

A Word from Our Preaching Pastor:  
Sunday, December 27, 2009

““Where your treasure is there will your heart be also”  
Matthew 6:21

Giving and Christmas go together. Everybody knows that. Even before Ebenezer Scrooge got straightened out by the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future and went running through the streets of London giving away his wealth, people have identified Christmas with giving. It's in the air this time of year. There are fund raisers at work and at school, bell ringers in front of every store and more than a few reminders from the pulpit.

But Americans don't seem to be listening as much as they used to. Last year charitable giving at Christmas fell by 7 billion dollars (to a total of \$307 billion) while holiday spending rose to a whopping \$460 billion despite the recession. Or maybe it's *because* of the recession. As people tighten their belts, charitable giving is often the first thing to go. But we as Christians understand that our missions giving can never be viewed as a seasonal “extra.”

One thing we have to keep in mind during this time of *holiday* giving, is that the attitude of our hearts toward wealth is something we must keep an eye on all year 'round. Sometimes I find that, even as I'm giving to help the poor or support missions, my foolish heart can be filled with greed. Whether a desire for the latest new gadget, the shiniest jewelry or the biggest HD TV , it's easy to become discontent with what you have and thus be tempted to give less for those in need so you can keep more for yourself.

My prayer, Rockport, is that God will continue to free us from the obsession with wealth and things that captivates so many around us; that we will not give in to the idea that “*I've already done enough*” but will instead ask God for even greater grace to do more to help extend His kingdom's glory and meet the needs of those who are hurting. Let's ask God to make us truly generous all year around with our time, our money and our very lives. And if you haven't done so yet, don't forget to ask Him how much your family should set aside this year to support our missionaries. You can designate your Christmas Missions Offering to (1) the HeartCry Missionary Society, (2) the Lottie Moon Offering for International Missions or (3) Gaining Christ (Brig and Michelle Jones).

*May God bless us, every one!*

*Pastor Scott Lee*