

## New Testament Giving

### INTRODUCTION:

1. The subject of giving that has been discussed among the eldership as one that needs to be preached on from time to time.
  - A. It has not been discussed because we are dissatisfied with the congregation's giving.
  - B. Instead, it is simply a biblical matter that needs to be addressed to assure all understand what is required of us by the Lord to serve Him properly.
2. Giving every first day of the week, or Sunday, is a common practice in most every church today.
  - A. That does not justify the practice.
  - B. And churches have abused this practice causing many to question its validity.
    - i. Most of us have likely heard of situations where church leaders or officials have been less than honest and often self-serving with the contribution received from the members.
    - ii. The news recently reported on a "pastor" berating his congregation because they were unwilling to give up certain things so he could buy a **luxury Movado watch**.
      - a. He indicated that their giving more was how they were supposed to *honor him*.
      - b. Incidences like that are rightfully rejected as unscrupulous and abusive.
    - iii. Unfortunately, the world has a tendency to overreact to these incidences and judge every church that collects money to be of this same mold.
3. Such wholesale judgment is unjust because taking up a collection is biblical and is designed by God for doing good, not evil (1 Cor. 16:1-2 – "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. <sup>2</sup> On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come." ).
  - A. This command and other instructions related to it, as we shall see, address collecting money to **help needy saints**, which was a generous, charitable act.
  - B. The question we must answer is what obligations these things place upon us today as Christians and congregations concerning collecting and storing up money for the Lord's work.
4. That is what I want to talk about today—the obligations we have as Christians and a local church concerning giving back to the Lord and supporting His work.
5. I hope in doing so to encourage you to consider the biblical practice of giving and your practice of giving so that we might better fulfill God's will and bring Him glory through this act of service.

### BODY:

#### **I. Why a collection and local treasury?**

- A. Why a collection?
  1. O.T. precedence for a collection to support the Lord's work.
    - a. When Abraham met Melchizedek he gave him 10<sup>th</sup> of his spoils of war (Heb. 7:1-4 – "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, <sup>2</sup> **to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils**, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. <sup>3</sup> Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but **made like the Son of God**, he remains a priest perpetually. <sup>4</sup> Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils." ).
      - 1) As a **king of peace** and a **priest of God**, Abraham recognized him as worthy to receive a portion of the spoils he had after defeating the armies of Chedorlaomer.
      - 2) Melchizedek being a *type of Christ* indicates that Jesus, who is King of peace and High Priest of God, possesses even greater honor and right to receive such gifts from His people today.
    - b. Later God established the tithe requiring Israel to give 10% back to God (Lev. 27:30, 32 – "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord...<sup>32</sup> And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord." ).

- c. Israel had to tithe despite also having to offer sacrifices, pay a temple tax, etc., and being responsible for taxes owed to the government (Mt. 22:21 – “Then He [Jesus] said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.”).
  - d. This tithe offered to God supported the Levites who were responsible for the spiritual workings of God’s kingdom (Num. 18:23-24 – “Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance.<sup>24</sup> For the **tithe** of the sons of Israel, which **they offer as an offering** to the Lord, **I have given to the Levites for an inheritance**; therefore I have said concerning them, ‘They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.’”).
  - e. The O.T. sets a precedence for collecting funds from God’s people to support His work!
2. New Testament precedence for collecting money to support the Lord’s work:
- a. Early Christians pooled their money to do the Lord’s work (Acts 4:34-35 – “For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales<sup>35</sup> and **lay them at the apostles’ feet**, and **they would be distributed** to each as any had need.”).
    - 1) Note the true sacrificial attitude shown in their giving!
    - 2) Money was **given** and **pooled**, laying it at the apostles’ feet to be distributed to needy brethren.
  - b. Paul commanded *churches* to take up funds to support the Lord’s work (1 Cor. 16:1-2 – “Now concerning the **collection** for the saints, as I **directed** [commanded] the **churches** of Galatia, so do you also.<sup>2</sup> On the first day of every week **each one of you** is to **put aside and save**, as he may prosper, so that **no collections** be made when I come.”).
    - 1) There was to be a collection by the local churches.
    - 2) Each member had a personal responsibility to take part in it, *putting aside, storing up, or depositing* money every Sunday for this godly work.
    - 3) This collection was to be ready when Paul arrived to pick it up.

#### B. Why a **local church treasury**?

- 1. The command was for local **churches** to have a **collection** (1 Cor. 16:1). If these funds were kept in individual homes, this could not be called a **collection by churches**.
- 2. These funds were to be set aside on **the first day of every week** (1 Cor. 16:2).
  - a. If this is done in the privacy of the home, *why designate the first day of the week?*
  - b. Instead, we should see this action as coinciding with the weekly assembling of the local church to partake of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17ff.).
  - c. And, like the Lord’s Supper, this was to be a weekly commitment of each member to bring the money they while at home determined to give and give it when assembled.
- 3. The funds from the members were to be **stored up** so **no collections would be made** when Paul arrived (1 Cor. 16:2).
  - a. If members were to keep these funds at their homes, those funds would have to then be collected when Paul arrived.
  - b. So, again, this is a command for pooling their funds so they would be ready when Paul arrived.
- 4. Paul says these funds were **from the churches** and sent **by the churches** (2 Cor. 8:1-2, 19). Why do this if giving did not involve the action and treasury of the local church.
- 5. Local churches must support other scriptural works like preaching of the gospel.
  - a. Local churches were commanded to do so (1 Cor. 9:11, 13-14 – “If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?...<sup>13</sup> Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?<sup>14</sup> Even so the Lord has **commanded** that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.”).
  - b. Local churches did support preaching the gospel.

- 1) Phil. 4:15-16 – “You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first **preaching of the gospel**, after I left Macedonia, no **church** shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but **you** alone; <sup>16</sup> for even in Thessalonica **you sent a gift more than once for my needs.**”
- 2) 2 Cor. 11:8 – “I robbed other **churches** by taking wages from them to serve you.”
- c. For a *local church* to support the preaching of the gospel and its other works some sort of collection of funds has to take place and be sustained.
6. I believe we have shown that it is right for a local church to collect money by freewill giving from its members each Sunday to sustain a fund used to support the Lord’s work.

## II. Requirements for acceptable giving

### A. A proper attitude:

1. Consider the proper attitude required for O.T. tithing (written for our learning – Rom. 15:4).
  - a. **Willing generosity** was required (Mal. 3:8-10 – “Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! <sup>10</sup> **Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse**, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.”).
    - 1) To selfishly withhold what was rightfully God’s was to rob Him.
    - 2) The whole of the tithe, all that was rightfully God’s, had to be willingly given so that God would then abundantly bless them.
  - b. **Honesty** was required (Deut. 26:12-13 – “When you have finished paying all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. <sup>13</sup> You shall say before the Lord your God, ‘I have removed the sacred portion from my house, and also have given it to the Levite and the alien, the orphan and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed or forgotten any of Your commandments.”).
    - 1) What would you think about having to verbalize this before God with each giving?
    - 2) God knows, whether we verbalize it or not, if we are giving as He desires.
  - c. Though required tithing passed with the coming of the N.T...
    - 1) Is it not reasonable that God would expect no less, and possibly more, from us?
    - 2) For, in Christ we have it better in every way than did Israel (i.e., better sacrifice, better high priest, better covenant, better promises, better priesthood, etc.).
2. N.T. giving
  - a. There must be **readiness**, or **eagerness**, to give (2 Cor. 8:3-5, 12 – “For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they **gave of their own accord**, <sup>4</sup> **begging us with much urging for the favor** of participation in the support of the saints, <sup>5</sup> and this, not as we had expected, but they first **gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God**...<sup>12</sup> For if the **readiness** [eagerness] is present, it is **acceptable according to what a person has**, not according to what he does not have.”).
    - 1) Giving the proper amount is not going to be difficult if we have this attitude/commitment. This attitude reminds me of how the O.T. people gave of their gold, silver, etc., for the building of the temple to the point that they had to be told to stop.
    - 2) If we are **ready/eager** to give, God will accept our giving according to what we **have**.
    - 3) He doesn’t expect us to give more than we have, but according to our blessings.
  - b. We must give **cheerfully** (2 Cor. 9:6-7 – “Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup> Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”).
    - 1) As one must sow ample seed to reap an ample harvest, one must sow one’s blessings bountifully upon God’s work to reap God’s blessings in bountiful fashion.

- 2) This must be done cheerfully and not grudgingly or as if under compulsion (due to pressure from others, embarrassment, etc.).

B. Proper motivation:

1. Our giving is to be **motivated by Jesus' grace** (2 Cor. 8:7-9 – “But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this **gracious work** also. <sup>8</sup> I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. <sup>9</sup> For you **know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ**, that though He was **rich, yet for your sake He became poor**, so that you **through His poverty might become rich.**”).
  - a. Note how Paul calls giving a thing of grace, a “gracious work,” that is to be motivated by the sacrificial grace we see in Christ.
  - b. There was a price to be paid for the blessing of grace we enjoy in Christ!
  - c. By grace Jesus gave up the riches of heaven and “became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:14) to face rejection, persecution, suffering, and finally death on the cross for us.
2. We must give in **faith** (Matt. 6:31-33 – “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”).
  - a. Our giving must be done with faith in Jesus that those who commit themselves to Him will be adequately provided for.
  - b. Thus, acceptable giving is not based on what we have left over after all our needs and wants are addressed, but according to faith in God that He will provide when we commit.
3. Extraordinary circumstances demand extraordinary sacrifices (Acts 4:33-35 – “And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup> There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold <sup>35</sup> and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.”).
  - a. Note how 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians were far more wedded to love than to their physical possessions.
  - b. This, of course, was not a normal situation, but does express a certain attitude of extraordinary sacrifice that existed in the 1<sup>st</sup> century church that needs to be among us.

C. Proper amount:

1. A proper amount is based how he/she has **prospered**, or literally **been carried on their journey** of life (1 Cor. 16:2).
  - a. Giving the proper amount requires thoughtful evaluation of the blessings you receive to live.
  - b. The more you are blessed, or the more you grow in understanding of the amount you are blessed, the more you can and should give.
2. The proper amount is *determined* by a *cheerful willingness to sow our blessings bountifully* on God (2 Cor. 9:6-7 – “The point is this: whoever **sows sparingly** will also reap sparingly, and whoever **sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.** <sup>7</sup> Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”).
3. From this we learn that the proper amount to give is based on:
  - a. The number and value of the blessings we receive, not what is left over once we have enjoyed these blessings. God does not accept our surplus.
  - b. Careful consideration and planning to give a predetermined amount, not a spur of the moment decision or just what happens to be in our pocket on Sunday morning.
    - 1) That consideration would involve how well we live, eat, entertain ourselves, etc.
    - 2) For most of us, that is pretty good, and our giving must reflect these things.

CONCLUSION:

1. I hope I have given you some things to consider about your giving to the Lord that will help you evaluate whether your giving is acceptable to God and respond accordingly.

2. With your faith and commitment to Christ and His work I believe God will bless you abundantly, giving you forgiveness, love, peace, and real hope of eternal life to come.
3. Will you respond to Jesus today, committing yourself to Him in F-R-C-B?