

Sunday, October 12, 2008
Living Hope EFC

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God's Principles for the Church about Grace Giving
2 Corinthians 8-9

ILLUS: Statements about Money

We all have an opinion about money.

Today – I'd like us to think about what God says to His people about **Grace Giving – in 2 Cor.8-9.**

PICTURES: Tabernacle

I want to begin by thinking about God's giving structure in O.T.

Picture One: Shikinah Glory. **What do you see?**

- God organized His people around His presence.
- Marching order = 6 tribes, Tabernacle, 6 more tribes.
- God was always central!
- The tribe of **Levi** camped closest to the Tabernacle, circling it.
- Moses and the Priests camped in front of the door.

Q: Why did God have them build the Tabernacle? / Temple?

- (1) To live in their midst. (2) As a means of fellowship.
- How was fellowship maintained? What process? (**Lev.1-8**)

Picture Two: Priests offering sacrifices.

Q: How was the Tabernacle built? How was it paid for?

- **Exodus 35:4-10, 20—39; 36:3-7; 38:24-29** (gold, silver, bronze)

Q: How were the priests & Levites paid?

- Num.1-8 portions of offerings. A tithe from people **18:20-29**.

O.T. Giving included:

- Offerings (personal & feasts); special (Tabernacle);
- Tenth for Levites; tithe taken to Jerusalem each year (Dt.14:22-27). A tithe every 3rd year for poor Dt.14:28.

Q: How much did the average Israelite give to God each year?

Q: Take a step back: What was God's reason for "giving?"

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| What does God expect of the Church by way of giving? |
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Q: What do you think God's reason for "giving" is today?

1. Q: Does the N.T. endorse tithing?
2. It does say a lot about money, and Grace Giving!

JESUS stated the heart of the matter: **Matt.6:19-21, 24, 33-34**

1. There are two domains of existence; temporary and eternal.
2. How foolish to put all your money in the **stock market!**
3. **Where we spend/ invest our \$ = is a heart issue!** Vs.21 & 24.
 - It becomes a **"faith" issue** of who/ what we serve - v.24
 - A man pursues and invests in that which his heart pursues.
 - **V.33-34** – Use of money (giving) is a **spiritual matter**.

- Those who believe in a heavenly Father who loves & provides for them will seek God's K'dom with our material stewardship. Otherwise, like the pagans, we will focus on the material.
- **Q: What %** of our income does Jesus say is important to Him?
- *What is God's reason for giving us wealth?*

Paul's instructions on "the grace of giving" in 1 & 2 Cor.

1 Cor.16:1-2. Basic Principles about Christian Giving.

PRINCIPLE: Be a regular, proportional giver.

- Christians are to set aside a certain % of their income – just as regularly as they are paid, to give to God's work consistently.
- First Day: Not Jewish or Gentile, but Christian. = Act or worship
- Each one: Every Christian is to be involved.
- In Keeping with: Proportionate to our income.
- Systematic: As systematic – as paying our house payment.

KEY: As Christians, we are not to give what is "left over" at the end of our monthly payments. We are to predetermine a regular amount based upon our income. – Prov.3:9-10.

- **What % does Paul say to give?** It will differ with one's income.

R.G. LeTourneau – Started at 10, ended at 90%

"Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving." - Green, 163

2 Cor. 8 & 9

8:1-2 Giving is in spite of circumstances.

ILLUS: W.W. In his first pastorate, they had a need for a new building but some opposed it due to economic situation.

"Apparently the steel mills were planning to strike, the refineries were going to shut down, and the railroads were having problems...it seemed to risky to build.

"But there were enough who believed in 'grace giving' so the church built a new building in spite of the strikes, shutdowns, layoffs and other problems."

ILLUS: I started giving in Bible College.

8:3-4. Have a determination to give.

- This is the result of God's grace in them (v.1).
- Only those filled with gratitude for their salvation, give like this.
- This is the heart Jesus' talked about – "Seek 1st the K'dom."
- When is the last time you pleaded to give more for something

8:7. Paul says Christian's should excel at giving!

- There has been a big movement of "excellence" in ministry the past years. It's in church's values. I've never heard anyone talk about "excellence" in giving?

Sanders: Spiritual Leadership – "Money is one of the acid tests of character. Whether a man is rich or poor, observe his reaction to his possessions and you have a revealing index to his character.

8:8-9. Give willingly. It is a measure of our love for God.

- It is "giving" according to Christ's perfect example of giving.

- It is giving – so others might benefit, be made rich (in grace).
- It is giving – trusting God to use it for His purposes.

8:11-12. Proportionately. Willingly. Now.

- *Context*: They had started a year earlier – but quit! No follow through. God got squeezed out. (Corinth was immature.)
 - Immature giving makes promises but doesn't follow through.
- ILLUS**: Hag.1:2-3, 9. (520 BC: 16 years the work had stopped!)
- Mal.1**:10-; 3:8-10. 100 years later, after Nehemiah= same problem
- APPLY: Are we giving? OR have we quit? God: "Start now."
- Note: God doesn't just look at the gift, but the proportion V.12.

9:5b. We give by "faith-promise."

- They had promised a gift. Paul wanted them to complete it.
 - We live by faith. We plan our giving in light of our estimated income. This is no different than the way we buy a car, etc.
- ILLUS**: Buying a car, house, etc. We promise to pay so much, anticipating our income.
- Q**: Do we treat God with less honor, respect – than a banker?

9:6. God will reward us according to our giving pattern.

- Which do you think God wants in our giving? Sparingly or generosity? 1% or 15%? Is God generous, or stingy?

9:7. Give cheerfully – what you want to give!

- When we plan ahead & routinely set aside a proportion of our income – we give freely, cheerfully.
 - Unplanned giving – creates uncheerful giving.
- Q**. Do you plan what you'll spend at Christmas? If so = much joy
If you don't plan ahead & all the sudden you have no money??

9:12-13. Giving results in happiness & gratitude in many people.

SUMMARY

1: *What was God's reason for "giving" in the O.T.?*

A/ So His presence could dwell in the community and people could find the way of fellowship with Him!

What is God's reason for the Church to give today? The same!

2: How much did God's people give in the O.T.? 20-30%

- How much does God want us to give today? 2% 3%?
- Is the glory of grace/ Christ – less than O.T. patterns?

3. If God's design for spiritual worship & service cost his people 20-30% to carry out in the O.T., do we expect it to cost us less?