

Sermon for Sunday, November 6, 1977, by Andrew A. Jumper, D.D., Senior Pastor  
Central Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, Missouri

"HOW TO GET HIT WITH A BOOMERANG"

St. Luke 6:27-38

Text: "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure pressed down shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

Next Sunday is Budget Sunday. All of us are asked to make a special effort to be in church next week, prepared to make our financial commitment to the Lord for 1978. Between now and next Sunday I want you to be thinking about your commitment for next year. Sometime this week you will receive in the mail a budget brochure that will contain our budget for next year along with material that will explain how the money will be spent. I hope it will answer any questions you might have. Also, the latter part of this week someone will be calling you and reminding you to be in church next Sunday. I hope you will be here. If you are not, it means that someone will have to call on you personally to ask for your commitment.

When you get your budget brochure in the mail you will discover that the budget for 1978 is projected to be \$70,000 more than this year. That represents a 12.5% increase. Your officers had hoped to keep the increase down, but as you study the budget brochure you will discover why this is impossible. You see, just across the street they are finishing up our new building and they tell us that, hopefully by December 15, they will be able to turn it over to us. Well, that's exciting! You cannot imagine what we have got over there. I have been going over there regularly ever since they first drilled the first hole to put down the first piling. I have just been praying that building up out of the ground. I go over there and walk through to check on the workers to be sure they are doing a good job. I wouldn't know if they were, but I'm checking anyway, because I prayed as that building has come out of the ground that God would just anoint that building with an out pouring of His Holy Spirit. I'm praying that God will bless that building and the minute we move in there God's Spirit will be so at work that the lives of our children, young people and everyone who uses that building will just be blessed by what is happening in their lives as they use that facility. I have just been praying that building out of the ground and I hope you join me as the workers are finishing up, that's what will happen. God will bless that building. It's a big building! You just don't realize how big it is until you get over there and see it. And you know what, it takes money to run the lights, the heating, the air conditioning, to clean it and maintain it, and so to add a big building like that to your budget takes a good bit of money. That's one reason the budget is up. On top of that, we desperately need another minister on our staff. And when you add to those needs the inflation factor and a growing program, I think you will find that the budget for next year is very reasonable in light of our needs. Incidentally, the raise of \$70,000 really isn't as bad as it looks for this reason. If you continue to give at the level you have been giving, you will give this year at least \$590,000 and that is getting up close to next year's budget.

I want to take a moment this morning to thank those men who will be working in the budget campaign this year. We have over 170 men who will be meeting for a budget workers' dinner this Thursday night. That is by far the most men we have had in the eight times I have been a part of the budget drive here at Central. On Thursday night those men will meet for dinner and be briefed on their duties. Between Thursday night and next Sunday morning they will be attempting to call every member of the congregation to urge all of us to be here to sign a commitment card next Sunday. Then, next Sunday after church, they will be served lunch here at the church and be given the names of all the members who have not yet signed a card. Within a matter of a week or two weeks, all of those cards hopefully will be completed.

Also, this morning I want to take opportunity to tell you what a fine secretarial staff you have here at Central. This is an incredibly busy time of year for them, but they have worked hard and the many complicated administrative details of the budget drive have been taken care of. At the same time, they have completed a new church directory which will be in your hands shortly, they have completed the church calendar for next year which is available to you this morning, and they have done all of the many mailings connected with budget drive. They have done all these things while continuing to fulfill all of their other regular duties. When you are by the church office during the week, I hope you will express your personal appreciation for their faithful service to you.

Between now and next Sunday every family should be thinking and talking together about its commitment for next year. As we are praying about what God wants us to do in our financial commitment, I would like to share with you some thoughts for your consideration. I want to talk about how to get hit with a boomerang. Our text for this morning says this, "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back". (St. Luke 6:38)

Notice first the word, "give". The Greek word used here means, "to bring forth without reservation." Do you have reservations about what you give? You see, bringing forth without reservation has to do with our inner attitudes. How do you feel about the money you give to the Lord? Your inner attitude about money tells a lot about you. For example, I am thinking of a seminary student who sat under the greatest Professor in the history of the world in the greatest seminary that ever existed. And at the end of three years he sold his Professor down the river for thirty pieces of silver. His name was Judas. What destroyed him? His inner attitude about money.

I am thinking of a young lawyer who came running up to Jesus one day and said, "Master, what good thing must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus told him to take what he had, sell it, and give... The young attorney's head dropped and he walked right off the stage of history for we never hear of him again. What went wrong? His inner attitude about money was bad.

Or again, I am thinking of two fine, upstanding church members who let it be known that they were selling a piece of property and were giving the money to the church. But when they sold the property, maybe it brought more than they had anticipated. They must have thought, "That's too much to give to the church. We didn't think it would be that much." So they kept back a part of it. They went to the church, gave some of the money, and lied that they had given it all. The Bible tells us they died as a consequence. What got them? How they felt about money!

The second thing I want you to notice also has to do with the word give. The person who does not give is a closed person. And a closed person who does not open his life to God or to others, who always receives but never gives, is in danger of spiritual death. Recently I had occasion to be with Gary Bender, the television sports announcer who is a member of our church, when he gave his Christian testimony at a meeting. Gary told a story that illustrates this point about a closed life. In Israel they have two seas. One is the Sea of Galilee. Waters from three rivers combine to feed into this large inland lake. The little Sea of Galilee teems with life. Fish abound in its waters, lush, verdant vegetation grows around its shores, water birds of many varieties live there. At the other end of the Sea of Galilee the lake empties out into the Jordan river. It is giving of itself even as it has received and its waters flow for many miles through the Jordan valley to nourish and give life to all it touches. But the Jordan river flows into the Dead Sea.

The Dead Sea has no outlet. All that it receives, it keeps. There is no life there. The waters are unfit for human consumption. There are no fish, no fowls, no vegetation. It is indeed dead. And that is the way with a human personality that has not learned to give even as it receives.

So giving provides an opening to a closed life. The more your life is opened up by giving, the more you can receive. That brings me to the third thing I want to say this morning. The Bible says that giving is a boomerang. The Bible makes us a promise. It says that if we give, it will be given to us. If you want to get hit with God's boomerang, first you have to open your life to receive by giving. Without an opening for God in your life that you make by giving, God can't give to you. Isn't that what St. Paul said to the Corinthians? He said to them, "he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly..."(II Cor. 9:6) Have you ever tried to throw a boomerang? I have tried it many times. I finally gave it up because I got tired of walking after it. I never could make it come back! But God's boomerang always comes back--you can't miss, and that is the promise of the Bible. The only thing is, a boomerang can't come back unless you throw it first. So with God. His boomerang of giving to you can't come back unless you throw it first by giving yourself.

Now, some of us may ask, "Do you mean I'll get back what I give? If I give \$50 a week will I get that much back?" Well, that brings me to the fourth thing I want to say this morning. Notice our text for this morning. The Bible says that if we give, it will be given to us. But the Bible doesn't stop there. The Bible goes on to say, "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over..." That means we get back more than we give! Isn't that a nice boomerang? You throw it out by giving and it comes back to you gold plated!

Well, maybe that means if I give \$50 a week I'll get back sixty? No, it doesn't mean that, although God may choose to bless you financially. But what it does mean is that you will get blessings back from God that money couldn't even buy! Over in the third chapter of Malachi the Bible talks about the man who is tithing to the Lord. And the Bible tells about the boomerang of blessing that will come to such a man. It says that the Lord promises, "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes..."

Are there any devourers in your life? A fire is a devourer. It can sweep over your place of business or your home and leave a pile of ashes. Inflation is a devourer. It can eat up all of your additional income. Sickness is a devourer. It can put you in the hospital and leave you debilitated and penniless as well. Depression is a devourer. It can take possession of your mind and your heart and simply ruin you. Worry is a devourer. It can tie you in emotional knots, ruin your health and destroy your enjoyment of life. Death is a devourer. It can snatch away your loved ones and destroy all of your hopes. A breakdown in human relationships is a devourer. Almost every day I deal with people who have suffered a breakdown in their dearest relationships that cause divorce, that cause alienation.

How are you going to protect yourself against things like that? You can't buy that kind of protection with money. But the Bible says that when we enter partnership with God through our giving that he will rebuke the devourer for our sake. The Bible talks about the man who has love and joy and peace and patience. That is the man who is in partnership with God. The greatest day in your life is the day that you accept Jesus as your personal saviour and receive eternal life. But the second greatest day in your life will be when you go into full partnership with God. You see, when you do that, he promises you that he will rebuke the devourer for your sake.

The fifth thing I want to say this morning has to do with the final sentence in our text for this morning. It says, "for the measure you give will be the measure you get back". How much do you need God's blessings in your life this morning? How much do you want God to do for you today? You see, you determine that for yourself for what you get back is determined by what you give. The Bible says that God wants us to put him to the test. How would you like to get hit by God's boomerang, to be blessed abundantly, to have the devourer rebuked in your life? Well, you get back in proportion to what you send out.

As you and your family think together, pray together, about what you will give to the Lord next year, think about God's boomerang for if you give, it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over.

Who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. I have tried it many times. I finally gave it up because I got tired of walking after it. I never could make it come back. But God's boomerang always comes back--you can't miss, and that is the promise of the Bible. The only thing is, a boomerang can't come back unless you throw it first. So when God's boomerang of giving to you can't come back unless you throw it first by giving yourself.

How, some of us say, "to whom I'll get back what I give. If I give \$100 a week will I get that much back?" Well, that brings us to the fourth thing I want to say this morning. Notice our text for this morning. The Bible says that if we give, it will be given to us. On the Bible doesn't stop there. The Bible goes on to say, "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over..." That means we get back more than we give. That's what a boomerang is. You throw it out by giving and it comes back to you gold plated.

Well, maybe that means if I give \$20 a week I'll get back \$100? No, it doesn't mean that, although God may choose to bless you financially. But what it does mean is that you will get blessing back from God that money couldn't even buy. Over in the third chapter of Malachi the Bible talks about the man who is tithing in the Lord. And the Bible talks about the boomerang of blessing that will come to each a man. It says that the Lord promises, "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes..."

Are there any devourers in your life? A fire is a devourer. If it sweeps over your place of business or your home and leaves a pile of ashes. Inflation is a devourer. It can eat up all of your additional income. Sickness is a devourer. It can put you in the hospital and leave you debilitated and penniless as well. Depression is a devourer. It can take possession of your mind and your heart and simply ruin your life. If you're in an emotional storm, this is a devourer. It can destroy your health and destroy your enjoyment of life. Death is a devourer. It can snatch away your loved ones and destroy all of your hopes. A breakdown in human relationships is a devourer. Almost every day I deal with people who have suffered a breakdown in their deepest relationships that cause divorce, that cause alienation.

How are you going to protect yourself against things like that? You can't see that kind of protection with money. In the Bible says that when we enter partnership with God through our giving that he will rebuke the devourer for our sakes. The Bible talks about the man who has love and joy and peace and patience. This is the man who is in partnership with God. The greatest joy in your life is the joy that you receive from your personal salvation and new life eternal life. But the second greatest joy in your life will be when you go into this partnership with God. You see, what you do that, he protects you that he will rebuke the devourer for your sake.