

We Don't Want Your Ten Percent: 2 Myths and 3 Truths About Giving in the Church

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[0 : 00] Well, again, my name is Anthony Parrot, like the bird. I used to be, for a year, as a substitute teacher, and I tell you what, I heard every joke under the sun when it came to that parrot last name.

But it's a good last name. I get to serve as one of the pastors here at the table. I've done that for about two and a half years now. And we are kind of coming up on the tail end of our series on generosity and communal economics.

And I know we've got visitors and friends and all that sort of here in this space. And so, as we've been saying throughout this series, you might be having this like, oh, no, we came to the church that's talking about money.

And it's true, we are, because we have this conviction that if we don't do it, someone else will. And someone else will probably pass on something harmful or toxic to you.

And we know that, we have confidence in that, because we've heard those stories. We've been actually in some of your all shoes of folks who have heard some really, really harmful things around money and finances and what you should be giving to churches and all of that.

[1 : 09] So we wanted to talk about it, even though it's hard, even though it's awkward, even though it's a little funky feeling to be in the church talking about money, because we thought it was important. And tonight, we're kind of getting into the practical aspects of this.

And I wanted to do kind of two truths, two lies and three truths, two myths and three truths about giving and finances and the church. So give me a moment to get back to my notes.

That is the door that has been left open, not a fire alarm. Don't worry. All right. So myth number one.

Myth number one is we want your 10%. Myth number one is we want 10% of your income to be given to us. That is a myth, believe it or not.

Now, it's a pretty popular myth, this idea of tithing, about giving 10% of your income to the church. And it's been popular in America only about since the 1800s, this idea that you need to give 10% of your income.

[2 : 14] Some people say, you know, before taxes. Some people say after taxes. But you need to give one-tenth of your income to your local church in order to be a good Christian or a good follower of God.

That's only been popular in America for, you know, a couple hundred years, but as long as we all have been alive, as far as I know, unless Highlander is here or something. And it's only been, you know, it wasn't original to the early Christians.

Around the time where Christianity was being co-opted by the Roman Empire as a religious tool was also around the time where this whole 10% idea got popularized in the church.

Now, you may be surprised by this because you may be thinking, but wait, tithing, it's in the Bible, isn't it? And yes, there are tithes, this 10% of income being given, in Scripture, specifically in the Hebrew Scriptures.

And so I want to talk about those and sort of have us understand what those are about so we know not to automatically apply them to today. So there are three tithes in the Torah, the first five books of what we call the Old Testament.

[3 : 25] The first one was for the Levites. Now, Israel was set up with 12 tribes. One of those tribes was the Levites, one twelfth of the ancient Israelite nation. And out of them would come the priesthood.

And the priesthood and the Levites would be the one to care for this tabernacle and eventually the temple and the entire sacrificial system that had been set up as a form of religious worship to Yahweh God.

And so this tithe, this giving of 10%, was a way to provide for the Levites who they had no inheritance, they had no land granted to them.

It was a way to care for the providers of the religious system who, based off of the way that the society and economy was set up, had no land, had no way to farm.

They had the sole responsibility of caring for the tabernacle and temple. We see this, for example, in the book of Numbers, chapter 18. God is saying, I have given all the one-tenth portions in Israel to the Levites as an inheritance.

[4 : 29] And they are a reward for performing their service in the meeting tent, what will eventually become the tabernacle. Now, we don't have a system like that today in the Christian church.

First of all, not one-twelfth of us are religious professionals. We don't have, like, one pastor per 11 people. That would be fascinating. We don't have a temple or a sacrificial system.

And the way our economy is set up is that pastors and ministry professionals, all of that, we're allowed to own land and property. We are allowed to have other ways of creating income.

So this whole system of giving 10% of all the produce of the land to the religious professionals is just not our reality anymore. Now, there was a second type of tithe in the Torah, and there was a tithe for the poor.

Now, this one is a little bit different in that it was about every three years, give or take. There was also a seventh year, a Sabbath year, in which the land was supposed to rest, and anything that the land produced on its own, the poor were meant to have.

[5 : 38] There were also sort of other economic systems set up in ancient Israel around releasing debts, about resetting property markers so that no one could lose their property permanently in their family.

There were lots of ways to provide and protect for the poor. But there was this every-third-year tithe that said, this is Deuteronomy chapter 14, every third year you must bring the tenth part of your produce from that year and leave it at your city gates.

And then the Levites, who have no inheritance, along with the immigrants, the orphans, the widows who live in your cities, they will come and feast until they are full. So there's this basically, you know, three and a third percent tithe, 10% every three years, that you're supposed to give everything to the poor, and that is what they are going to reside on.

And not just the poor, but also the Levites who don't have an inheritance, also the immigrants, the stranger that would come into Israel and also didn't have a way to get land or property, and therefore start a farm and have produce of their own.

Which is, like, really fascinating implications if you were to bring this, like, as a policy proposal to Congress, of like, hey, let's give 10% of the budget to immigrants. I think, I don't know, I'd like to see how that would go.

[6 : 53] So tithe for the Levites, tithe for the poor and the immigrant and the stranger, and there was also a tithe for the religious festivals. So Israel had, ancient Israel had all of these religious festivals that you were meant to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to the temple, to the, wherever the center of worship was.

And it was a place where you're meant to have these feasts in God's presence and in the presence of your nation, of your people, to remember all of these significant events that God had done in history.

So this is, again, Deuteronomy 14. It says, Because if the trip is too long, you can't make the pilgrimage, then you can convert your produce, anything that comes from your land, into money.

Take the money with you and go to the location the Lord your God selects, and then you can use that money for anything you want. Cattle, sheep, wine, liquor, or whatever else you might like. And then you should feast there and celebrate in the presence of the Lord your God, along with your entire household.

Which, I don't know about you, I've not heard a lot of sermons on this passage, telling you to save 10% of your income to throw an epic rager. Like, that would be astounding.

[8 : 07] Like, you just, you don't hear Dave Ramsey recommending this. Now, I want to do some math. Let's do some math, okay? I'm sorry, it's Sunday, it's the weekend, but we're going to try to do some math. At the table, of course, if you've been watching, like, cable news, all you've seen is math on the screen, right?

At the table, we've had around 160 or so people or households give to us in the past six months or so. And let's say that those 160 people or families gave 10% on the median income in D.C.

So that would give us \$1.8 million for staff and ministry, another \$1.8 million for parties, religious feasts, excuse me.

And then about \$600,000 or so for, like, justice and compassion ministry. So \$4.2 million in total. Now, I shared my notes with Tanetta over here this week, and she's like, I want you to take a beat here before you move on.

And I think she's right, because the beat is this. There are churches and other religious organizations that deal in this kind of money. And typically, the kinds of churches and religious organizations that deal in this kind of money are not working for your liberation, usually.

[9 : 26] They're the sorts of places that they're working to, if you're LGBTQ, they want to convert you out of that. They might throw an epic party or a rager on behalf of, like, you know, July 4th and military and police and things like that.

But if you suggest, like, maybe we should spend that money to do something about racial injustice in America, they would have, like, a poop-their-pants tantrum. That's the sort of places that, like, they get the publishing money, they get the curriculum money, they get the radio and the television and the bad Christian movie money.

That exists. That happens. And then the places who are working at the edges and at the margins of inclusion and of affirmation and liberation theology, focused and centered on the way of Jesus, not often works in those sorts of well-endowed circles.

Now, I mean, this sounds fun. And to be honest, for at least this context right here, right now, two-and-a-half staff and a leased building and all of that, kind of unnecessary.

And also, the local church doesn't need to be the clearinghouse for your charitable giving. There's one church I know of, and I think they have to go at this with, like, honorable intentions.

[10 : 40] They want to give away half of their budget each year. That's their goal. Which sounds good, but then you think about the fact of, like, why do I need to give them so much money that they alone get to decide what to do with it?

Like, it's sort of an interesting system that I don't think needs to exist. So if we look at the tables budget, it's give or take around \$400,000. We're working on that budget for next year right now.

And I'm sure, like, there are board members in the room who saw, like, the myth of, like, we don't want your 10%. They're like, Anthony, shut up. But we have a budget of give or take \$400,000. 60% of that goes to staff.

There's two full-time staff, me and Tanetta, and a half-time administrator and communications person. That's Mish. About 23% goes to renting this space and then operations, like office supplies and a website, all of that.

And then 17% goes to ministry, curriculum, community group stuff, the snacks and drinks, and then our justice and compassion efforts as well. So that's a more realistic number.

[11 : 42] So we don't need, you know, what was the number? \$4.2 million. But we need some amount of money. So that's myth number one. I don't want, we don't need your 10%.

We'll get into what percentage maybe you should be giving in a second, but we don't need it. Myth number two is that tithe is not a button for blessing.

Or I guess the myth would be tithe is a button for blessing. That if I give money, God's gonna, is gonna bless me some way. In fact, God is obligated to bless me in some way.

And I don't hear a lot of like prosperity gospel sort of teaching in these circles at the table church. Prosperity gospel is basically this idea of like, if I give, if I do good, God is obligated to bless me right back.

I don't hear tons of that in our congregation, but I think it does sort of get into our brains sometimes. I'll give some examples. Where this comes from is from a passage in the book of Malachi chapter three.

[12 : 47] It's God's, God is talking. God says, bring the whole 10th part, the tithe, to the storage house so that there might be food in my house. Please test me in this, says the Lord of the heavenly forces.

See whether I do not open all the windows of the heavens for you and empty out a blessing until there is enough. And entire theologies have been built around verses like this.

However, let's remember some context. The context is about Jerusalem being rebuilt after the exile. Malachi was around the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, which is confusing because it's the end of our Old Testaments, but it's around the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

So they're rebuilding a temple that had been destroyed by Babylon. Babylon. It's a fundraising campaign. And we know that the tithe was providing for sacrifices and the priesthood and the poor.

That's why there's reference to a storehouse and there being food in there. And we know that today we're not paying for a priesthood. We don't make sacrifices. And rarely are the types of televangelists who are asking for money, you know, doing this to take care of the poor, unless they're using those private jets in some sort of unexpected ways.

[13 : 55] I will also say, and this might make us a little squeamish, but the Hebrew Bible has this debate within it about how God works in the world.

And sometimes it paints a picture that's sort of karma-esque, that if you do right by God, God is obligated to do right by you. You scratch his divine back, God help you, and he'll scratch yours.

But this is just as often challenged in that very same Hebrew Bible. The book of Job is about this argument. The book of Proverbs has this argument within it. That is, no, that's not how the world works.

Bad things do happen to, quote-unquote, good people. Good things do happen to wicked people. Sometimes it seems like God's not carrying through with God's promises. And sometimes maybe God didn't make that promise at all.

And this whole idea of a karma-esque, scratch God's back, God will scratch yours, worldview is shut completely down by Jesus. Who says things, like in the Sermon on the Mount, that God sends rain on both the just and the unjust.

[15 : 00] That God loves both his friends and his enemies. In the book of Luke, Jesus talks about the idea that just because something bad happened to people doesn't mean that they were worse people.

Sometimes just stuff happens. So I know that I can fall into mind games of, oh, man, I've seen my friend getting blessed some way, financially, career-wise, something like that.

Maybe I didn't give enough. Maybe I haven't been praying enough. Maybe I'm not good enough in God's eyes, and I'm not getting that sort of blessing. That sort of worldview seeps in, even though I know better.

And I imagine it seeps into some of our minds as well. But this is theological BS, and I want us to be free of it. It's a myth. It's not the way God works.

God is always working for our good. Yes, there are other forces in the world working against our good, but God is always intending for our well-being. So those are the two myths.

[16 : 04] One, that we need or want your 10%. And myth two, that giving is a button for blessing. Truth number one, however, is that wealth is risky.

It may make you believe that you can single-handedly fix a social media platform, not run it into the ground within a week. It may make you believe weird things about how the way the world works, that people who are wealthy are inherently better, smarter, stronger, more powerful, more capable.

There's this paradoxical reality that the more times the Bible speaks against something, the less likely some folks, particularly white American evangelicals, are going to take it seriously.

And it seems like the fewer times it references something, the more likely they are to build an entire theology around it. For example, you know, limiting women in pastoral or leadership roles.

There's like two to four possible verses you could make an argument for for that. Or condemning LGBTQ folks. Maybe six passages that some people think condemn gay or queer people.

[17 : 19] They're wrong. But then you look at the number of passages that critique violence and wealth. And if I were just to read to you all the references, we would be here all night.

Now, I want to pause for a second. I want to recognize that there are a variety of economic situations in this room and joining us online tonight. All right? And so whatever we're doing here tonight, it is not about guilt.

It's not about shame. We're not here to eat the rich. In fact, some of us may be the rich that some may want to eat. But I do want us to grapple seriously with what Scripture says about wealth and its effects.

James chapter 5. Quick aside. This blows people's mind every time I bring it up. That's why I like to bring it up. It's what preachers like to do. The word for James in Hebrew and Greek is not James.

It is Jacob. And then a king said he wanted a new translation of the Bible. And hey, by the way, could you add my name to it? And so Jacob became James. True story.

[18 : 22] True story. So it's actually the book of Jacob. Fun fact. So, book of Jacob, chapter 5. Come now, you rich people. Weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you.

Which you would think if you were a king, this is not the book that you'd want to have your name attached to. Your riches have rotted and your clothes are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted and their rust will be evidence against you and it will eat your flesh like fire.

You have laid up treasure during the last days. Listen, verse 4. The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out.

And the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived in the earth in luxury and in pleasure. You have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter.

You have condemned and murdered the righteous one who doesn't resist you. Jacob, brother of Jesus, author of the book of James, he ain't holding back.

[19 : 29] 1 Timothy 6. People who are trying to get rich fall into temptation. They're trapped by many stupid and harmful passions that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. You Google this verse, you know how many blogs are trying to justify this passage. It's not money, it's the love of money.

It's just your attitude towards money. Some have wandered away from the faith and have impaled themselves with a lot of pain because they made money their goal. There is this foundational understanding.

in both the early church and in the Hebrew prophets, that wealth itself was toxic. That it could corrode people from the inside out.

There's this tweet I think about a lot from Floozy Esquire. It's okay to be a person struggling with productivity during a prolonged crisis, my brain.

[20 : 28] Not you though, me. Not me though. I think about this all the time because I think it works in both directions. We can be both kinder to ourselves than we are to other people and harsher on ourselves than we would ever be to someone else.

We talk to ourselves often much more cruelly than we would ever speak to our friends and we tend to give ourselves a lot more excuses than sometimes we offer anybody else. So I made some variations on this.

People deserve rest and relaxation and to not always have to be productive. My brain. Not you though. Not me though. Maryland drivers.

People really should use their signals when they're changing lanes. Maryland drivers' brains. Not you though. Not me though. Ha ha ha.

Or we can self-deceive ourselves into thinking we deserve all the benefit of the doubt and no one else deserves it. People who get rich tend to become more self-centered and use their money for harm.

[21 : 31] My brain entering the Powerball. Not you though. Ha ha ha. Not me though. So, how do we inoculate ourselves against the corrosive effects of wealth?

Truth number two. We must learn the skill of generosity. Has anybody here ever taken a spiritual gifts assessment? Anybody taken a spiritual gifts assessment?

So yeah, it's like a multiple choice thing. You fill it out. What are your gifts? Talents, skills. And then you figure out your spiritual gifts. And one of these possible gifts that you get assigned is like giving, generosity.

Because, let my cynicism flag fly for a second, what these assessments were, were a way to flag the church staff who in this church has money that I could specifically ask for donations from.

But generosity is not a spiritual gift. It's a skill that has to be learned. It takes practice. It's a habit. Because here's the fact of the matter. Most people aren't generous on accident.

[22 : 41] Oops, I gave away too much money this year. It doesn't happen that way. Most people give money out of guilt, without a plan, without thinking through the intentions of their giving.

If you've done couples or premarital counseling with me, you've heard my shtick about this. I like to have a plan for my giving so that somebody asks me at the cashier window, like, hey, would you like to round up to the nearest dollar to support this charity that you've never heard of?

I can say no and not feel guilty because I have a plan for my guilty. Or for, sorry, a plan. I have a plan for my guilt. That's right. That's right. To-do list.

What shall I feel guilty about today? I have a plan for my giving. But most people don't.

And so we give out of, like, sense of crisis or guilt or panic. And there's this truth that people who make under \$100,000 give away a larger percentage of their income than folks who make more than \$100,000.

[23 : 43] That starts to not be true again after you hit about a million. But there's sort of this U-shape that once you hit \$100,000 or more, then you give less percentage away of your income.

Now, I believe that generosity, it can't be and it shouldn't be compulsory. There's this quote from a church leader in the second century CE. He's talking about the church.

He says, even if there is a treasury of some sort in the church, it's not made up of money paid in initiation fees as if religion were a matter of contract. Every man, once a month, brings some modest contribution, whatever he wishes, and only if he does wish, and if he can.

For nobody is compelled. It's voluntary. To feed the poor and to bury them. For boys and girls who lack property or parents. For slaves who have grown old. And so we are united in mind and soul, have no hesitation about sharing property.

All is common among us. So I don't think generosity can or should be forced, but it can be planned. I can set intentions and goals for how I give.

[24 : 54] So how much do I want to give in a given month or a year? Is it a certain amount or a percentage? More than last year or less? There was a friend that we had who had a life goal of giving away a million dollars in their lifetime.

And they've reached that goal because they planned for it. We can make plans about how we want to give to local issues, national and international issues. I also want to take just a quick moment to highlight that giving to political or policy change is also important.

Because charity can only ever go so far. One of my favorite sayings is that every billionaire is a failure of policy. Despite what some might believe, economic systems can't truly be transformed solely by charity.

Some more math for you. Total charitable giving in the U.S., not including religious or education giving, total charitable giving is around \$240 billion.

Whereas the federal and state governments spend \$1,000 billion, a trillion dollars on welfare spending. And so it's a fantasy to think that, well, you know, just churches should take care of it.

[26 : 05] There's no possible way. So we need systems to be transformed and changed so that there is care for everyone in our society. So I think we can make plans to be generous as a form of inoculating us against the corrosive effects of wealth.

Now, I want to be clear about a couple things. One, if you're unable to keep up with bills, you can't afford basic necessities, I still think you need a plan for your money, but the first part of that plan is probably not charitable giving, even to or especially to a church.

And on the other hand, I want to say that some people, even when they're financially strapped, feel empowered to still be able to give generously. So giving away some amount of money that gives you a sense of autonomy over your life, who am I to stop you?

But please, never let a religious leader guilt you into giving if you're struggling to get food on the table, if you even have a table in the first place.

All that to say that generosity requires planning and intention, because wealth is risky. And generosity does something formational within us as well. It's a preventative against the side effects of being rich.

[27 : 20] 1 Timothy 6 puts it like this, Tell people who are rich at this time not to become egotistical and not to place their hope on their finances, which are uncertain.

Instead, you need to hope in God who richly provides everything for our enjoyment. Tell them to do good, to be rich in the good things that they do, to be generous, and to share with others.

Andy Stanley, writing about this verse, puts it like this, Generosity isn't just something you do when you have more. It's not a someday thing. It's something you practice constantly, so you know what to do when you have more.

It's a part of the plan, not just an overflow of the heart. It's a preventative against the side effects of being rich. So, myth one, we need your 10%.

No, I don't think we do. I think there's probably a percentage that some of us could be giving overall to include the church in that, but also to local, international, national issues.

[28 : 25] Myth number two is that giving is a button for blessing. No, this is not a way to control or coerce God in making your life more comfortable.

Wealth is risky. It can have effects on us. But, number two, we can make plans against those side effects.

And the final truth is that churches can't exist without money. And that's sort of the thing that brings us up here to talk about this, is that there are churches that are, you know, have resources, and some of us have felt the effects of those resources that have done harm.

They have done bad things. They have done spiritual harm or abuse in our lives or the lives of people that we love. And there are churches like The Table that I'd like to believe are working for good in the world, that are creating communities of hope and healing and affirmation and joy.

And if we want those kinds of communities to exist, not only here, but in other places as well, it does require money. It does require some level of giving.

[29 : 38] So I want to hand it over to my friend and co-worker, Toneta, to take it from here. Don't worry, we get to change roles next week.

Sorry, not only forcing her to do the hard thing. All right.

So Anthony has spent some time sharing with us about our need as disciples of Jesus to cultivate the scale of generosity, not out of compulsion, not because we have to give a certain percentage, and not because we have a desire to broker a relationship with God or with the church.

We give above all because we want to be participants in the kingdom of heaven, in this commonwealth of God's peace and joy and love here and now.

And we give because, just as Anthony said, holding resources is tricky and if we aren't intentional, we will be consumed by our desires. It is so easy to continue with business as usual, status quo that floats around in our culture, but that is completely at odds with the disruptive way of Jesus.

[31 : 08] So we share our resources as a revolutionary no to the narrative that there is not enough. And that things must always be this way with some left out.

And we've talked some in this series about how the communal economy that God is calling us to requires shrewdness in handling our wealth and possessions.

It requires being honest about our unconscious ways of relating to our resources and our needs and our dreams. and we, your pastors and your elders have started to realize that we need to be a bit more honest, a bit more bold, which means a bit more vulnerable in talking about money and possessions and in asking for the resources that this community needs to realize our communal dream.

So we are trying something that we have not done in a while. Today marks the beginning of our end-of-year fundraising campaign.

So from now until December 31st, you're going to be hearing about all of this in our newsletter and on social media and from time to time on the platform.

[32 : 33] We're going to be talking about this vision that we have and the resources that we need to fund that vision. And our overall goal is super simple. We're asking for 53 people to become new recurring donors and hoping that that giving will average about \$175 a month.

That would give us about 150 recurring givers, which would be about 56% of folks who actively participate in this community.

So people who come on Sunday, who watch online, who attend community groups, affinity groups, who volunteer. So we're thinking that just over half makes a lot of sense in terms of sustaining the fundamental vision that we have.

And I got to say, if you're wondering like, oh, why now? That's always what comes up in me when people start talking about money. I want to say a few things about that. So there's kind of no doubt that the transition from the earlier leadership of this church was difficult.

It was hard. There's also no doubt that like many churches, this one has faced, you know, a lot of challenges in navigating the pandemic.

[33 : 52] And that does include in terms of resources. This year, we ran a budget deficit. In this upcoming year, we might need to do that same thing. It was a small one.

It was a giant, but it was a budget deficit. But we're not asking, actually, because we're in like a lot of trouble. We're asking because, as I said a few weeks ago, we're a community that has started to regain its feet.

And it's time to start walking to determine the direction we want to walk in. We're back to full staff, which historically full staff has been about two, two and a half people.

We are merging with Resurrection City to create an even more inclusive community across racial and ethnic boundaries and other cultural differences. Our dreams are really big. You know, when the opportunity arises, we want to make sure that we can afford to lease a space that can serve our community for more days of the week than we currently can.

we want the learning cohort that some of you are a part of to grow into something that can nourish people both inside our community and outside our community beyond colonizing ways of doing church that predominates so often.

[35 : 11] Eventually, we'd like to have a regular training program for church leaders that can come and learn and think through what it means to pursue and to invite other people into a more beautiful gospel.

And we want to be in a financial position to make all of that possible and even to help other churches like this come into existence and thrive.

There's lots to figure out, things like space. There's things to figure out like how do we create a community that has music and a service that fits all of us.

Lots to figure out in terms of how we build a family ministry. And we know that to fund some of those things, we may need to hire staff or hire consultants to figure those things out.

And all of that takes money. We have dreams. Dreams that are big and small. And we don't want to be afraid to talk about either the dreams or funding them.

[36 : 11] So, to those of you who've been consistent supporters of this community, super thank you. I am so grateful.

We are so grateful for the faith and just the desire to be a part of this. And to those of you who, you know, you want to be involved, here is your clear invitation.

If you share our dream, take some time to discern how you might partner with this community. Some people, as Anthony said, it is not your season. It is just not, period.

There is no shame. There is no guilt in that. We want to normalize that. I think that probably most churches should never be at 100% folks supporting because then I think maybe some boundaries are being crossed.

But we are asking for everyone to at least consider giving. For some of you, that might be as a recurring donor to help us meet this goal. For some of you, that could be \$10 a month.

[37 : 10] For some of you, that could be \$1,000 a month. I don't know, but we need all levels. And we need people who would just say, I can't do that, but I want to be a part.

I want to be a part of this thing this community is doing. I can give one time. We need some folks who have been giving a long time to kind of reevaluate and realize like, oh, my income went up. Maybe I can give a little bit more.

But the point overall is to partner with us in this dream. It's an invitation that isn't, it's odd when I think about this because it's actually not about money.

It's about, actually, the very first time that I was in an interview for this position as one of your pastors, one of the first things I heard from one of the people interviewing me on the committee was this is a place that is the last stop for people in terms of faith.

This is a place that offers home and healing to those who are, who have been marginalized, particularly LGBTQ folks and folks of other marginalized identities.

[38 : 20] It's not about money. At the end of the day, it is about partnering with us for a bigger dream. So, on the screen behind you, there are all kinds of ways to give.

I ask that you consider donating. Thanks. Thank you.