

On the First Day of the Week, We Give an Offering  
2011-11-20

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 26:1-19

Confession of Sin: 1 John 1:6-9

Sermon: On the First Day of the Week, We Give an Offering 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 1 Timothy 5:16-18; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Benediction: James 1:27

## I. THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE CHURCH ADDRESSING THE SUBJECT OF GIVING or WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT GIVING?

- A. the matter of giving comes up in many of the Bible's books; it is a theme running throughout the Old Testament
- B. when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came, much of His teaching was on giving
- C. the book of Acts shows giving figuring prominently in the life of the early church
- D. most of Paul's letters to the churches addressed giving
- E. the most specific text on how the church is to practice giving comes right on the heels of a discourse on the gospel of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the dead in Him
  - 1. the apostle talks about the Gospel of Jesus Christ 15:1-4
  - 2. then he talks about our resurrection from the dead 15:51-58
  - 3. then he goes on to the matter of giving 16:1

## II. THE CHURCH'S PRACTICE OF GIVING or HOW DO WE GIVE?

1 Corinthians 16:1-4 And concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so also you do; (2) on every first of the week, let each one of you lay something by, treasuring up, as he may have prospered, so that when I may come collections need not be made; (3) and whenever I may come, whomever you may approve, through letters, these I will send to carry your gift to Jerusalem; (4) and if it is fitting for me to go also, they shall go with me. (my translation based on YLT)

- A. Understand how we use this instruction
  - 1. This instruction was given regarding a certain offering for the poor
    - a. the saints in Jerusalem were very poor, and there were very many of them
    - b. the apostles, at least James, Peter, and Paul, were concerned that the gentile churches help (Galatians 2:9-10)
    - c. so Paul and his team of helpers led the churches of Galatia, Macedonia, and Greece to take up a collection to be sent to the saints in Jerusalem
  - 2. We are not in precisely that situation
  - 3. In our giving, we desire to follow the apostles' doctrine, rather than make up our own practice, and we recognize that Paul's method is good for the ongoing benevolence of the church, not just for that one specific situation
  - 4. So even though we are not collecting for exactly the same occasion as were those churches, we follow the same method, because it is the method the Lord taught His churches on that occasion
- B. See how our practice, and that of many churches, follows this instruction. On the first day of the week:
  - 1. We individually set some money aside from the rest of it (each person as God has prospered him)

- a. the one who prospers little is expected to give only little
  - b. the one who prospers much is expected to give much
- 2. We collect this money
  - a. the instruction about storing it up almost sounds like each person is to store it up himself at home
  - b. but the second part of the verse clears that up
    - i. we don't want it to be that when the money is needed, then we start trying to collect it
    - ii. we collect it every week, and treasure it up, so that when it needs to be used, it's already in the treasury, ready to be used
- 3. We put it into the hands of those approved to administer it (v. 3)

### III. THE CHURCH'S NEED FOR GIVING or WHAT ARE WE GIVING TOWARD OR FOR?

1 Timothy 5:16-18 If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows. (17) Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. (18) For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE AN OX WHILE IT TREADS OUT THE GRAIN," and, "THE LABORER IS WORTHY OF HIS WAGES."

- A. There are classes of people in God's church who do not have the natural means of income
  - 1. the church minister, whether your local church pastor or a distant missionary, who devotes himself to the preaching and teaching of the Word, does not have a money-making job or business; his family's needs must be met by the church's offerings
  - 2. the woman without her husband or the child without his parent does not have a man to earn an income
    - a. in such a case, other family should take the widow or the orphan in
    - b. but sometimes this is not done
  - 3. the stranger, who does not yet have roots down the community---has not yet made it in business or landed a good job
  - 4. those who are very poor, due to certain circumstances beyond their control, such as the saints in Jerusalem during the time of Paul
- B. There are expenses the church incurs pertaining to the place where it meets (this will be a very brief defense of the practice of maintaining a church meeting house instead of meeting in people's homes)
  - 1. people's homes are very pleasant to meet in if the church meeting is small---just a few people; my wife and I have experienced this for years, when we hosted a youth Bible study in our living room
  - 2. people's homes are generally not conducive to the church's meetings, if the church consists of more than just a few people
  - 3. the early church ran into this right away, when 3,000 people were saved on the first day; they then assembled in the temple courts, then also met in smaller groups in people's homes
  - 4. in all times when Christianity was not persecuted, churches have seen fit to buy, build, borrow, or rent meeting halls large enough for the church to assemble
    - a. there are abuses to this, to be sure!
    - b. but the basic concept is not corrupt, but merely practical
      - i. the middle ages cathedrals are a corruption, but were the Jewish synagogues?

- ii. The modern-day mega-entertainment-center is a corruption, but were all the pioneer church buildings corrupt?
    - iii. The baptist church that was pastored by Benjamin Keach, John Gill, and Charles Spurgeon built a meeting house in 1688, just as soon as it was legal to do so in England, and when Spurgeon was there, built a new building holding 6,000 people. Are we sure this was all misguided, and they should have met only in homes?
    - iv. The familiar clinging to the buildings as the church is a corruption, but was Paul's use of a lecture hall corrupt?
  - 3. this is our practice, too. We maintain this old church complex, which consists of this meeting hall, a study, two storage rooms, a fellowship hall and kitchen, and a house for the preacher (parsonage, preacherage, manse).
    - a. the church often meets in smaller groups in people's homes
    - b. but when the whole church meets, we meet in these buildings
  - 4. and so there are expenses for the church's meeting house, its upkeep and utilities
- C. There are expenses related to what we do
  - 1. we use paper plates and plastic ware for the church lunch
  - 2. we publish things from time to time, including the weekly worship bulletin
  - 3. we post the church's sermons on the internet
  - 4. we travel to association conferences and meetings
  - 5. we travel to preach in other places
- D. I have given these categories in order of how much money goes to them

#### IV. THE CHURCH'S REASONS FOR GIVING or WHY SHOULD WE WANT TO GIVE?

2 Corinthians 8:1-15 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: (2) that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. (3) For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, (4) imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. (5) And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. (6) So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. (7) But as you abound in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us--see that you abound in this grace also. (8) I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. (9) For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. (10) And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; (11) but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have. (12) For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have. (13) For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; (14) but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack--that there may be equality. (15) As it is written, "HE WHO GATHERED MUCH HAD NOTHING LEFT OVER, AND HE WHO GATHERED LITTLE HAD NO LACK."

- A. That we may abound in the grace of the Lord v. 1
  - 1. giving is a grace from the Lord
    - a. to give even during affliction v. 2
    - b. to give joyfully v. 2

- c. to give liberally v. 2
  - d. to give even beyond what you are able to do comfortably v. 3
  - e. to be freely willing v. 3
  - f. to beg for the privilege to do so v. 4
  - g. to see it as fellowship with other believers to give v. 4
  - h. to give yourself first to the Lord, and to His ministers v. 5
- When you are able to give like this, it is not a human accomplishment, it is grace from the Lord!

- 2. since it is grace from Him, we wish to abound in it! v. 7
  - a. we want to abound in faith
  - b. in speech
  - c. in knowledge
  - d. in diligence
  - e. in love
  - f. and in giving!

B. That we may test the sincerity of our love v. 8

C. That we may follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ v. 9

D. That we may have the advantage of finishing what we have begun v. 10

E. That we may establish an equality among God's people v. 13-14

- 1. not socialism or communism v. 13
- 2. but a mutual supplying of each other's needs v. 14
- 3. doing as God did for the Israelites in the wilderness v. 15