

A Generous Heart

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[0 : 00] Thank you. You may be seated. Please open your Bibles to the book of Exodus, chapter 35.

Exodus 35, and we're reading verses 4 through 29. Exodus 35, beginning in verse 4.

Moses said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, This is the thing that the Lord has commanded. Take from among you a contribution to the Lord.

Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the Lord's contribution. Gold, silver, and bronze, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twine linens, goat's hair, tan rams, skins, and goat skins, acacia wood, oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense, and on its stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod, and for the breastpiece.

Let every skillful craftsman among you come and make all that the Lord has commanded. The tabernacle, its tent and its covering, its hooks and its frames, its bars, its pillars, and its bases.

[1 : 53] The ark with its poles, the mercy seat, and the veil of the screen. The table with its poles, and all its utensils, and the bread of the presence.

The lampstand also, for the light with its utensils, and its lamps, and the oil for the light, and the altar of incense with its poles, and the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the door, at the door of the tabernacle.

The altar of burnt offering, with its grating of bronze, its poles and all its utensils, the basin and its stand, the hangings of the court, its pillars and its bases, and the screen for the gate of the court, the beds of the tabernacle and the pegs of the court, and their cords.

The finely worked garments for ministering in the holy place. The holy garments for Aaron, the priest, and the garments of his sons for their service as priest. Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses, and they came.

Everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the Lord's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments.

[3 : 18] So they came, both men and women, all who were of a willing heart, brought brooches, and earrings, and sydney rings, and armlets, all sorts of gold objects, every man dedicating an offering of gold to the Lord.

And everyone who possessed blue, or purple, or scarlet yarns, or fine linen, or goat's hair, or tan ram skins, or goat skins, brought them.

Everyone who could make a contribution of silver or bronze, brought it as the Lord's contribution. And everyone who possessed acacia wood, or any use in the work, brought it.

And every skillful woman spun with her hands, and they all brought what they had spun in blue, and purple, and scarlet yarns, and fine twine linen. All the women whose hearts stirred them to use their skill spun the goat's hair.

And the leaders brought on its stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastpiece, and spices, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense.

[4 : 32] All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the Lord had commanded, by Moses to be done, brought it as a freewill offering to the Lord.

Let's pray together. Dear Heavenly Father, we pray that as we look at your word today, as even this long list of things that they brought, Lord, we yet would see Christ.

Lord, that you would make us a people of a willing, a generous heart. That you might be glorified among us. We ask this in Christ's name. Amen. Now, if you remember where we've been in the book of Exodus, the people have sinned with the golden calf.

And the result of that sin was that God really was going to be done with them. He was willing to be done with them. He said that he could not go among them unless he destroyed them. You may remember Moses then interceded for the people.

And God now has reissued the Ten Commandments, which was a visual expression of he's reestablished the covenant that they've already broken, even before Moses made it down with the Ten Commandments the first time.

[5 : 51] And so God has reestablished the covenant. Now, that means that now they're moving forward with the building of the tabernacle. If you've been here for this study, I think there was something like three months that we spent, maybe five chapters or six chapters, that explained the building of the tabernacle, all the furniture that was to be in it, the garments that the priests were to wear.

And we spent a long time looking at that in detail, which is one of the blessings of preaching through the word of God. When we get here today, we're going to spend just about no time on the list. We've seen the importance of those items.

I want us to focus on something else. But as we look at this, the importance of what we see here is that they're moving forward with the building of the tabernacle. The importance of the tabernacle was that God would dwell among his people.

They would have tents all around, and God's tent would be there in the middle of the people. And so as God speaks about bringing an offering to build my meeting place, to build the tabernacle, God's communicating to them that the relationship is there now.

It's been reestablished. The covenant's reestablished. God's going to dwell among them. And so it's in that context that you begin to understand the joy of God's people.

[7 : 09] And they've really gone to a point in which they were going to be cast out. If we were to say this in terms of salvation, cast out from the presence of God.

And now God has worked to restore that relationship, to make them his people, that he would dwell among them, and that they would be his people, and that he would be their God.

And so it's in that joy that we read this text. Back in chapter 25, when we read about those items, we read in verses 1 through 7 of Exodus 25, the Lord said to Moses, Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution.

From every man whose heart moves him, you shall receive the contribution for me. And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them. Gold, silver, and bronze, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twine linen, goat's hair, tan ram skins, goat skins, acacia wood, oil for the lamp, spices for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense, on its stones and stones for setting, for the ephod, and for the breast piece.

Now that list should sound familiar. If you followed what we read earlier, this is exactly what they brought when Moses asked them to bring this contribution.

[8 : 37] So, ten chapters ago, God told them, this is what you are to bring. And the offering has not yet been taken. But now we reach the point where Moses calls for the offering.

God has told you what you are to bring. Today's the day. Bring it. So the day of the contribution has now arrived. And the title of my sermon is, A Generous Heart.

That's really what I want to focus on in this passage, but even back in 25, we see that. He says, that they may make for me a contribution from every man whose heart moves him, you shall receive the contribution for me.

And so notice, who's bringing that contribution? Every man whose heart moves him. There's this internal desire. Dave, in his worship leading today, he was pointing us to the fact that it's God who changes the heart.

And so now it's those in whom God's working in their hearts who produce this kind of generous heart. It's them who will bring the offering.

[9 : 50] So I want us to first look at this idea of a generous heart. How it's described here in the passage. We see it, we've already seen it in chapter 25, but also in our passage, look at verse 5 of chapter 35.

Take from among you a contribution to the Lord, whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the Lord's contribution. And so there's this distinguishing.

It's not commanded that they all bring one. There's not this obligation that here's what you have to bring. It's let a contribution be taken from all those of a generous heart.

And we see in here, I think we have evidence in chapter 35 and what we read that there was a good response. 29, all the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the Lord had commanded by Moses to be done, brought it as a free will offering to the Lord.

So we know it happened. And it sounds like a lot of people participated, but even when we read verse 29, all the men and women, the people of the people of Israel, whose heart moved them, we're still left with, well, how many of them was that?

[11 : 07] Whose heart was moved to give to this? But if we look at the next chapter a little further on, chapter 36, verses 5 and 6, he said to Moses, the people bring much more than enough for doing the work that the Lord has commanded us to do.

So Moses gave command and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing.

I mean, let that sink in. They were called to bring a contribution and the response is so overwhelming that Moses has to say, stop it. No more. You know, we're cutting it off.

That's the end of the contributions. We can't handle any more. We've got more than enough to do what's needed. I don't know that I've ever heard of a church that said that in terms of the offering on a Sunday.

Guys, we have enough. You know, next Sunday, just take off. We can't take any more. But the response of the people is so overwhelming that the need is met quickly and it has to be really cut off to prevent there from being too much.

[12 : 18] And we see in our passage that it really is an offering to the Lord. We saw in verse 29 that it was a free will offering to the Lord. In verse 24, we see the same.

Everyone who could make a contribution of silver or bronze brought it as the Lord's contribution. And so, they're viewing this, they're seeing this as an offering to God.

we're going to talk more about this in a little bit, but for now, let me just say, remember their condition.

They were slaves. In terms of possessions, they probably possessed very little to nothing. It was a time of hard work, a time in which they really weren't given much time to worship their God, and they possessed very little.

So now, when they leave Egypt, because of the work of God, the plagues, remember they plundered the Egyptians. And so now, they come out really wealthy, having much in terms of possessions.

[13 : 30] And so now, that which they receive from God, they are returning to Him. And notice, it's not just those possessions that they plundered of the Egyptians.

It's also work, their labor that's included. In verse 10, let every skillful craftsman among you come and make all that the Lord has commanded.

And we're going to see an expression of that a little bit further along in the book of Exodus, how God worked that out. But, some brought their stuff, some brought their ability, their willingness to serve, the giftings that God had given them.

And so, the offerings that they brought were various based on what they had. Some had gold, some had silver, some had leather or goat skin, some had the goat's hair that they were able to weave and make into thread.

Whatever they had, though, they brought as an offering to the Lord. I think of a New Testament correlation to this. 1 Peter 4.10 says, As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.

[14 : 50] And so, we understand likewise that God gives His grace in various ways to His people. But whatever that gift is, we are to use for the building up of God's kingdom, even as we see it happening here among them.

Matthew Henry, I thought, did a good job in how he said this. He said, The work was likely to go on when some help with their purses, others with their hands, and both with a willing heart.

And when he says the work is likely to go on, he means it's going to happen. The work will be accomplished when some give what they have and others give what ability they have. They give their time, their strength, their energy, even their skillfulness to the work to make it happen.

But the connecting factor with both of those things is a willing heart, a generous heart that moved them to want to see this happen. I thought we could even say that they are doers of the word and not mere hearers.

Right? Moses said, Bring a contribution. And they could have been like, Yeah, that's a great idea. but they actually do it. Verse 20, Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses and they came.

[16 : 08] Everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him and brought the Lord's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments.

And so this is happening out of an overflow of their heart. Their hearts are generous to the point that they overflow and they have what they want to give for the purpose of this.

I just read verse 21 if we look even further on. Well, verse 21 there at the beginning everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him. Verse 22, So they came both men and women all who were of a willing heart brought these items.

And so we see it's those whose heart or spirit was stirred by God. Those who had a willing heart a generous heart are those who give. And I pointed out earlier in verse 29 the people of Israel whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the Lord commanded.

And so this is response to the heart. This isn't just fear. This isn't mere obedience. There's a desire in their hearts to see this work take place.

[17 : 29] Now why is that? Well, I think part of that is that their hearts were moved because they knew themselves to be recipients of the grace of God. They knew themselves to have received and experience God's grace.

I said a little bit of this earlier but God saved them from slavery. He's brought them out of that so that now they are a free people. He's revealed to them His glory as He led them in the wilderness.

That Shekinah glory. He's provided for their every need in the wilderness. Remember there would be times where they could find no water and water would come from a rock or something as simple as throwing a piece of wood into a spring or lake would make the water drinkable when previously it was not.

He's provided manna for them. God has constantly provided for His people. He's currently in the process of bringing them into the land that He's promised to them.

A land flowing with milk and honey. He's bound Himself by covenant to these people.

[18 : 46] He's even provided for them the blood of the covenant that they should be bound together. They've broken the covenant and worshipped another God. They've committed spiritual adultery.

God had every right to as it were divorce them to leave them but He hasn't. He's going to dwell among them He's reestablished the covenant.

He hasn't cut them off. I think even there's an understanding going back to Genesis 3 15 and onward in the covenant promises that there's going to be a restoration of relationship that's greater than the tabernacle.

God's going to provide His Son as an atonement for sin. That Passover lamb will be provided for us. And so why were their hearts overflowing?

They were recipients of the grace of God. They were grateful for what they had received. They had not earned it. In fact, what had they earned?

[19 : 53] In their rebellion against God, they earned His judgment. His condemnation. but yet God still is with them. He's making relationship with them.

He's going to dwell among them. And so they were grateful and their hearts are overflowing in their thankfulness so that they value their stuff and their time and their skill of less value than relationship with God.

I thought, is that true of you? Have you known the grace of God in such a way that's made you grateful to God that you're willing to give to Him that which you have for His kingdom as an offering to Him out of a heart that's overflowing with thankfulness for what God has done?

And so as we see this happening, this giving to God is an act of holy worship. They're worshipping their God. You know, I thought about how God could have provided for them a perfectly built tabernacle.

I mean, He could have just set one down from heaven. He could have manifested one. But God's means of doing this is what? They were slaves and now He's made them wealthy so that they can not exploit their wealth, not build their kingdom, but give to see His kingdom built, to see the tabernacle built.

[21 : 22] But it's not just the wealth that they've received. God has given them skill, some with working stone, jewels, some with fabric and cloth, others with wood, but God's given them skill that they, together with the contributions and their skill, are working to build this tabernacle in which God's presence would be known.

even that's God's mercy. God's allowed them to contribute to the building of this tabernacle.

And so their hearts are overflowing. Their relationship has been reestablished. God's going to be here with us and now He wants us to give to see His home built, His tent built among us.

Yeah, I'll do that. I want Him to be dwelling among us. I long for that. And besides, what I have He's already given to me anyway. It's His.

And so we see their generous heart, this overflowing of love for God. I want us to think about that now in terms of giving today. What does that look like?

[22 : 40] How do we give? I think really the same principles that is in play as what we saw already.

Verse 5, Take from among you a contribution to the Lord. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the Lord's contribution. So sometimes we get questions about giving in the New Testament or in the church today.

What does that look like? Well, this principle ought to be a guiding principle for us. God is calling us to give in accordance with the generosity of our heart. whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the Lord's contribution.

I said earlier, it's an overflow of the heart. Jesus talked about this, Matthew 12, 34. He's speaking to the Pharisees. He said, You brood of vipers, how can you speak good when you are evil?

For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. very similar Proverbs 4, 23 says, keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

[23 : 53] And so our words and even our behavior flows out of what's going on inside our hearts. So nothing's changing that. That was true then.

Those who gave were those of a generous heart. So too now, it's our hearts that motivate our giving. Likewise, we could say that they gave what they were given.

And they knew that. They were slaves. They were poor. And now they had stuff. And that stuff was given to them not because of what they did, but because of God's miracles, the pledge that came upon the people.

The Egyptians were glad to see them go. They were paying them to leave. The skills that they had, they understood, were gifts from God.

So too for us, this is Mark 12, 41-49. Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and he watched the people putting money into the offering box.

[24 : 55] Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and he said to them, truly I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box.

For they all contributed out of their abundance. But she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on. And so again we see this distinction being made.

She's giving from what she's been given. And the proportion in which Jesus here is judging the contribution is not in terms of volume. volume. It's in terms of the heart that moved them to give.

Even though she had less, she was moved to give all that she had. He said that's a greater contribution than those who are rich and are giving the extra that they have. Maybe instead of putting in the savings account, they give a little bit to God.

But they still kept all they needed to live off of. And this woman's given all. All. All. All. I think even what we see in the New Testament is the idea of cheerful giving.

[26 : 15] 2 Corinthians 9, 6 through 7. The point is this. Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. And whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart. Not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver. Maybe I could say it this way.

Cheerful giving is an expression of a generous heart. God's less concerned with what's being given than the heart that's giving it. You remember at one point he says of Israel that he's despised their offerings and their sacrifices.

He commanded those offerings and sacrifices but they've given him reluctantly. They didn't want to do it. And so God has despised it. What did God desire?

It wasn't the offering that he desired. It was the heart of obedience. The heart of love. That generous cheerful gracious heart toward God.

[27 : 23] And so again let me just be clear we're in a passage that's dealing with this and I think it's important for us to be reminded of it. You guys know I don't ever preach topical sermons on giving.

That's not the point. I want you to see here what we see in God's word and how we see that in the New Testament. It's not that God has given us a set guideline of here's the percentage.

It's not like the government where it's some staggered or step system with depending on how much you make you're to give this percentage. God says he loves a cheerful giver.

It's about the heart that desires it, that loves it. this passage even talks about whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. Spurgeon as he so often does has a good way of saying things.

He says God has a way of giving by the cartloads to those who give away by shovelfuls. And I thought that's a good way of expressing what I see in this passage.

[28 : 28] So in terms of our giving the New Testament doesn't specify an amount. often it's helpful to think of the tithe as some kind of basis.

10% was an offering that was sometimes given in the Old Testament. But it's not about it's a 10% tax on us.

God wants to see not just our giving money but our giving of our time, our mind, our focus, our ability, our skills. And we're to give it with a cheerful heart, in generosity, in thankfulness for what God has done.

And so rather than being really concerned about that specific number, what am I supposed to give? We ought to think of it as an offering to the Lord and there be a desire in us to grow in our giving, in our generosity, in our cheerfulness, in our hearts, that we would grow in grace.

And we can ask God to enlarge our heart. We saw in this passage, those whose hearts were stirred. Who is it that stirs the heart?

[29 : 36] It's God. And that really leads to our third point, our motivation. What is our motivation for giving? How are we going to get to a point that we are of a generous heart?

Well, I've said this already, but saying it a different way, the posture of our heart makes all the difference in our offering.

More so than what we give is the heart that gives it, the motivation, the factors that lead us to give to God. Giving God the best of what we have is really an act of worship to God.

It's an expression of acknowledgement that God has given to us and that He is gracious and that we delight to give to Him. So as we think about our motivation, if we want to have hearts that motivate us to be generous and cheerful givers, what's going to motivate us to be like that?

What's going to stir our hearts? I said already with what we see here in the book of Exodus, what stirred their heart was God's grace and mercy toward them. how is that demonstrated?

[30 : 51] Well, He saved them out of bondage, out of slavery. Likewise, we've seen that God has saved us out of slavery to sin.

And in the midst of the wilderness wanderings, they have rebelled against God and they worshipped idols. In the midst of our Christian life, we too have sinned against our holy God.

God. And we've desired things other than God. Money being one of those. And yet, God is gracious to forgive us in Christ. He's reestablished relationship with us.

He dwells among us. He tabernacled among us in the person of Jesus Christ. But also, Jesus ascended to heaven and He sent His Holy Spirit to live inside the temple of our bodies.

And so, He dwells among us even now. And we know that we're headed for a day in which we will dwell in the presence of the Lord forever. And so, as we think about that, what might motivate our hearts?

[31 : 53] I thought maybe one motivation in terms of God's grace, His salvation, and what Jesus has done to understand that Jesus became poor, that we might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8, verse 9. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.

Now, what's being spoken of here is not the prosperity gospel. Jesus didn't give up earthly money so that we might have His earthly money. Jesus was dwelling in heaven with the Trinity.

Perfect communion. He humbled Himself by taking on human flesh and submitting Himself ultimately to the death on the cross. That's His poverty.

And what is our wealth? That we who were without God in the world, who were cast out outside of God's people, might be brought in.

[33 : 01] We who were dead might be made alive. Spiritually, that we would be made rich. We think of wealth in those ways. We know ourselves to have been made very wealthy by the grace of God, if you're a Christian.

And so, that motivates us to have a generous heart. God's generosity toward us. That was 2 Corinthians 2.8, the next chapter, 2 Corinthians 9.

I'm sorry, the first one is 2 Corinthians 8.9. This is now 2 Corinthians 9.8 and 9. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

As it is written, He is distributed freely, He is given to the poor, His righteousness endures forever. And so we're reminded again here, that it's God who makes grace abound.

It's God who stirs up in us a generous heart. And He is distributed freely to us. I said earlier that they're giving back what they have received, and that ought to motivate us as well to understand that we're giving back to God a small portion of what He's given to us.

[34 : 23] Back in Exodus chapter 12, verses 35 and 36, we read, the people of Israel had also done as Moses told them. For they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing, and the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked, thus they plundered the Egyptians.

So they were previously slaves, and all that they have now, every possession they have, they know has been given by God. God has recently given that to them, and so this is gratefulness for God, this change in position reminds them of that.

Maybe materially that may not be true for many of us. Maybe we're worse off than the house we grew up in, but financially speaking, but don't we know it to be true?

For so many of us in this room, God's rescued us out of homes that did not know God. He saved us.

He's made us rich in ways beyond human comprehension. He's been gracious to us. And it's that heart that moves them to give back a portion of that, and so too we know as well that God gives us even our daily bread.

[35 : 45] Even when we buy it from Aldi, it's God who gives us our daily bread. God is the one who provides everything that we have and everything that we need, and so it's His to receive back.

1 Corinthians 4, 7 says, For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

What's the point there? Whether it be money or whether it be skill, intellect, ability, whatever you have, rhetorically He's asking, what do you have that you didn't receive?

Nothing. Everything you have you receive from God. And so then the conclusion, why boast as though you did not receive it?

Maybe we could say it in terms of our giving, why cling to that which we have as though we earned it? As though it's ours in the first place when it's God who's graciously given us all things.

[36 : 52] So we talked about the heart and how this giving flowed out of a generous heart. I'm going to look at it the other way and say what we do with our money, and I think sometimes as good an indicator of this is what we do with our time.

So how we use our money and how we use our time is a great indicator of the state of our heart. If we see here in this book that those with a generous heart gave what they have, or maybe some had both, maybe some only had ability, they gave their time and their ability to serve.

That's what the outflow of a generous heart is. Then what does your use of your money or your time say about where your heart is?

What are the things that we treasure? What are the things that we love? Everything else that we'll use our money on, and really everything else that we would use our time on, has no lasting eternal value.

Whatever we do in our service ought to be a service to the Lord. Our use of our time ought to be an act of worship, whatever that be. Luke 12, 33, 34, sell your possessions and give to the needy.

[38 : 15] Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. And so looking at it from both sides, we need a generous heart. How are we going to get that? Well, we're going to get that by God working that in our hearts.

And so we pray, we ask God to give us such a heart. We're going to get that by understanding that God has been gracious to us. And so there's a heart of gratitude and thankfulness that he saved us.

That whatever we have, whether that be skill, ability, intellect, finances, whatever we have, God has given to us. And so we're grateful to him.

And therefore, we're not clinging to it. And so that's where life is found. We know life to be found in God. We know that like the widow, if we give it to God, it's God who gave it to us in the first place.

[39 : 25] He will provide for us. He will take care of us. But we see also that we can kind of check our heart by how we spend our money and how we spend our time.

I want to encourage this really as we come to the end of this sermon with a quote, one of my favorite quotes from Jim Elliott. Jim Elliott said, he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

That's kind of what I see being lived out in our passage. What do they care about the stuff they got from the Egyptians? What do they care even about their time or their ability?

All of that's perishing. One day it will all be gone. Provide yourself with money bags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches, and no moth destroys, for where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

He is no fool if he gives up what he has to gain, what he's going to lose anyway, to gain that which is of eternal value. And so, let us be a people who pray that God would give us that kind of generous heart, a cheerful heart that knows it to be a recipient of God's grace, and that is glad to give back to him a portion of what we have, knowing that as we do so, it's worship of God, and we're storing up for ourselves treasures in the one place where treasure matters.

[40 : 59] Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you expressing our gratitude, our thankfulness, because you have been gracious to us.

Lord, you are not obligated to us, and yet you have given us your Son. Christ has laid down his life, he's given his blood, he is our Passover lamb, and Lord, we pray that we would be mindful of this, that we think about this, that you would give us hearts that are grateful for what you have done.

And so, Lord, in our love, in our affection, in our hearts, overflowing in love for you, that we would be cheerful givers, that we would have a generous heart.

And Lord, we know that we can't do this by mere will or effort. Lord, work in our hearts. Show us your goodness, your glory, your grace, your love, that we might be moved in an overflowing of our heart to be gracious to you, to others around us, to use what time you've given, knowing that it's going to come to an end, to use what skill we have, knowing that it's waning as we age, that we might use that for you and for your glory.

We pray this all in Christ's name. Amen.