Today is a day that needs no introduction. For three weeks, we’ve been preaching and teaching about stewardship. We’ve been talking about God’s work in this church and the direction God is leading us and the plans for a new children’s wing. For six weeks, we’ve been praying and fasting for God to prepare our hearts. For six months, we’ve been planning this capital campaign. For at least three years, we’ve been developing a master plan for our campus. For almost 35 years, we’ve had a long range plan for this church. For 110 years, we’ve been following Jesus in this community.

Today is a day that needs no introduction, because the past three weeks, the past six weeks, the past six months, the past three years, the past 35 years, and the past 110 years have all brought us to this day. And today we take another step of faith as we keep following Jesus. Today is our Commitment Sunday. Today we’re going to make commitments as a church for what we feel God has called us to give for our children’s wing over the next three years. But before we do that, I want us to do what we do every week. I want us to turn to the Bible and hear what God has to say to us from His Word. And this morning we’re going to look at a text that speaks directly to us right where we are today. We’re going to look at 1 Chronicles chapter 29. 1 Chronicles 29 is the account of King David leading Israel to bring their gifts to God in order to build the temple in Jerusalem. And this text teaches us some great truths that need to guide our giving. So read with me, 1 Chronicles 29:1-20, *“Then King David said to the whole assembly: ‘My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities. Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the LORD?’*

*“Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly. They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron. Any who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the LORD in the custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.*

*“David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, ‘Praise be to you, O LORD, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. O LORD, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you. And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands, requirements and decrees and to do everything to build the palatial structure for which I have provided.’*

*“Then David said to the whole assembly, ‘Praise the LORD your God.’ So they all praised the LORD, the God of their fathers; they bowed low and fell prostrate before the LORD and the king.”*

As we prepare to make our commitments today, I want you to know that my hope is *not* that you’ll make a commitment to give. My hope is that you’ll make a commitment to give in the right way. My hope is that you’ll make a commitment to give in a biblical, God-honoring way. And that means I may need to talk some of you out of your commitments right now. And that’s okay. If your heart is not ready to give in the right way, then you shouldn’t do it. But what I really hope is that the power of God’s Word over the past few weeks and the truth of this text today has prepared our hearts to make a commitment and to give in a way that truly honors God.

So let’s look at what this text teaches about how we should give. The first truth is you should give to God. Look at verse 1. David says, *“My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for God.”* David tells them, “I know Solomon’s young, but you’re not giving to Solomon. You’re not giving to me. You’re not giving to build a palace for the king. You’re giving to God. This is not for man but for God.”

When you give, make sure you give to God. Don’t give to a building project. Don’t give to a capital campaign. Don’t give to me. Don’t give to make a name for this church. Give to God. If you’re giving for any other reason, don’t give. Give to God.

The second truth is that you should give generously. Look at verses 3-4. David says, *“In my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver.”* Now, I know that most of us have no idea how much 3000 talents of gold is or how much 7000 talents of silver is. So let me translate for you: It’s a lot. 3000 talents of gold is about 225,000 pounds, and 7000 talents of silver is about 525,000 pounds. And in today’s dollars that much gold and silver is worth roughly $4.5 billion. Billion with a B. That’s no small gift. David gave generously. And it wasn’t just David. Verses 6-7 tell us that the leaders of the families in Israel gave 5000 talents of gold, 10,000 talents of silver, 18,000 talents of bronze, and 100,000 talents of iron. A very rough estimate in today’s dollars is that that’s about $9 billion worth of gifts. We’re talking about the wealth of an entire nation being given to God. They gave generously to God.

It reminds me of a story I heard about a man who had a heart attack and was rushed to the hospital. The day after he went into the hospital, Publisher’s Clearinghouse informed his family that he had won $1 million. Obviously, his family was ecstatic. But they were also worried that the excitement might put too much strain on the man’s already-weak heart. So they asked their pastor to break the news to the man gently. The pastor agreed and went to the hospital and started talking with the man. After about 30 minutes, the pastor decided it was safe to bring up the news about the million dollars. So he asked the man, “What would you do if you won a million dollars?” The man replied, "I would give half of it to the church." To the man’s surprise, his pastor dropped dead.

Wouldn’t it be good to be in a place where such generosity isn’t shocking? Wouldn’t it be good to be in a place where such generosity is the norm? And I just want to assure you, if any of you are worried about my health, don’t let that be a stumbling block for you. You give as generously as you want. I promise, I can handle it. In fact, I’ll just go ahead and expect that you’re going to give generously, and that way it won’t shock me when you do. How’s that? In all seriousness, when you give, make sure you give generously, because that honors God. Don’t give grudgingly or sparingly... as if God isn’t worth it. Give generously, because God is worth it.

The third truth is closely related. You should give willingly. Look at verse 6. *“Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly.”* And skip on down to verse 9. *“The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD.”* The people gave willingly, freely, and wholeheartedly. That’s why I hope you’ve heard me say over and over for the past few weeks that I don’t want you to give out of guilt or pressure. I don’t want anyone to be forced or coerced or manipulated into giving. I want you to give because God is working in your heart, and you want to give to Him. I want you to give because you just can’t help but give in response to God’s grace.

It’s like the little girl whose mom was teaching her about giving. The mom gave the little girl a quarter and a dollar for church, and she told her daughter, “Put whichever one you want in the offering plate and keep the other for yourself.” When they were leaving the church, the mom asked the girl what she had done. "Well," said the little girl, "I was going to give the dollar, but just before the offering, the man in the pulpit said that we should all be cheerful givers. And I knew I'd be a lot more cheerful if I gave the quarter, so that’s what I did."

The little girl actually had something right. You should give willingly, freely, and wholeheartedly, because that honors God. If you give out of guilt, or if you give grudgingly, that doesn’t honor God. We want our hearts to be so changed by God that we give willingly to God. Give willingly.

The fourth truth is you should give even more than your money. You should give yourself. Look at the end of verse 5. David asks, *“Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the LORD?”* That word consecrate is the exact same word that the Bible uses in Ezekiel 43:26 when it talks about the altar of the temple being dedicated to God. And it’s the exact same word that’s used in Exodus 28:41 when the priests are set apart to serve God. In other words, the word consecrate means to give completely to God. So David is asking the people not just to give their wealth to God, but to give themselves to God. David is calling them to give their lives to God. And the giving of their wealth is just an indicator of whether or not they’ve given their lives. So please don’t just give your money and think that’s enough. You need to give yourself to God… and giving your money is just one small natural result of giving yourself.

We see this same truth in verse 18. And actually David takes this truth to a whole nother level in verse 18. David’s praying and he says, *“O LORD, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.”* David says, “God, I don’t want these people to just give you their wealth. I want their hearts to be loyal to you.” And even more than that, David says, “And I don’t want this to be just a one-time thing. I want this desire to be in their hearts forever.”

Church, please hear that today. This is not just about making a one-time commitment to God and then going on with the rest of your life as if nothing has changed. This is about the rest of your life being changed because you have encountered God in His Word. This is not about giving your money for three years. This is about giving your entire life to Jesus forever. Listen, I mean this: If we give all $6.9 million, and then go back to business as usual, because our hearts haven’t really changed, this campaign was a failure. We want more than that! We want God to work in our lives and change our hearts and make us more like Jesus. And we want that to be a permanent, spiritual change that has lasting results and eternal impact. So don’t just give your money for the next three years. Change your giving forever. Give yourself forever. Give your entire life to Jesus forever.

Finally, the fifth truth is you should give God all the glory. Look at verses 10-16, *“David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, ‘Praise be to you, O LORD, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you*.’”

I love these verses. I love David’s prayer. Think about what’s going on here. The people have just given $9 billion to God, and what does David do? Look at verse 10, *“David praised…”* who?... *“the Lord.”* Does that seem strange to you? The *people* give, but David praises *God*. David doesn’t give the people the glory for their giving. David gives God the glory. Why? Look at verse 14. David prays, *“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.”* Do you hear that? David knew that they had not given God anything that didn’t already belong to God. David says the same thing again in verse 16. He says, *“O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.”* Everything they gave came from God and already belonged to God. The fact that they were able to give generously was to God’s credit and not theirs. Their generous giving was the result of God’s grace, not their greatness. And that means God got the glory for their giving and not them. That’s exactly what David says in verses 11-12. He says, “*Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.”* Everything is God’s. Even what we give comes from God and belongs to God. The only reason we can give generously to God is because God has given generously to us. So God gets all the glory even for what we give.

And Church, I mean this: if our giving ever makes us proud of ourselves, then it is a horrible plague on our souls, and we would be better off not giving. God help us if our giving ever causes us to boast in ourselves. Our giving should humble us. Who are we that we should be able to give generously to God? Who are we? We are sinful creatures completely dependent on our gracious Creator. Our giving should cause us to boast in God’s greatness and God’s grace. So make sure that even as you give, you give God the glory for what you give. Don’t give arrogantly. Give humbly. Don’t give with a proud, self-righteous, self-important heart. Give with a humble, submissive, grateful heart that worships God and gives God all the glory. Give your money to God, because it comes from God. And give the glory to God, because it belongs to God.

So as you make your commitment today, commit to give to God. Commit to give generously. Commit to give willingly. Commit to give your very self to God for the rest of your life. And commit to give God all the glory.

At the beginning of the sermon, I told you that the past three weeks, six weeks, six months, three years, 35 years, 110 years have all brought us to this day. One of the things I didn’t mention is that it was exactly one year ago this weekend that I stood before you for the first time and you called me to be your pastor. I don’t know if you remember, but I preached on Jesus’ feeding the 5000 in Matthew 14 that day. In that text, we saw that there is no one like Jesus. There is no one who can do the things Jesus can do. And Jesus graciously invites us to join Him in what He’s doing. And that means Jesus calls us to things that are impossible for us to do on our own. If we’re going to join Jesus in His work, of course it’s going to be too big for us… because only Jesus can do it. That’s the whole point! Jesus calls us to things that are too big for us, because He wants us to depend on Him and trust Him and be part of what only He can do.

And it is so appropriate that exactly one year later, we have the opportunity to live out that truth in a major way. This task is too big for us. But it’s not too big for Jesus. Will you trust Jesus and join Him in what He’s doing in this church and in this community? I pray that your commitment today will be a commitment of faith as we join Jesus in His great work.

 And I pray that as you make your commitment today, you will do more than just make a commitment to give. I pray that you will commit to give in a way that truly honors God. Commit to give to God. Commit to give generously. Commit to give willingly. Commit to give your very self to God for the rest of your life. And commit to give God all the glory.