

Sermon Growth Guide

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WHAT CAN I GIVE? | PSALM 116:1-6, 12-19

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Key Verse: Psalm 116:12: What shall I return to the Lord for all his goodness to me?

Big Idea: The Epistle to the Romans—Paul's great exposition of the gospel message—ends in praise. This is the chief end of God's saving work.

Foundations

This Sunday we begin Advent, a season when the church slows down to remember that God has come to us in Jesus and to look ahead to His return. Our series asks a question that shifts our attention from what we hope to receive to the One who has given us everything: "What can I give?" Psalm 116 is a fitting place to begin. It is the song of someone who has been rescued. The psalmist knew deep distress, calling out to the Lord in the midst of anguish, and God heard him. "I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy" (116:1). He discovered that God is gracious, righteous, compassionate, and present in his suffering.

That is the heart of Advent. God has never waited for us to find our way to Him. In Jesus, Immanuel, God came to us. Before we ask what we can give, we remember what God has already given. Gratitude grows as we remember His goodness.

The psalmist then asks, "What shall I return to the Lord for all his goodness to me?" Grace cannot be repaid, but gratitude calls for a response. The psalmist offers thanksgiving, worship, and himself. As we enter Advent, "What can I give?" invites us to remember God's goodness and respond by offering Him all that we are.

Understanding God's Word

In Psalm 116:1-6, what does the psalmist remember about the God who heard him? What do verses 3-5 reveal about both his circumstances and God's character?

The psalmist asks, "What shall I return to the Lord?" in verse 12. How do verses 13-19 answer that question? Why does he lift the cup of salvation, fulfill his vows, and offer a thanksgiving sacrifice?

What stands out to you about the psalmist's shift from receiving God's help to offering himself in worship among God's people (verses 17-19)?

Applying God's Word

Think of a season when you experienced the presence and faithfulness of God. What did you learn about Him, and how can remembering it shape your gratitude this Advent?

What would it look like to ask, "Lord, what would You have me do with what You've already given me?"

Witnessing God's Word

Who around you needs to know that God hears them and is with them? Consider how gratitude, generosity, or simply your time could be a gift to someone who is struggling or lonely this season.