

## The Godly Duty of Giving

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Recently I preached on the subject of “Where do you draw you ‘no’ line?”
2. One of these lessons addressed how there are many things in this world we can do that are not sinful in and of themselves but that if we are not careful can take up too much of our time and resources.
3. The subject today relates to that point because it deals with the duty every Christian has **to set aside a portion of their wealth to give on the first day of the week** to support the Lord’s work.
  - A. We need to talk about this regularly because:
    - i. It is **required** of Christians by the Lord. You cannot be faithful if you are not doing this.
    - ii. Our **life’s situation can change** requiring that we reexamine our priorities, including our giving, to be sure that the Lord is coming first in our lives.
    - iii. People **do not know** or **have misconceptions** about whether they should give or how much.
4. So, today I want to talk about the godly duty of giving back to the Lord a portion of our blessings He has bestowed upon us, and what that requires of each of us.
5. I hope in doing so to encourage each of us to examine or reexamine our giving so that our obedience will be assured, and proper glory given to God.

### BODY:

#### **I. Giving and need** – N.T. giving has always been connected to meeting a need.

A. There are **physical needs** that must be met.

##### 1. **O.T. giving and physical needs:**

- a. Although the O.T. Law has been fulfilled and replaced by the New Testament of Christ, the giving required of the Israelites can teach us some important things.
- b. God required Israel to **tithe**, or to give **10%**, back to Him (i.e., 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.**”).
  - 1) This tithe was **required to meet the needs of the Levites** who performed the works of the tent/temple (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.’”).
  - 2) The tithe was required **in addition to** the required **sacrifices**, the **temple tax** given for the upkeep of the temple (Ex. 30:13), and the **taxes** owed to a **foreign government** that came later (Mt. 22:17-21).
- c. Important: Although the temple tax and tithe supported the **physical workings** of the **temple** and the **Levites**, these had **spiritual significance** and **value** to the Israelites!
  - 1) The tithe was an **offering to the Lord**.
  - 2) The temple and priesthood were the center of Israel’s worship and service to God.
  - 3) To view their giving as being solely for physical needs would have been misguided and would have cheapened the godly purposes of these requirements!

##### 2. **N.T. giving and physical needs:**

a. Early Christians gave **generously** to **meet the physical needs** of their brethren.

1) Scriptures:

- a) Acts 2:44-45 – “And all those who had believed were together and **had all things in common**;<sup>45</sup> and they **began selling their property** and **possessions** and were **sharing** them with all, as **anyone might have need.**”
- b) Acts 4:32-35 – “And the congregation of those who believed were of **one heart and soul**; and not one of them claimed that **anything belonging to him was his own**, but **all things were common property to them.**<sup>33</sup> And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and

**abundant grace was upon them all.** <sup>34</sup> 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.**"

- 2) Though this giving met certain physical needs, there is **spiritual significance** and **value** in it as well.
  - a) Their giving expressed **community in Christ** above personal wants (i.e., **one heart and soul**, and **had all things in common**, and **viewed nothing as their own** – 2:44; 4:32)!!
    - (1) This resulted in tremendous sacrifice—people sold **lands** and **houses**!
    - (2) Do we grasp the extent of their commitment and generosity? I can write this off as a **special occasion**, but would I do this on a special occasion like this?
  - b) Their giving either **expressed** or **resulted** in (or both) the abundance of **God's grace** being upon them (4:33).
  - c) So, giving to meet physical needs includes far more than just that!
- b. N.T. churches are **commanded** to take up funds to support their **needy brethren** (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) This is a **command** that is obeyed by **money being set aside** each **Sunday** by **each Christian** based on **what they have been prospered (wages, etc.)** and **collected** by the local church so that it is **ready when needed**.
    - a) This church cannot do its job unless each Christian is doing his/her job!
  - 2) This command requiring each Christian to give has **spiritual significance** and **value**.
    - a) Giving is a willful **expression of God's grace** in one's life and the **joy it brings** (2 Cor. 8:1-3 – “Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you **the grace of God** which has been **given in the churches of Macedonia**, <sup>2</sup> that in a **great ordeal of affliction** their **abundance of joy** and their **deep poverty** overflowed in the **wealth of their liberality**. <sup>3</sup> For I testify that **according to their ability**, and beyond their ability, they **gave of their own accord**”).
    - b) Our **obedience in giving** brings **thanksgiving** and **glory to God** (2 Cor. 9:12-14 – “For the ministry of this service is **not only fully supplying the needs of the saints**, but is also overflowing **through many thanksgivings** to God. <sup>13</sup> Because of the proof given by this ministry, **they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ** and for the **liberality** of your **contribution** to them and to all, <sup>14</sup> while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the **surpassing grace of God in you.**”).
    - c) So again, giving, even to meet physical needs, has **vital spiritual value**.
  3. A reasonable question for a Christian is “What does my giving, or possible lack of giving, express to God about my love for God and my brethren and my appreciation for the abundant grace and joy I have received in Christ?”
    - a. I do not know what any of you give, or if you give, so only you can answer this.
    - b. Yet, it is a question all of us must answer!
- B. Giving is also required to **meet certain spiritual needs**:
  1. N.T. churches are to support the **spiritual work** of **preaching of the gospel**.
    - a. The Spirit **commanded** churches/Christians 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. The Spirit wants us to **give** to support the gospel with the **spiritual benefits** in mind (Phil. 4:15-18 – “You yourselves also know, Philipians, 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.** <sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift itself, but **I seek for the profit which increases to your account.** <sup>18</sup> But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; **I am amply supplied, having received** from Epaphroditus what you have sent, **a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.**”).
- 2. So, **giving is not optional** if you are:
  - a. **Having the gospel preached and taught to you** here at Colonial Heights!
  - b. **Hoping to benefit** from this congregation’s work.
- C. There should be a **deeper spiritual need** to obey the command to give.
  - 1. To understand this, consider when Abraham met Melchizedek (Heb. 7:1-3 – “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.”).
    - a. Though Abraham was **not commanded to do so**, because of Melchizedek’s exalted position Abraham **was compelled to give him a 10<sup>th</sup> of the spoils** of victory.
    - b. That is significant because Melchizedek is a **type/shadow** of Christ.
  - 2. If Melchizedek’s exalted position compelled Abraham to give him a 10<sup>th</sup> of the spoils, how much more should **Jesus’ exalted position compel us to give of our blessings?**
    - a. For Jesus is far greater than Melchizedek (Isa. 9:6-7 – “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the **government will rest on His shoulders**; and His name will be called **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.** <sup>7</sup> There will be **no end to the increase of His government** or of **peace**, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to **uphold it with justice and righteousness** from then on and **forevermore**. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”).
      - b. So, if you are not compelled to give by the fact that you have Jesus as your savior, king, and high priest, and by Him enjoy grace and its peace and hope of eternal life, not to mention that it is commanded, you should examine your heart!

## II. There are pressing long-term needs to be met:

- A. There are continual needs related to our place for assembling, to worshipping, and to providing Bible classes.
  - 1. We are commanded to assemble and edify one another (Heb. 10:24-25), which requires a place to assemble, which with a building requires utilities and insurance to be paid, general upkeep, and supplies for our worship and Bible classes, etc., that cost a tremendous amount of money.
    - a. These needs are to be met by each Christian giving as he/she should.
    - b. And, as has been true so far, giving to meet these needs have **definite spiritual significance** and **value** to the Christian.
    - c. For, these “needs” are directly related to God’s required spiritual goals of this church!
  - 2. So, ask yourself, “If everyone practiced giving with the same commitment I do, would...
    - a. The Sunday contribution commanded of each of us increase, or decrease?
    - b. We be able to pay the bills, keep us this building, have needed materials, etc.?
    - c. Would we be self-supporting in the gospel or be relying on outside support?
- B. There is a pressing need concerning outgrowing our place of assembling.
  - 1. The Lord has blessed us with a significant growth with a current membership of 95!
    - a. Also, we are currently enjoying an average of **15 visitors per Sunday.**

- b. So, we have a weekly potential attendance every Sunday of **110**, which we often surpass.
- 2. That, of course, is **wonderful**, but also presents some challenges, the most significant being our auditorium seating capacity.
  - a. Considering our number of pews, including the front two, their length, and a standard seating space of 24-inches per person, our seating capacity is **118!**
  - b. On a **somewhat normal** Sunday, we are 8 shy of **max** capacity, requiring us to put chairs in the back, and soon possibly in the foyer!
  - c. If you **subtract the front two pews** (I do not see anyone jockeying to sit there), on Sundays we regularly exceed our seating capacity, which would only be **105**.
- 3. So, what is the problem?
  - a. These figures, though sufficient to prove the point, do not take into account more growth!
  - b. And, if each member continues to give, or not give, as we are doing right now, it will take about 13 months to have the money to **begin the new building**, causing these challenges to pressure us even more!
- C. Though our growth has increased our weekly contribution significantly, do not forget that...
  - 1. Giving is **commanded** of every Christian to **fills physical** and **spiritual needs** that are **vital to the spiritual wellbeing** of each Christian.
  - 2. What others give has nothing to do with your responsibility to obey God's command to give as you have been prospered.
    - a. For, the fact that others obey God does not free you from obeying.
    - b. Every part of the body has to do its own work for the Lord's body to function properly and grow (Eph. 4:15-16 – "but speaking the truth in love, we are to **grow up in all aspects into Him** who is the head, even Christ,<sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, being **fitted and held together** by **what every joint supplies**, according to the **proper working of each individual part**, causes the **growth of the body** for the building up of itself in love.").
    - c. If I am not doing my part, the body suffers and I am held accountable by God.
  - 3. So, if you are giving:
    - a. **As you should**, with a **proper attitude** that mirrors that of the early church, you are to be **commended**. But, would/could you consider this time as a time of special need that calls for a short-term increase in your giving?
    - b. **Sparingly**, or **not with the commitment/attitude** demanded by God, or **not giving at all**, then will you **repent and give**?
    - c. Or will continue to **ignore** God's command, to not do your part, and **refuse to express** to God your appreciation for the **community** he has given us in Christ and for His **grace** and the **joy** it brings in your life?
    - d. Only you can answer these questions.

#### CONCLUSION:

- 1. I ask you, **what do you need to do** and **what will do** about your **giving**?
  - A. By acting in faith and commitment to Christ and His work I believe God will bless you and this congregation abundantly, giving us what we need to serve and glorify Him acceptably.
  - B. We the elders ask you to examine your giving!
- 2. If you are
  - A. Not a Christian, will you respond to Jesus today, committing yourself to Him in F-R-C-B?
  - B. A Christian but have not lived faithfully, will you return to God, repent, and confess your sin before the Lord and seek His forgiveness?
- 3. Will you come to Jesus right now?