

Almsgiving

Alms

- Luke 12:32-33 - “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.”

Alms

- Acts 10:1-4 - “There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, Cornelius! And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, lord? So he said to him, Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.”

Alms

- Alms? What are alms?
- How can contemporary Christians practice almsgiving?
 - Not the Sunday offering
 - Not paying our taxes
 - Not giving to charities

Alms

- 1Thes. 4:9-10 - “But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more”
- What are alms?
 - Knowing the answer will help us to know how to practice almsgiving in the 21st century.

What Are Alms?

- **It's Not About The Money**
- In the Old Testament, giving was regulated by the tithe, but its entire purpose was about glorifying God
 - Psalm 96:7-8 - “Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Give to the LORD glory and strength. Give to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come into His courts.”

What Are Alms?

- In the New Testament, giving is about many things, but instructions about the amount are conspicuous by their absence. Instead, giving in the context of alms and local church benevolence is about:
 - Fellowship, manifested by sharing
 - Love for others, manifested by giving
 - Glorifying God, manifested by the seed principle
 - Spreading the gospel, manifested by God's grace in enabling them to give
- 2Cor. 8:1-6, 9:8-14

What Are Alms?

- **It's Not About Me**
- The English word alms is an abridged form of the Greek word, eleemosune -
“compassionateness as exercised towards the poor, beneficence, a benefaction; alms, charitable deeds” (Strongs)

What Are Alms?

- The Jews viewed almsgiving as one of the three great works of righteousness: prayer, fasting, alms
 - Deut. 15:11 - “For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land”
 - Rabbi Assi - “Almsgiving is a powerful paraclete between the Israelites and their Father in heaven, it brings the time of redemption nigh” (Talmud 10a).

What Are Alms?

- Jesus took the Jewish standard of alms and raised it higher
 - Matt. 5:20 - “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”
 - Matt. 6:1 - “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds (*eleemosune, alms - prb*) before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.”

What Are Alms?

- Three examples of this:
 - Almsgiving
 - Matt. 6:2-4 - “Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.”
 - Prayer - Matt. 6:5-15
 - Fasting - Matt. 6:16-18

What Are Alms?

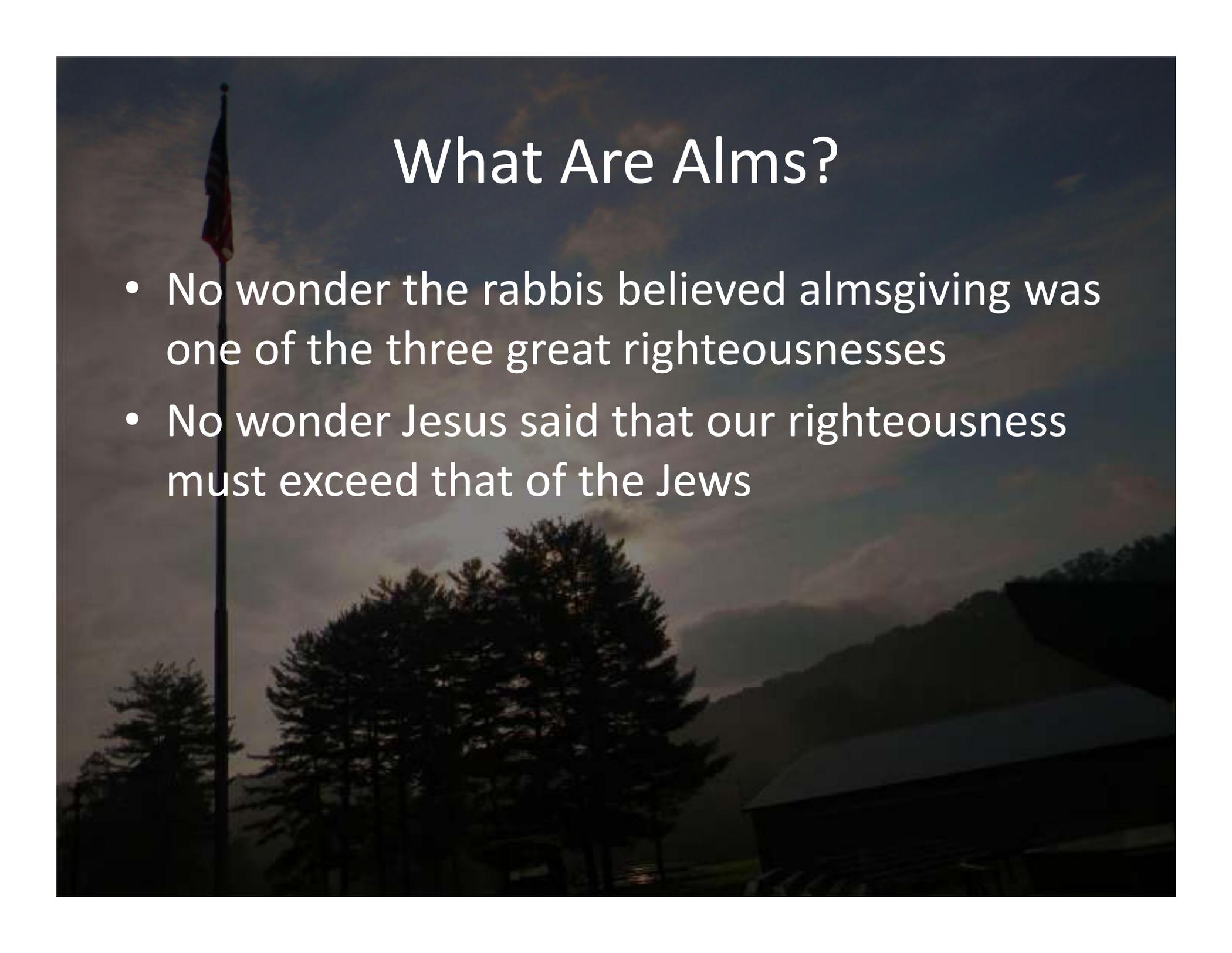
- Almsgiving is about stewardship
 - Matt. 25:14 - Parable of the talents is about stewardship, not about amounts of revenue generated
 - God didn't give you what you have for you; He gave it to you for you to distribute it on His behalf
 - You don't even own your body
 - 1Cor. 6:19-20 - "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

What Are Alms?

- 1Chron. 29:11-12, 14 - “Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all... But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You.”
- Luke 6:38 - “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

What Are Alms?

- **It's About God**
 - It is not, “Here, I am giving you this.”
 - It is, “Here, God sent me to give this to you.”
- To understand alms, we must understand:
 - It all belongs to God
 - It was not given to me for my exclusive comfort, but I hold it as a servant and a steward
 - It is not about something as limited and small as money, but it demands a commitment of our entire being



What Are Alms?

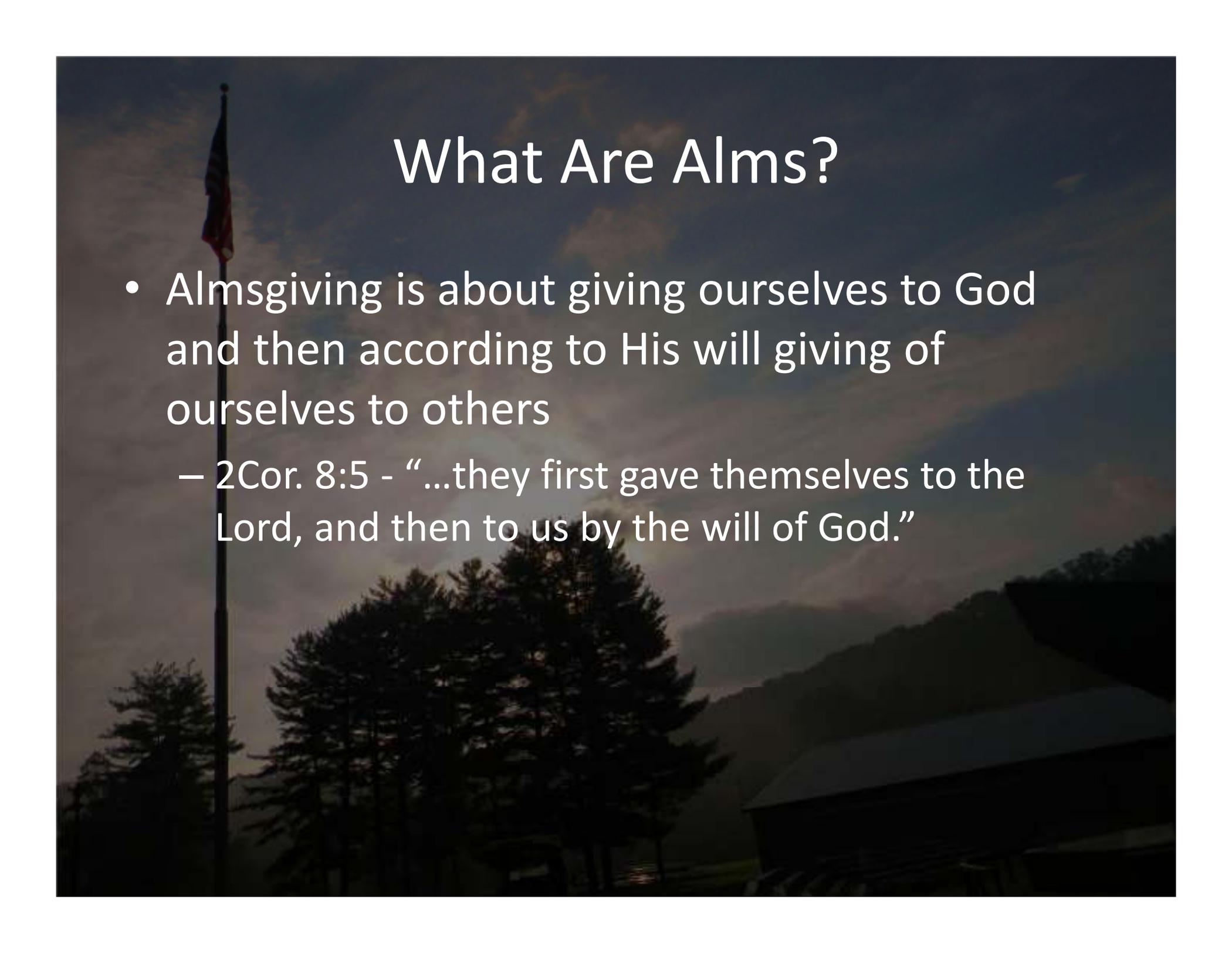
- No wonder the rabbis believed almsgiving was one of the three great righteousnesses
- No wonder Jesus said that our righteousness must exceed that of the Jews

What Are Alms?

- What things constitute alms?
 - Money is just one of many things:
 - Time, work, attention, energy, resources, moving out of your comfort zone, taking a loss for someone else's gain, just as Jesus did for us
- Alms are good deeds done in behalf of God to others at our expense

What Are Alms?

- Do you understand why Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive?
 - Alms encourage unselfishness within us.
 - Alms brings others needed relief and encouragement.
 - Alms force us out of our own narrow world.
 - Alms keep us from becoming too attached to material things.
 - Alms model the life Christ lived.
 - Alms result in eternal rewards.
 - Alms teach us the value of servanthood.
 - Alms make us more cheerful, caring people.
 - Alms prompt greater sensitivity toward others.
 - Alms provide an example for others to follow.



What Are Alms?

- Almsgiving is about giving ourselves to God and then according to His will giving of ourselves to others
 - 2Cor. 8:5 - “...they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”