



**Message Three: I CAN'T AFFORD TO GIVE**  
***Pastor Mike Chapman***

*There is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44, NIV).*

*No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:24, NKJV)*

Today, I want us to explore the biblical concept of “first fruits” as it relates to the expression of our generosity toward God.

**FIRST FRUITS WAS A PART OF THE LIFE OF  
ANCIENT ISRAEL**

Exodus 23:19, 24, *Bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God. (NIV)*

By giving their first fruits to him, the Israelites **acknowledged** God as the giver of all good things.

They also declared their faith that he would provide the **rest** of the **harvest** .

## A POWERFUL PICTURE OF THE FIRST FRUITS OFFERING

Joshua 6:19, *'All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury...' They burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD's house. (NIV)*

The victory at Jericho was the **first fruits** of the Promised Land to Israel.

Immediately, they are defeated by a weaker enemy at the city of Ai. (Joshua 7:3-5)

*Joshua 7:7-9, 'LORD, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan! O Lord, what can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?' (NIV)*

*Joshua 7:10-12, The LORD said to Joshua, 'Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions...I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.*

*Joshua 7:20-21, Achan replied, 'It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of*

*gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them.'* (NIV)

## **GOD CALLS US TO BE "FIRST FRUIT" GIVERS**

Giving to God first is an act of **thanksgiving**.

*Deuteronomy 26:1-11, When you go into the land the LORD your God is giving you as your own...you must take some of the first harvest of crops that grow from the land to the designated place of worship...Say to the priest, 'Today I declare before the LORD your God that I have come into the land the LORD promised our ancestors that he would give us.' The priest will take your basket and set it down in front of the altar of the LORD your God. Then you shall announce before the LORD your God: 'My father...went down to Egypt with only a few people, but they became...a large nation there. But the Egyptians were cruel to us, making us suffer... So we prayed to the LORD...When he saw our trouble...the LORD brought us out of Egypt with his great power and strength...Then he brought us to this place and gave us this fertile land. Now I bring part of the first harvest from this land that you, LORD, have given me.' Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him. Then you and the Levites and foreigners among you should rejoice, because the LORD your God has given good things to you and your family.*

Giving to God first is an act of **faith**.

*Proverbs 3:9-10, Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. (NIV)*

Giving to God first is a **sanctifying** act.

Romans 11:16, *If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy.* (NRSV)