

Sunday, September 20, 2009—How Much Money Should We Give God?

### **Introduction**

- This morning we are going to begin a two part study about the issues associated with Grace based giving.
- Generally speaking there are two approaches to subject.
  - Talk about it constantly and make it the only measure of faith and blessing. Despite the current economic downturn the prosperity teachers have not back off their message. If anything they have stepped up their rhetoric.
  - Ignore the issue completely because they don't want to be accused of being a money hungry preacher. This is where I am at.
- Neither attitude is correct.
- Our whole offering system using the can rather than taking up a collection comes from the board's desire to not lord over the saints when it comes to giving. However, sometime I fear that we have made it too easy for the saints to neglect this aspect of their spiritual life.
- I Timothy 6:10—money is not the danger in itself. Rather our attitude about money is the issue.
- I Timothy 3:3, 8, Titus 1:7, 11—talks about filthy lucre. According to the Strong's Concordance filthy lucre means eager for base gain or greedy for money. Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines filthy lucre as gain in money or goods with the sense of something base or unworthy.
- Paul says that the leadership of a church should not be willing to abandon the doctrines of graced in favor money gain and reward. We could have a lot more people in here this morning if we wanted to be like every other church in the city.
- Acts 19:24-27—rather than abandoning the truth for monetary gain and making money our God we should be using our money to promote the truth.
- Our money should be focused where our affections are focused.

- Colossians 3:1-2—far too often our focus is down here on earth. Some of us have a roots sunk so deep into this earth we get wipe lash even trying to have a heavenly focus.
- I Timothy 6:17-18—people with money are in an advantages position of being able to make things happen within the Body of Christ. To support the local church and give to the work of the ministry.

### **Giving Under the Law**

- Amount: The amount of money Israel was supposed to give was determined by when they lived during the kingdom program.
- Under the Law Israel had specific instructions about how much money they needed to give God.
  - Deuteronomy 14:2, 22—tithes means a tenth. Every year Israel was instructed to give one tenth of all their increase to God.
  - Leviticus 27:30, 32
  - Numbers 18:21, 23-24—tenth to the tribe of Levi since they have no inheritance.
  - Deuteronomy 14:22-23—every year one tenth of their increase.
  - Deuteronomy 14:27—every year one tenth for the tribe of Levi
  - Deuteronomy 14:28—every three years an additional 10<sup>th</sup> for the stranger, orphan, and widow.
- So we see right off the bat that all of the ministries that talk about tithing a 10<sup>th</sup> of your income are not even following the giving outlined in the law.
  - 20 % every year
  - 30 % every third year
  - 23 and 1/3 percent every year.
- There were other required offerings and free will offerings that could be added to these totals.

- During the gospels when the Kingdom of Heaven was announced as being at hand Israel instructions regarding giving changed.
  - Matthew 19:21-22—Christ tells the rich young ruler to sell all his possessions.
  - Luke 12:32-33—“sell that ye have”
  - Matthew 19:27-29—in the kingdom those who have forsaken all shall receive 100-fold back.
  - Acts 2:44-45—how come all these people who believe the body of Christ started in Acts don’t live like the folks in Acts 2?
  - Acts 4:34-35—these guys are living precisely like they were taught to live by Christ during his earthly ministry.
- All of these ministries that want to follow the teachings of Christ and are trying to bring in the kingdom are they even following the kingdom instructions regarding giving. When was the last time you heard a ministry tell you to give 100% of your income?
- Motivation: fear was Israel’s motivation for giving.
  - Malachi 3:8-10—Israel’s motivation for giving was like everything else under the Law, fear of punishment.
  - Notice that in verse 10 God challenges Israel to “prove Me” Giving under the law and for that matter all obedience under the law makes God a debtor to the person performing the obedience. When a person obeys God’s commandment under the law God become obligated to give him the appropriate blessing.
  - Luke 6:38—if you don’t give God is not going to bless you.
  - Acts 5:11—Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for lying about how much they gave.

### **Giving Under Grace**

- Motivation: giving like all obedience under grace is not motivated by fear but by love.
  - II Corinthians 5:14—the love of Christ ought to be our motivator

- Ephesians 1:3—we have already been blessed richly in Jesus Christ with all spiritual blessings.
- Our giving is no longer a way to prove God; it has now become a way for God to prove us.
- II Corinthians 8:8—show me where a person spends his time and money, and I will tell you what they love. What are we more concerned with: the work of the ministry and investing in eternal spiritual things, or temporary corruptible things?
- Our attitude about giving in the Dispensation of Grace is to be that we are giving out of a heart of love and gratitude for what God has already done. Our giving is not to be motivated by fear of judgment or by trying to gain additional blessings from God.
- Amount: under grace we are not instructed to give a percent.
- II Corinthians 9:6-7—our giving is to be planned out and prayerfully considered. Not what you just happen to have in your wallet.
- You should give God as much as you can and still be cheerful about doing it.
- Always keeping in mind that if we invest in spiritual things we will reap eternal spiritual rewards. Corruptible things will only melt with fervent heat.
- It's hard to give too much money to the right cause.