

Sermon Series on Giving

Stewardship Training for Pastors

Introduction

There are two subjects that most pastors find it difficult to preach on. These two subjects are money and sex. In talking to pastors over a twelve year period on three different continents, we have discovered there are reasons why pastors have difficulty speaking on these two issues. For now we will focus on the subject of stewardship. Let's look at some of the reasons pastors find it difficult to speak to their congregations on this topic.

1. Many Christians feel (incorrectly) that their money belongs to them. Pastors know this and hesitate to teach what the Bible says on this subject for fear of how their members may react.
2. Some pastors do not want to preach about money because if there are visitors present those visitors might feel that all the church cares about is money.
3. Some pastors feel that this is too personal a subject to deal with (just like sex) and prefer to speak about topics that are more general and less personal.
4. Some pastors know that the rich members of their congregations give much of the offering and do not want to upset them or disrupt the church's current giving pattern by speaking about stewardship.
5. Finally, pastors know that their income depends on giving of church membership. Many pastors, if they are getting paid a regular salary that they are comfortable with, do not speak about giving and stewardship because they do not want to change the status quo.

These reasons are not Biblical. Because pastors depend on the goodwill of other people for their income, many are hesitant to speak about giving because it may affect their income, their families and their future at the church. Yet, the Bible is clear that Christians have a responsibility to be faithful in this area of giving, and there is much teaching on the subject. Jesus spoke more on the subject of money and giving than He did on any other topic, especially in the book of Luke. Here are some reasons why pastors should speak on the topic of stewardship and giving:

1. This subject is found all throughout the Bible. To avoid speaking on giving is to ignore large portions of the Bible.
2. This subject was one of the main topics of Jesus' teaching ministry. Since He spent time dealing with this subject, pastors should follow His example.
3. Money touches every area of life. By teaching on the subject of giving and stewardship, pastors can help their congregations become mature followers of Christ.
4. Pastors who teach on this subject realize that it is more important to be obedient than to fear the reaction of some members (We have found that the people who are most likely to be upset by preaching on giving are those who do not give). Pastors who are obedient find that God will bless and strengthen them in their position as pastor.
5. Pastors who preach on this subject will have more money to use in their church's ministry. It is a fact that the more money a church has, the more strategic it can be in reaching the world and making disciples.
6. Pastors fear above all else people leaving their churches. Our experience has been that if people do leave because you preach on giving and stewardship, it is usually those who are not faithful givers so in reality you have not lost a faithful, mature believer, but usually someone who was going to cause you trouble sometime in the future if not already in the present.

Our approach:

1. We have developed a series of four sermons to preach consecutively to your congregation. These sermons are in the appendix.
2. These sermons are sequential in nature:
 - a. Perspective – How to think about money and treasure. The main passage is Matthew 6:19-25.
 - b. Trust – How to realize God will always provide for His children. The main passages are Luke 21:1-4 and 1 Kings 17:7-16.
 - c. Excuses – How to overcome the excuses we sometimes use to not be obedient in the area of giving and stewardship. The main passage is 2 Cor. 8:1-5.
 - d. Blessing – How God blesses those who faithfully give. The main passage is 2 Cor. 9:6-14.
3. The sermons are in outline form. Go over each sermon and add your own illustrations where appropriate. We recommend that you do not change the overall message and structure of the sermons but we want you to have the freedom to personalize them to make them more effective.
4. The idea is that after the fourth sermon the pastor challenges those who are not faithful, consistent givers to give a percentage of their income for 90 days to prove the faithfulness and blessing of God. If after 90 days of faithful and consistent giving a church member has not seen God bless and is in financial difficulty because of faithfully giving to God, then the church leaders offer to help those who are having this kind of financial difficulty. This offer is to help those who are weak take a step of faith to be obedient in this area of discipleship. There is no risk for the pastor or church leadership because GOD ALWAYS KEEPS HIS PROMISE TO PROVIDE FOR ALL OF OUR NEEDS AND BLESS US WHEN WE ARE OBEDIENT! This approach has been used by hundreds of churches around the world and we have never heard of anyone asking the church to help them financially because God is faithful to His word.
5. How to approach this series:
 - a. Announce to your board that you are going to spend four weeks talking about the topic of stewardship and giving.
 - b. Your plan is to help those in the church who are not faithful givers become obedient in this area of discipleship. Churches that have adopted this type of plan, where they specifically challenge their members to be faithful to God in the matter of giving see their offering increase 30-200%. We have seen this in hundreds of churches in different parts of the world, especially in churches that would be considered very poor.
 - c. You feel that by doing this it will also discourage those who do faithfully give to the ministry of the church. Many pastors feel that by teaching on this subject they will upset those who give, but it is usually the opposite; those who give faithfully appreciate the pastor acknowledging the importance of this subject.
 - d. Go over the part that the church will help those who after 90 days of faithful giving cannot pay their bills or who are having financial difficulty. Emphasize that this will not happen because God will bless and take care of those who seek to become obedient in this area. It is important to not leave this part out of the series because it challenges people to prove that God is faithful and puts the leadership of the church standing behind the promises God makes to those who are obedient to Him in the area of stewardship and giving.
 - e. After going over this with the leadership of the church, announce to your church that you will deal with this subject for four weeks and at the end offer those who have not been regular in their giving to trust God the opportunity to trust God in this area of discipleship.
 - f. Then preach the four sermons and after the fourth give the challenge to give a certain percentage of income to the work of God. We suggest 10%, but leave this up to each

individual person, you may suggest to your congregation what you percentage you feel is best, but the idea is to have people settle on an amount and give for 90 days.

- g. After 90 days is over, have some of those who have for the first time given faithfully to God share how God has blessed them. Most pastors speak once a year on the topic of giving and stewardship.

Four Sermons on Giving

Treasure in Heaven: Perspective

Sermon 1 of 4

Introduction

What would you do if you won the lottery? How would you feel? What would you do with the money? If you look at the lives of those who win large amounts of money in the lottery, half of them change for the worse and half have no real change in how they live. Most people who play the lottery believe that winning a large amount of money will make them happier, more secure, able to help their families and have less worry and stress and life. The idea that money brings happiness is as old as mankind, but there are some obvious conclusions about this idea.

1. Since most people will never have large amounts of money, does this mean that most people will never experience happiness?
2. Many people who are rich seem to lead lives that are less fulfilled and happy than those who are poor.
3. Most Christians are not rich; does this mean that most Christians are not happy?

Jesus had much to say about money and happiness. In fact, Jesus spoke more about money and treasure than He did about any other subject. What Jesus has to say about our relationship to money and treasure shows us how committed we are to Him and the true condition of our heart.

Matthew 6:19-34

I. Jesus says that we will either store up treasure on earth or heaven.

1. He is talking about our perspective on life. What do we value, what motivates us, what principles do we live by?
2. He is talking about the choice we have on how we will view our relationship to money. Will we try to accumulate as much as we can and use it for ourselves or use what we have to accumulate treasure in heaven?
3. He is not saying it is wrong to be rich (1 Tim. 6:9). Some people become rich by their hard work or through circumstance, not because they were greedy or trying to become rich. (Prov. 10:22).
4. He is saying to not make it the goal of your life to become wealthy (Prov. 28:20).

Trying to become wealthy can:

1. Take your focus from heavenly values (Mt. 19:23-24).
2. Cause you to treat people like objects (Prov. 22:7).
3. Steal your time, energy and talents.

Questions:

- How much do you think about money?
- How often do you think about the things that money can give you?
- Do you think that you would be happier if you had more money?

II. You have two places you can lay up treasure: vs. 19-20

1. Heaven.
2. Earth.

Why should you lay up treasure in heaven?

1. It will be there for you.
2. It does not depend on people.
3. It will be guarded by Jesus.

Why shouldn't you lay up treasure on earth?

1. You may lose it.
2. You will lose it, when you die. Everything you own will one day end up in the dump.
3. People may take it from you. Rich people constantly worry about losing their money.

If you were rich, who would you trust?

1. Mt. 25:14-30. One man did nothing with his master's money.
2. Luke 16:1-13. Another man gave away his master's money.

Question: If you were rich, who would you trust with your money?

III. You can know where you are laying up your treasure. v. 21

1. Ask yourself these questions:
 - a. What do you think about in relation to money?
 - b. What do you do with the money you do have?
 - c. Do you envy those who have more money than you?
 - d. Do you have a problem with coveting, wanting what others have and you do not?
 - e. Are you generous?
 - f. Are you helpful to others?
 - g. Do you trust God to provide for your needs?
 - h. Are you content with what you have?

Question: What do these questions reveal about the condition of your heart?

IV. Your heart has room for only one master. V. 24 and 1 John 5:21

God made us so that our heart has room for only one master. Other things pull at your heart:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Money2. Power3. Family4. Sex5. Alcohol | } | Something will be your master! |
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- Jesus wants to be your only master.
- Paul said that he was a "slave to Christ" (Rom. 1:1, Phil. 1:1).
- Luke 17:10-We are unworthy slaves who have only done what we have been commanded. It is a privilege to be Jesus' slave and servant.
- Serving two masters for the Christian produces tension. Luke 18:23 is the story of the rich, young ruler who wanted to follow Jesus but loved his money more.
- Demas loved the world more than he loved Jesus and deserted Paul. 2 Tim. 4:10

Question: At this moment, does Jesus or someone or something else rule your heart?

V. You can be mastered by a love for money.

1. Luke 12:16-21 tells the story of a man who laid up treasure for himself. What good did it do him?
2. 1 Tim. 6:9 says those Christians who want to get rich fall into temptation and can fall into ruin and temptation.
3. Judas betrayed Jesus for money, and then regretted what he had done and killed himself.
Question: How much does the love of money have a hold on your heart?

VI. You will suffer from anxiety if you lay up treasure on earth. V. 25

If your focus in on eating, drinking, clothing and other things that money can provide, then you may end up worrying and suffering anxiety.

If your focus in on heavenly things you will be less likely to worry and suffer from anxiety. God will provide for your needs and provide contentment. 1 Tim. 6:8 Phil. 4:11

Question: How content are you with what God has provided?

VII. What does treasure in heaven look like?

1. Linked with rewards. Mt. 5:12, 46 6:1, 4 1 Cor. 3:14 Rev. 22:12
2. God rewards us for our faithful behavior.
3. We will have treasure in heaven waiting for us.
4. This treasure will be seen in the good works we have done for other people who will thank us for our ministry to them. Luke 16:9

VIII. How do we lay up treasure in heaven?

Example, Mt. 25:31-46.

1. Help the hungry.
2. Help those who thirst.
3. Help strangers.
4. Help those who have no clothes.
5. Help those in prison.

Question: What are you doing to lay up treasure in heaven? What will be waiting for you when you arrive in heaven?

IX. Conclusion.

1. What is your perspective on treasure and money?
2. Where are you laying up your treasure?
3. Who is your master?

The Story of Two Widows' Trust

Luke 21:1-4

Sermon 2 of 4

Introduction

One of the areas in the Christian life that is developed over time is the area of trust. Trust means to rely on the strength, integrity, intelligence or ability of someone else. In the case of a Christian, that means placing your trust in God. When we pray we trust that God hears us and will answer us according to His will and good pleasure. Yet there is another aspect to trust, and that is to act and behave in such a manner that shows that we trust God. To say that we trust God and then not act in a manner that displays that trust in action is the same as having faith without works. In Ps. 4:5 David writes, Offer the sacrifices of righteousness and trust in the Lord. And then in Ps.37:3 he writes, Trust in the Lord and do good. Trust with obedience, whether in doing good or in making sacrifice to the Lord, shows that our confidence and trust in God has become practical and observable to others.

One of the hardest areas in our lives to trust God is with our money. Money touches every area of our life and it is easy to think that our money belongs to us because we either earned it or it was given to us. What we do with our money, and how much we trust God to provide for us, is one of the clearest ways we can show how much we trust God.

Two Stories about Two Widows' and Their Trust in God

I. The Widow's Gift Luke 21:1-4

a. Two Kinds of People

1. The rich. Jesus is at the Temple in Jerusalem and sees the rich putting their gifts into the treasure.

Thoughts:

- a. The rich have no problem giving.
- b. The rich give out of their abundance.
- c. The rich use their giving many times to control others.

2. The poor widow. She is among the poorest of the poor in that culture, with no one to look after her.

Thoughts:

- a. She would be the last person we would think should be giving.
- b. Widows are supposed to have money given to them, not to give themselves. James 1:27

b. Two kinds of Giving.

1. The rich. They gave out of their surplus, which cost them nothing but made them look good. The rich do not have to sacrifice when they give.
2. The poor widow. She gave out of her poverty, giving what she needed to live on.

Question: Which kind of giving do you think God honors, those who give out of their abundance or those who give out of their poverty? Or both?

c. Two types of Faith.

1. The rich. The rich do not need faith when they give; they have plenty of money left to live on.
2. The poor widow. The poor exercise faith and trust in God when they give, having no other resources to depend on.

Question: Does God care about how much you give or the attitude of your heart?

II. The Excuses the Widow could have used to not give.

- a. There was no need for her to give since the rich were there and giving much more than she could give.
- b. She did not have much money; the rich should be helping her.
- c. She was a widow who probably had children and could not spare any of the money she did have. She needed to take care of her own family first.
- d. The Temple did not need her money; it was supported by many other people. Those people who worked at the Temple had good jobs and did not need her money.
- e. She had no “extra” money, would God expect her to give everything she had?

Question: Is it reasonable for God to ask poor people to give?

III. What the Widow did have.

- a. She did have a little money to give. Everyone has something to give, no matter how small.
- b. She had faith in God; she had probably experienced God taking care of her in the past.
- c. She obeyed-willing to risk everything on God.

Questions:

- How has your faith in God shown itself in how you give?
- How has God taken care of you when you have given all that you have?
- What is the worst that can happen when we risk things for God?

IV. The Widow's Faith 1 Kings 17:7-16

- a. She had very little resources. Some flour and a little oil.
- b. She was in a very bad situation; death was literally at her door.
- c. She did have faith to obey what Elijah told her to do.
- d. God supplied her need when she obeyed God and used up the last of her resources.

Questions:

- Do you believe that God will provide for you if you are down to your last dollar?
- Would you give that dollar to someone else who was also in desperate need?

V. Key Ideas:

- a. All believers need to invest in the kingdom of God through their gifts. God does not need your money, but He has chosen to use our gifts to further His kingdom on earth through the church.
- b. All believers must give to God from what they have, no matter how little that may be. Some will give more, some will give less, but all Christians have an obligation to give to the work of God.
- c. No gift is too little or insignificant. God can use and multiply even the smallest gift or offering. The boy gave Jesus his fish and loaves so Jesus could bless thousands.

- d. Our motivation is loving obedience not personal blessing, though that might happen when we give. We give because that is what Jesus wants, and because we love Him we will give freely not out of guilt or compulsion. The fact that He may choose to bless us personally because we give (2 Cor. 9:9-10).
- e. Disobedience to God, in any area of life, is dangerous. Mt. 25:31-46 Those who say that they knew Jesus but did not do good works in His name, giving of themselves to those in need, are cast into outer darkness.

Question: Will you trust God to use your gifts to further His work or will you be like the rich young man who would not follow Jesus because he loved his money more than Christ? Luke 18:23

The Church That Gave: No Excuses

2 Corinthians 8

Sermon 3 of 4

Introduction

During the time of Jesus' ministry He was very popular, especially during that first year. People followed Him wherever He went to hear Him preach and teach and see Him do miraculous works. Many became His followers during this time, only to abandon Him later as His teaching grew more exacting. In the book of Luke, in chapter 9:57-62, Jesus calls out to one of these followers and says, Follow me! The man then says that he needs to first go home and bury his father, which seems like a reasonable request. But Jesus answers and says that the man needs to follow Jesus, and not be distracted by anything. Another person says that he too is willing to follow Jesus, but first needs to say goodbye to his family. Jesus recognizes this for what it is, an excuse, and again says that if you are going to follow Him you must not look back.

Excuses are just that, excuses. People use excuses as reasons to not do what they know is right. This is true not only in the spiritual realm, but in every area of life. You don't want to go to work today; you give the excuse that you are tired and need rest. You don't want to be with your family, you give the excuse that you need to work. You don't want to go to church, you give the excuse you are tired from too much work, and on and on. Christians have many excuses when it comes to why they do not give to the work of the church. In the end, as we will see, there really aren't any excuses that we can use to avoid the responsibility we have to give to the work of God.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Nine Observations from These Verses about Giving

1. God gave them grace because they were obedient in giving. V. 1

Thoughts:

- a. God blesses those who are obedient; their obedience is shown in the following verses in how willing they were to give.
- b. God's grace made them think of others first. James 4:6
- c. Grace is the God given ability to do things we cannot do on our own.

God saved us with grace because we could not save ourselves, He gives us grace to live because we cannot live the Christian life in our own strength.

Heb. 4:16 God gives grace to those who come to Him in prayer.

Questions:

- How have you experienced the grace of God in giving?
- Do you view the opportunity to give a duty or a privilege?

2. Though they were persecuted and had their own problems they were willing to give to others. V. 2

Thoughts:

- a. They could have used the excuse that they could not give because they had their own problems. Looking at our own problems can keep us from ministering to others.

- b. They could have used the excuse that they did not have any extra to give. This would seem like the perfect reason not to give, but having faith in God can overcome this seemingly valid reason not to give.
- c. They could have used these excuses; if we do collect the money, how do we get it to Jerusalem? Do we have people we can trust to carry it there? Will it really make any difference? What if it gets there too late? What if we need money in the future for ourselves or some other worthy cause?

Question: What excuses have you used to avoid your responsibility to give to the work of God?

3. They were poor, someone should be helping them. V. 2

Thoughts:

- a. Who will help us? God will meet your need in His own way; the need now is to help the church in Jerusalem.
- b. How can poor people help anyone? Many people giving a little creates much that God can use.
- c. We are told to think of the needs of others as well as our own. Phil 2:3-4

Questions:

- Do you ever think that you are too poor or have too many obligations to give to help others in need?
- Do you believe God can take care of you if you give to help others?

4. Though they were poor, they were generous in their giving. V. 2-3

Thoughts:

- a. They did not look at how much money they had, they looked at how great the need was.
- b. They showed that they had compassion for others, just as Jesus did. Mt. 9:36

Questions:

- Do you ever spontaneously give more than you had planned?
- What would have to happen for you to give more than usual?

5. They were not only generous, they gave beyond their ability. V. 3

Thoughts:

- a. This showed their faith in God that they could give more than they could “reasonably” afford.
- b. This showed their giving was sacrificial; they were giving money they would need to use for other things, like their own living expenses.
- c. This showed they were ready to give to a need that was urgent and time sensitive. Mt. 6:3 implies we should sometimes give spontaneously.

Question: How is your faith in God shown in your giving?

6. They gave freely. V. 3 “of their own accord”.

Thoughts:

- a. Paul did not need to command them to give.
- b. Paul did not need to guilt or shame them to give. This sometimes happens in churches or religious organizations.

- c. People should give to God freely, not because they feel an obligation or duty to do so.

Questions:

- Do you ever feel that if you do not give God will be mad at you?
- Do you feel that giving should be a private decision left up to each believer?

7. They were so eager to give; they begged Paul for the opportunity to help another church. v. 4

Thoughts:

- a. They heard about the need.
- b. They contacted Paul to help meet the need.
- c. They gave to the need.
- d. This is a good model to follow when thinking about giving to the needs of others.

Question: Do you have a plan or system on when you give, how much you give or do you give when you feel like it and give whatever amount you desire at the time you give?

8. They gave to people they did not even know!

Thoughts:

- a. They did not know anyone in this church (Jerusalem).
- b. The Christians there were mostly of Jewish background, the Macedonians were Gentiles.
- c. They might never have the opportunity to meet those they were helping.

Question: Do you feel compassion for other Christians when they are in need and would you give to them if the need was presented to you?

9. The reason they gave generously was they had first given themselves to God. v. 5

Thoughts:

- a. Without being committed to God you will never enjoy giving.
- b. Without being committed to God you will view your money as your own.
See Matthew 6:21
- c. Without being committed to God you will miss the blessing of giving to others.

Questions:

- Have you given yourself to God?
- If so, how has this commitment shown itself in your life?
- If not, why have you held yourself back from giving yourself to God?

Conclusion.

Giving is the product of a life given to God. Those who give themselves to God find that God gives them the grace and ability to be faithful in this area of the Christian life. The question is not, how much or how often are you giving to the work of God, but rather, have you given your life to God and experienced the grace He gives to those who follow Him completely.

A Plan to Give: Blessing

2 Corinthians 9

Sermon 4 of 4

Introduction

We have spent three weeks looking at different aspects of giving. We spent time considering where we are gathering treasure. We can lay up treasure on earth or we can lay up treasure in heaven. We can let money be our master or we can choose to let Jesus be our master. We next looked at two stories where poor widows chose to trust in God and give either all they had to live on or trust that God would provide for their needs when all hope was gone. We explored what it would like to trust in God with our giving, how God will provide for us when we obey Him in this matter of giving. Last week we saw how a poor, persecuted church in Macedonia, Greece, eagerly took up an offering to help another church that was suffering much worse than they were. Though they did not know anyone in the church in Jerusalem, they sacrificed to give what they could to help out other Christians. The Macedonian church serves as an example of how to give; abundantly, sacrificially and freely. Today, our final subject will be how to develop a plan to give and how our giving results in blessing.

Let's consider nine principles from 2 Cor. 9

I. Giving results in personal blessing. v.6

Thoughts:

- a. Paul has just instructed the Corinthians to prepare the offering before he arrives at the church.
- b. He tells them that if they give little, they will be blessed little (the word bountifully means blessing).
- c. He also tells them that if they give with blessing (meaning giving abundantly) they will reap blessing.
- d. Blessing can be either spiritual blessing realized in the heart and spirit or physical blessing realized in God providing more than you need in terms of your needs. Rom. 15:29 Heb. 6:7 1 Peter 3:9 all refer to spiritual blessing we receive from God.

Questions:

- What kind of blessing do you want from God? Physical or spiritual? Or both?
- Which do you think will have the most impact on your life for good?

Point: While God may choose to grant to us physical blessings in terms of health and finance, He does not always do this. He does, however, always grant spiritual blessing when we are obedient.

II. Our giving should be according to a plan. v. 7

Thoughts:

- a. Paul says that each should give to this offering as he "has purposed in his heart". Some may give more, some may give less. Notice he does not say that they have the option of not giving. Let "each one" means everyone.

- b. Though this offering was for a specific purpose (to help the church at Jerusalem) the principle of having a plan on how you give is an obvious application of this verse. Whether you want to give 5%, 10% or 15% or some other figure, Paul encourages them to give something.

Question: What is your current pattern of giving? If you do not have a plan, what has been your reason?

III. Our giving should not be based on compulsion or guilt. v. 7

Thoughts:

- a. Many people give because they feel they have to, not because they want to. No one can make another give, Paul does not want them to give because they feel he is making them give. Nor does he want them to give if they really don't want to.
- b. Giving when you don't want to can cause bitterness and resentment towards God and towards people. God does not force us to act, if we feel He will be angry at us unless we give, we miss the fact that only wants the best for us, and in this case the best for us is that we experience His blessing when we give.

Questions:

- Do you or have you ever given because you felt you had to, either by the church or by God?
- How did this make you feel?
- How did you get past that feeling, or have you?

IV. Our giving should be done cheerfully. v. 7

Thoughts:

- a. Paul says God loves a cheerful giver. Does this mean He does not love those who do not give cheerfully? Of course not. It does mean, however, that God has a special place in His heart for those who chose to be obedient in the area of giving.
- b. Giving cheerfully shows that we have surrendered this area of our life to God and trust Him to provide for all of our needs. Like many things, cheerfulness can be contagious. If you give cheerfully, it is an encouragement for others to follow your example.

Question: Do you have a smile on your face when you give? Or a frown?

V. God is able to help you be obedient in this area. v. 8

Thoughts:

- a. Money touches every areas of our life. We need it to survive in this world. If we can be obedient in this area, we will probably be obedient in other areas of life as well. If you think you cannot give, God is able to help you trust Him and develop the habit of consistent giving.
- b. Paul uses the word "grace" to describe how God will help the Corinthians give to this offering. Grace is something God gives us to be able to do things we cannot do in our own strength or ability. We could not save ourselves; God did that for us in sending Jesus to die for our sins (Eph. 2:8, 9). Similarly, we need God to help us in every area of our life to live for Him, especially in terms of giving. Jesus knows how hard it is for money to be our master (Mt. 6:24).

Question: Do you believe God is able to help you become a consistent, faithful giver to His work in this world?

VI. Your giving accomplishes good for others. v. 12

Thoughts:

- a. God does not need your money. It does Him no good, money does not make Him happy (though your giving makes Him happy and pleased, see Heb. 13:16) and He has no needs that money can meet.
- b. Other people, however, benefit from our giving. The money Paul was collecting was going to poor, suffering Christians. The money you give goes to help others learn more about Jesus and help the lost become saved. You may say that your money goes to buildings, electricity and payroll, but all of these things can be used to minister to people.

Question: When you give, do you think about the people your gifts are helping and pray for them?

VII. God will multiply your gift. v. 10

Thoughts:

- a. Paul uses the words “multiply” and “increase” and “harvest” to indicate that the gift the Corinthians were collecting would be increased by God’s blessing, just as Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed the multitude.
- b. Paul tells them that their gift will bring results that would result in “righteousness”. This means that both the Corinthians and the believers in Jerusalem would have their lives blessed by God.

Question: When you give, do you expect that God will multiply the effect of your gift in the lives of others?

VIII. Your giving will result in personal blessing. v. 11

Thoughts:

- a. Paul says that by giving they would be enriched in “everything”. What does this mean? It certainly means that God would bestow His blessing on their hearts and spirits; it may also mean that God will bless them physically by providing more than they need. Keep in mind that Paul says we should be content with whatever we have and we should not give in order to increase our own monetary wealth or circumstance. 1 Tim. 6:8
- b. Those who give with the idea that they are going to get rich fall into the temptation Paul wrote about in 1 Tim. 6:9.

Question: If you have given faithfully to God, how have you experienced His blessing in your life? If not, how badly do you want to experience God’s blessing in your life?

IX. Your giving will make you friends with others. v. 13-14

Thoughts:

- a. By giving to others you establish a special relationship with them. Paul says that the Jerusalem church will both “yearn” and pray for the Corinthian church because of their generosity. Though most Christians give to their church first, it is appropriate to give to

specific individuals that you know who are having difficulty. This giving should not be done anonymously, though at times God may direct you to help others without their knowledge of who gave to them.

- b. Jesus says in Luke 16:9 that we can make friends by how we use our money. He indicates that when we get to heaven they will thank us for our help.

Questions:

- Have you ever helped someone financially?
- How did God bless you for this act?
- What was the response of those you helped?

Conclusion:

We want to help you be obedient in this area of your Christian life. We want to help you develop faith and trust in God. If you have never developed the discipline of cheerfully giving to God, why not begin today. We understand for some of you this will be difficult, but we believe that God can help give you grace in this area of obedience. Why not try this? Determine to give a certain percentage of your income for the next 90 days. If God does not meet your needs, if God does not give you enough to live on, you come and talk to us, and we will help you financially meet those needs. But you know what? We believe that God will bless your obedience and meet all your needs. What do you have to lose?