

I Corinthians Lesson # 35
Christian Giving
Pentwater Bible Church
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1 Corinthians 16: 1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

The most practical expression of our faith is our willingness to give. We are commanded to give of our time, talents, gifts, and financial resources to build and sustain the body of Christ. The text here turns to some practical aspects of the fundamentals of giving as expressed in the New Covenant. Paul who founded the churches in Galatia first (Acts 13: 14-14:23) is instructing the Corinthians and us to have a will to follow what he did with them. Notice the recipients of the gifts are other believers who he calls saints. This is the first of many aspects of Christian giving that we must acknowledge. Our time and resources go first to the body of believers and then if we can to others.

1 Corinthians 16: 2-4 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

Several characteristics of giving can be seen from this verse. 1) It is to be systematic. The first day of the week being on Sunday is stated. It was to be a regulated proportion of one's income stated: As God hath prospered him. We see an example of this with the disciples in Acts 11:29 sending relief money to Jerusalem during a famine in the reign of Roman Emperor Claudius (cir AD 41) which Tacitus describes in "The Annals." So varying income levels are accommodated so that all are required to give. When the time comes for the funds to be used for God's work there are no last minute collections. This is characteristic 2). Giving should be regular so the funds can be laid in store for the time when it will be needed. This way there are no last minute collections, which can produce a sense of being pressured. 3). Cheerfulness. God loves a cheerful giver and bountiful giver to His work. The term liberality lets us know that God wants us to be generous when giving back to Him. 4) Generosity is the fourth characteristic.

When does the Bible say we should take our collections? On Sunday each week

2 Corinthians 9: 6-7 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

God loves a cheerful giver is a reference to the state of mind we should be embracing regarding our Christian giving. It is to be done cheerfully. Not of coercion or

from any motive other than a heartfelt desire to see God's work be fruitful on this earth. If we give for any selfish motives we will not be keeping in the proper sense that God has provided for us, and the outcome will reflect that poor attitude.

The Lord Jesus when speaking to bountiful giving had this to say:

Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

A fifth characteristic of Christian giving is that the system of managing the funds must be scrupulously honest and visible to the congregation. 5) The funds must be handled by trustworthy people. They must provide regular reporting to any that ask regarding the financial status of the local fellowship. In keeping with this the money should only be directed to those that are doing the Lord's work. Some do not carefully evaluate missionaries and others that *seem* to be doing the Lord's work when sending money.

Paul never mentions the tithe in this letter. It is not commanded for believers in the New Testament. It is from the Old Covenant, which was done away with when the New Covenant came in. In fact the tithe as described in Leviticus (Chapter 27) worked out to 23 1/3 % each year. There was an annual 10% on the current income and 10% on what they had already stored. Then each three years there was another tithe (Deut 14: 28-29). In the OT the tithe was always of food and livestock. The tithe is described as the product of the land, seed of the land, fruit of the tree, herd or flock. The tithe was not the giving of money. Nowhere in all of the Scriptures will you find that tithing was the giving of money to God. Our principles in the New Testament are greater than the tithe. We are to give out of love for God and our fellow Christians. Not out of obligation or duress. And we are not commanded to give a particular percentage of our income. Money is only one means of giving. Our time and talents as well as our physical resources can be given too. The important aspect of this is the state of our hearts and minds related to our giving. If we don't give to God's work He will extract it from us in ways that will not be pleasant (II Chronicles 36: 20-21)

Does the New Testament command tithing? No it does not.

II Chronicles 36: 21-21 To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

Because the Ancient Israelites did not obey God's command with His tithe of the land to let it lie fallow every seven years He brought the Babylonians against them in three separate invasions.

Malachi 3: 8-10 8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes

into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Moving on with the text of First Corinthians sixteen

I Corinthians 16: 5-9 Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

Paul here lays out his plans for ministry travels to take the Gospel to other areas. He makes note that the opportunities are large and so are the adversaries to the Gospel. Christ's message has always been poorly received from the beginning and it is no different today. There are many adversaries as each of us has seen. Do not get discouraged. Paul's example of pressing on is a fine example of realizing the resistance and moving beyond it to continue expressing our knowledge of the truth.

I Corinthians 16:10-12 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren. As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

Paul wanted to send several helpers to assist the Corinthians. He specifically told them to treat Timothy as one sent directly from the Lord to do His work. The Corinthians were a difficult group to work with and Timothy was young. Paul admonished them to treat him properly. Paul considered himself as a brother to these men not as their overseer. Regardless of the role we have been given in the New Testament Church of Christ we are all equal under God as brothers and sisters.

I Corinthians 16: 13-14 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.

Again Paul admonishes the Corinthians to always be alert for the enemy of the Gospel is prowling like a lion seeking to devour us (I Peter 5:8). Another enemy is ourselves. In the quaint King James text says to quit ourselves. That means to not let our tendency to sin get in the way of exercising our faith for Christ. Therefore we are commanded to quit that! The Lord expects us to be strong since He has given us the tools to strengthen ourselves. If we regularly study our Bibles and stay focused on Him we will receive His strength. Finally in we are commanded to do all things in the Church with

love. Love constrains our behavior (II Corinthians 5:14). It also covers a multitude of sins (I Pet 4:8).

What does the Bible mean by “Watch and Stand Fast in the faith?” Alertness to any deviation to serving Christ in truth

I Corinthians 16 15-18 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth. I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

Stephanas exhibited the behavior of a genuine believer. He was addicted to the ministry to other believers. We are told to submit ourselves to such as him and labor with him and others like him. Others who were coming to fill needs were with Stephanas were Fortunatus and Achaicus. They would complete the necessary spiritual gifts to bring the ministry to the Corinthians fullness so as to fulfill God’s plan for them. True believers are refreshment to our spirits. They bring a needed confirmation that God is working in this ministry.

I Corinthians 16: 19-21 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss. The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.

Paul is confirming to the Corinthians that others are aware of their trials and are with them in the battle. There were close knew house churches in that time and all knew each other well as they persevered against a very hostile culture and government carrying out the work of Jesus. The holy kiss (II Corinthians 13:12; Romans 16:16; 1 Thesslonians 5:25; 1 Peter 5:14) was primarily a symbolic expression of the love, forgiveness, and unity, which should exist among Christians. As such, it became associated with the celebration of the Lord’s Supper as a prelude to its observance (Justin *Apology* 1. 65. 2). It was a mark of the familial bond, which united believers. There is no indication that it was restricted to one’s own sex in the New Testament era (Luke 7:37, 45). In the New Testament church love for one another was openly expressed. We have replaced this with shaking of hands and hugging (Galatians 2:9)

What does the Bible mean by greeting one another with a “Holy Kiss?” An embrace and open kiss signifying our love for each other

I Corinthians 16: 22- 24If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Finally Paul gives strong admonishment to those who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ. He says they are an Anathema. This is an extremely strong cursing. Synonyms to this are: detesting, loathing, consigned to damnation or destruction, excommunication and divine punishment. He immediately follows this with Maranatha. This means that our Lord comes. He has come and He will come back. The epistle ends with a spreading of God's Grace to them and Paul's love in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Epistle's Review:

1. Corinth was a culture that was hostile to the Gospel
2. Paul asserts his apostleship and authority as a teacher
3. Thanks God for the Corinthians before he criticizes them
4. There were divisions in that church brought in by false teachers
5. The elders were celebrating sexual sin instead of condemning it
6. Human wisdom is no match for the Gospel
7. Worldly wise people are generally not called into the Church
8. Christian revelation is not from the world and the world cannot understand it
9. Revelation is spiritually discerned after belief
10. Carnality impedes spiritual development
11. Christian service will be rewarded by Christ at the Bema Seat Judgment
12. We are in the world but should not be of it
13. We cannot use the secular courts for matters between believers
14. The marriage between believers is holy and should be treated as special
15. Our bodies are the temple of God
16. God established marriage and restricts sexual intimacy to heterosexual committed marriages
17. We are not to marry unbelievers
18. There are very limited allowances for divorce
19. God has placed us in the spots where we should work for Him
20. We have very special rules regulating our Christian liberty
21. Teachers of the Gospel may earn their living by it
22. Temptation is common to all of us in Christ's Church. We must master it
23. We have specific rules for communion
24. We have all been endowed with gifts of the Holy Spirit and must use them in love
25. We will all get new resurrected bodies at the last trumpet of Christ when He calls.
26. We will prevail over death because Christ defeated it for us
27. Christian giving instructions were provided

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