The Offering is an Oxymoron

Do you know what an oxymoron is? No, I'm not talking about your husband! Wikipedia defines the word as, "a figure of speech that juxtaposes elements that appear to be contradictory."

You have to love the Internet! You can find anything on Google. I wanted to illustrate what an oxymoron was so I Googled it. I found an article that lists out 100 common oxymorons. Here are some of my favorites…

> Awful good. As in that was some awful good pie!
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> Bitter sweet. How can something be both bitter and sweet?
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> Civil war. What is civil about any war?
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> Clearly misunderstood. As opposed to foggily misunderstood?
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> Definite maybe. Sounds like a conflicted mind doesn't it?
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> Friendly takeover. Now what is friendly about that?

The Bible is filled with oxymorons. For instance consider that it teaches us that salvation is a free gift yet we have to give our life to receive it. We talk about being free in Christ yet the Apostle Paul says we are slaves to Christ. Those statements seem contradictory but they are in fact true.

Now let me read you a statement from Jesus who said, "Give, and it will be given unto you. A good measure pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Can there be any more oxymoronic statement than to get you have to give? This passage runs counter to all our thinking. We naturally want to keep rather than give. Yet this passage, which I remind you is from the lips of Jesus says just the opposite of what our natural response would be.

As Christians we are not motivated to give simply that we might "get" more stuff. We give from a heart of gratitude. We give because we want to help advance the Kingdom of God. Yet these words from Jesus and a host of other passages teach us that when we give we receive back.

So this morning as we prepared to take up the offering it might seem oxymoronic that the key to receiving starts by giving but it is true. Let's take Jesus at his word and see what happens in return.