

EVERY MAN SHALL GIVE AS HE IS ABLE

TEXT: DEUTERONOMY 16:13-17

Introduction:

1. Our text contains instructions for the feast of tabernacles (Deut. 16:13-17).
2. In Leviticus 23, we read that the LORD gave Israel seven feasts.
3. First and foremost is the passover (Lev. 23:5; cf. Deut. 16:1).
4. The seventh, and last, feast given is the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34).
5. The Feast of Tabernacles commemorated Israel's wilderness wanderings and their deliverance from bondage in Egypt.
6. It was also a time of great rejoicing at the bountiful blessings of God during the autumn harvest.
7. It is referred to in Exodus 23:16 as "the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field" (cf. Ex. 34:22).
8. The Feast of Tabernacles reminded Israel how they dwelt in tabernacles (or "booths") as they journeyed from Egypt.
9. Today, many Orthodox Jews erect booths or tents in their drive way or in their yards for their seven-day Sukkot holiday (in the fall).
10. Leviticus 23:42 and 43 says, "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."
11. This morning I would like for us to focus on Deuteronomy 16:16, 17. Three times a year every male was to make a pilgrimage.
12. He was to bring his offering, acknowledging God as the giver and sustainer of life (16:16, 17).
13. The interpretation is very simple, so I will spend most of our time with the application.

I. THE LORD WANTS US TO BE CHEERFUL

1. Deuteronomy 16:14 says, "And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast..." This feast was a time of great rejoicing.
2. Why were they to rejoice? Verse 15 says, "because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice."
3. "Shall bless thee..." They should rejoice in future blessings as well as past blessings!

4. It is the will of God that His people should be a cheerful people. Now let us apply this to the church. If Israelites were to rejoice, what about us?
5. Matthew Henry said, "If those that were under the law must rejoice before God, much more must we that are under the grace of the gospel, which makes it our duty, not only as here to rejoice in our feasts, but to *rejoice evermore, to rejoice in the Lord always.*"
6. Now, if we are rejoicing in our salvation and in the manifold blessings of God, we ought to show our gratitude to God by being generous.
7. Deuteronomy 16:16 says the men were not to "appear before the LORD empty" ("empty-handed").
8. Once again, we must apply this to our situation today because these are not just Old Testament principles. These are Biblical principles, found in both the Old and the New Testament.
9. Second Corinthians 9:7 says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."
10. So God wants us to be cheerful (Deut. 16:14, 15).
11. And God wants us to give (Deut. 16:16, 17).
12. And God loves a cheerful giver (II Cor. 9:7).
13. The Lord Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).
14. We miss out on the blessings of God when we do not give.

II. EVERY MAN SHALL GIVE AS HE IS ABLE (16:17).

1. Again, this principle is taught throughout the Bible (cf. I Cor. 16:2).
2. The trustees have told me that basically there are about a dozen people supporting this church. **My brethren, these things ought not so to be.**
3. Some of our members are supervisors. Some have their own businesses. What would you think if you came to work and saw that only a small percentage of the workers were working?
4. If you are not contributing to the Lord's work, and if you are not tithing and giving to missions, you are missing out on the blessings of God, because Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).
5. He also said, "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" (Luke 6:38).

6. John Bunyan said, "a man there was, though some did count him mad, the more he cast away the more he had."
7. The world can never understand men like John Bunyan, though his *Pilgrim's Progress* has been translated into more than 200 languages, and is the second most popular book of all time, after the Bible.
8. The Bible teaches that every believer is to "give as he is able" (Deut. 16:17).
9. First Corinthians 16:2 says, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him..."
10. And there is a special blessing for those who give beyond his ability. The apostle Paul commended the churches of Macedonia because they gave "beyond their power" (II Cor. 8:3).
11. Our Lord commended the widow woman because she gave all she had (Mark 12:41-44).
12. The great British soldier, General Charles Gordon was born near London, England in 1833. He distinguished himself as a great soldier during the Crimean War (1853-56), and then he volunteered to join the British forces in China.
13. General Gordon was present during the occupation of Peking in 1860 and defended Shanghai during the Taiping Rebellion.
14. He returned to England in 1865, where an enthusiastic public had already dubbed him "Chinese Gordon." When the British government tried to reward him for his magnificent service in China, General Gordon declined all money and titles, but did accept a gold medal on which his name and a record of his 33 engagements were inscribed.
15. After he was killed by Muslim rebels in Sudan, the medal could not be found. After a thorough search, it was finally discovered that he had sent it to Manchester during a famine, with a request that it be melted and used to buy bread for the poor.
16. **In his diary he recorded that the medal was the only earthly thing he valued and that he had given it over to the Lord Jesus Christ.**
17. Oh, if we only had more Christians like General Gordon today!
18. Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
19. When we trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, He delivered us from the power of sin, and that includes the sins of covetousness and selfishness and greed and materialism.
20. We have been delivered; we just need to believe it!
21. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14).

22. I read about a Japanese soldier who hid in a cave in Guam from 1944 (when the US Army liberated Guam) until 1972! For twenty-eight years, he hid in an underground jungle cave, fearing to come out of hiding even after finding leaflets declaring that WWII had ended.
23. He was free, but he did not know it. We are free from selfishness and covetousness; we just need to believe it and trust God.

III. EVERYTHING COMES TO US FROM THE HAND OF GOD

1. Our text says, "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee" (cf. 8:11-20).
2. King David prayed to God and said, "For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (I Chron. 29:14).
3. James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights."
4. God gives us the ability to make a living. He gives us our health and our strength. He is the One who put a roof over our heads, and clothes on our back, and food on our table, and if we ever lose sight of this we are in big trouble (cf. Deut. 8:17-20).
5. This is why America is under the judgment of God. God has blessed the USA like no other nation on the face of the earth, but America has forsaken God.
6. The apostle Paul said in II Timothy 3:1, 2, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy..."
7. Go to a restaurant and look around. When was the last time you saw someone bow their head and give thanks for their meal?
8. God help our country?
9. We read in the papers that citizens are fed up with the economy, and they ought to be fed up. But what many do not understand is America is under the judgment of God (cf. Deut. 8:11-20).
10. Our country's biggest problem is spiritual. America needs to get back to God. Back to the Bible.
11. I saw an interview with Donald Trump on the Internet. He made some good observations about the problems in America, but he said nothing about America's moral problems.
12. How could he? He has been divorced twice and he is now on his third wife. Therefore, he is in no position to speak out on these issues.

CONCLUSION:

1. Queen Wilhelmina became the queen regent of the Netherlands in 1890, when she was only ten-years old.
2. One day little Wilhelmina looked out at the great crowd of people and asked her mother, "Do all these people belong to me?"
3. Her mother smiled and said, "No, you belong to them."
4. According to the Bible, we belong to the Lord. Romans 14:8 says, "Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."
5. First Corinthians 6:19 says, "Ye are not your own."
6. In Acts 27, we read that on that storm-tossed ship, the apostle Paul stood forth and gave a speech. He said, "Be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve..." (Acts 27:22, 23).
7. Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."
8. Therefore, since we belong to God, everything we have rightfully belongs to God -- "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof..." Everything -- our income, our possessions, even our children.
9. Money can be used in many wonderful ways -- to build and renovate church buildings, to print Bibles and Gospel tracts, to support missionaries, and to encourage preachers, etc.
10. But money can be dangerous if we are not careful. First Timothy 6:10 says, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
11. Money has a strange attraction. This is because men are born with a sinful, selfish nature. Wicked men covet, and lie, and steal, and even kill for money.
12. The Bible says Christians are stewards, and all we have belongs to God. Stewardship is a discipline, just like prayer, Bible reading, and soulwinning.
13. I was reading a sermon about stewardship the other day, and the preacher told a story about a certain a Christian lady who inherited \$5,000.00. She immediately wrote a check out to her church for \$500, and as she wrote the check she prayed, "Lord, help me to do this before my heart hardens."