles would that cause for each person? What struggles would that cause among the members of the congregation? If you were to take the task seriously, what factors would you consider about the other person's resources, finances, life, and needs? What would you want your neighbor, who was deciding your offering or pledge, to know about your resources, finances, life, and needs? Would you tend to ask more or less of your neighbor than you would of yourself?

*Give each member a bookmark piece of card stock paper with The Message version of 2 Corinthians 9:8 printed at the top. (2 Corinthians 9:8 - *God can pour on blessing in astonishing ways so that you're ready for anything and everything, more than ready to do what needs to be done.*) Leave the rest of the bookmark blank or print it with blank lines below. Invite each person to think about the thought process they went through in the imagining exercise above. Encourage each person to write on their bookmarks the things they would want someone who is determining how much they should give to know about their resources, finances, life, and needs. Allow people to take their bookmarks home to use, think about, and pray over.

*Allow for a time of prayer where people may remain in their seats or come to tables, kneeling rails, or altar rails with candles to pray about what God has given to them and what they would like to give to others.

*In conclusion of the time together, speak to each the congregation the words of 2 Corinthians 9:7 from The Message: "*I want each of you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your own mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and arm-twisting. God loves it when the giver delights in the giving.*"

*As a benediction, encourage each person to commit to set aside any sob stories and pressure, and to spend time with God; finding what level of giving will bring him or her delight to return to God.