Sunday Centerpoint

Key Takeaway:

1. Jesus warns against practicing righteousness in order to be seen by others. When the goal is public recognition, that recognition is the full reward, and nothing more remains for God to give.
2. Performative piety produces a hollow harvest. Giving that is designed to earn influence, control, or a favorable reputation is not sacrifice but strategy.
3. God is not after your money. He is after your heart. It is not the size of the gift but the posture of the heart that gives a gift its value in God's eyes.
4. The widow's two small coins were worth more in Jesus' estimation than the large donations of the wealthy, because sacrifice, not abundance, is what makes a gift meaningful.
5. Jesus himself modeled true sacrificial giving on the cross. He gave with no strings attached, knowing full well that nothing we do could ever repay him.

Discussion Questions:

1. Think of a time when you did something generous and secretly hoped someone would notice. What did that feel like? Were you comfortable admitting it to yourself?
2. In Matthew 6:1, Jesus warns against practicing righteousness in order to be seen by others. What are some modern-day equivalents of sounding a trumpet before giving? Where do you see this show up in everyday life or even in church culture?
3. In Luke 20:45-47, Jesus describes scribes who dress to draw attention, claim the best seats, and make long public prayers, while privately taking advantage of vulnerable people. What does this reveal about the relationship between outward religious performance & inward character?
4. In Luke 21:1-4, Jesus says the widow gave more than all the wealthy donors combined, not because of the amount but because of the sacrifice it represented. How does this challenge the way we typically measure generosity?
5. The sermon identified several reasons people give with strings attached, including wanting praise, wanting blessings in return, wanting influence over decisions, and wanting control. Which of these temptations do you find most personally challenging, and why?
6. The pastor said Jesus' death on the cross was a gift with no strings attached. How does reflecting on that reality change the way you think about your own giving?
7. The sermon asked, "What if we were a church that gave sacrificially with no ulterior motives?" What would that actually look like in practice, both individually and as a congregation?

Practical Applications:

1. Do something generous that no one else knows about. Do not post it on social media or mention it to friends. Make it a genuine sacrifice: leave a generous tip, meet a financial need anonymously, give your time without seeking credit, etc. Let it remain between you and God.
2. Take a few quiet minutes this week to ask yourself the following questions honestly:
    a. Is there anyone I believe owes me because of something I have given or done for them?
    b. Have I ever withheld giving, or threatened to stop giving, in order to express displeasure or gain leverage?
    c. Am I holding back from giving in certain areas because I am not yet willing to trust God with that part of my life?