

Giving

(Shared by Rose Marie Miller at NLMG on 14 January 2013)

I would like to share with you today the blessings of giving. I was planning to share last Sunday, because it was the first Sunday of the New Year, but the evening was full, and I am sure you all enjoyed the art work from our friends in America

I don't know if you make New Year resolutions. I don't anymore, because I can't keep them. But there was one commitment my husband and I made that no matter how small the salary is we would give 10%, and if it increased we would give more. That commitment was made 63 years ago.

When we were first married we lived in one room, Jack was going to school full time and we lived on a part-time salary of about 60 pds/month. (\$100). We gave \$10 to the church. Whenever he made a little more we would increase our giving.

Years passed by. God gave us the gift of 5 children, and during the years of 1950-1970, when Jack finished his education—20 years, we never lacked. Pretty soon I forgot the 10% and when our taxes were made out we discovered that we have given beyond---up to 20-30%.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites were commanded to give 10% of everything. But they forgot, and God pleaded with them saying, "You have robbed God." Then he gives the promise of putting God to the test and He would open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing of riches that they would have no more need. Don't rob God.

Since Jesus came giving us the riches of grace, the 10% is not binding, but Paul writes in II Corinthians 9: 6, "If you sow (give) sparingly you will also reap only a little, but if you give generously, you will also be rewarded with God's generosity. But he also writes give as you have decided in your heart not because you must, but because God who is rich in mercy, loves a cheerful giver. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you also may abound in the work of giving.

Paul was going through Asian Minor collecting money for the poor in Jerusalem. He writes about one church who gave willingly out of their poverty.

We are never too poor to give. Jesus looked at a poor widow who gave her last pennies and she was commended.

It isn't only about giving money; it is the matter of the heart. I trust your heart will be open to the grace of God's generosity and give to bless the church, to honor God, and to experience as I have through the years, that He provides every need according to His riches in glory. God bless.