

Thank you, Iota Cocione!
Speaker for today

Business Meeting Postponed

Giving

“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”
Matthew 6:21

No July Birthdays

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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Christian Giving

By Tim Dooley

One of the great banes of preaching is to have to address topics that society, and many in the pew, have no desire to hear, and of which many are simply intolerant. The sad truth is, many preachers and elderships have acquiesced to the worldly mindset in order to keep the numbers up and the contributions coming in. A recent survey of denominational preachers noted size of the congregation, amount of contributions, and size of ministerial staff as the leading indicators of success in ministry. Sadly many in the Lord's church are today operating on the same premises.

To that end many have either stopped preaching on, or changed their views on, issues like divorce and remarriage, social drinking, modesty, and yes, even giving. Why? Because people don't want to hear it! They don't want you meddling in their "personal lives." But preaching and teaching the truth is going to "meddle" because God demands "personal" changes in our lives (see the definition of repentance) in order to be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). With that in mind allow me to go to a little "meddling."

In 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 Paul writes, *“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”* Simply stated, easily understood, and filled with the power of inspiration. So why is it that so many Christians fail to live up to this biblical text? I heard a missionary say recently, “The money is out there in the brotherhood, we just have to get it out of their pockets.” Sad indeed that so many good works are hindered because of greed, worldliness and biblical unfaithfulness.

Consider with me the following points:

We Are Stewards, Not Owners. In Matthew 25:14-30 Jesus tells a story of a man who delivers his own wealth to his servants, and when he returned those servants were called to give an account of

their stewardship. Everything we have is thanks to the blessings of God. 1 Timothy 6:7 tells us, *“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”* Someone says, “Well, I worked hard for everything I have, God hasn’t given me anything.” People all over the world work just as hard as we do and do not have the blessings we have. Conversely, there are people all over the world who do not lift so much as a finger compared to us who have much more. God gave us a brain, a strong back, and opportunities. What we have we have because of Him! Consider also that Matthew 25 places our eternal destiny squarely on this issue! Martin Luther once said, “I have tried to keep things in my hands and lost them all, but what I have given into God’s hands I still possess.”

We Are Commanded, Not Encouraged. Many who want to dilute the word of God in order to make it more “palatable,” or “appealing,” want to hear God use words like encourage, suggest, or recommend. The problem with this is God requires certain things of us in order for us to reap eternal benefits. Passages like Matthew 25, Hebrews 13:16, and 2 Corinthians 9:6–7 all make certain demands. “But I live in the land of the free,” shouts the American modernist/pluralist. Yes we do and God allows all us the freedom to choose to do good, or not. To those who choose to not do good it is sin (James 4:17).

We Are to Be Christ-Like, Not World-Like. Christians are supposed to be different than the rest of the world, not conformed to it (Romans 12:1–2). We are to let our light shine before the men of this world (Matthew 5:16). God predestined His children to be changed into the like image of the Son (Romans 8:9). But being like the world will cause many Christians-in-name-only to be lost for eternity. *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever”* (1 John 2:15–17). What example did Jesus leave us in regards to this issue (1 Peter 2:21)? *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich”* (2 Corinthians 8:9).

So how is our giving to the Lord and His work? Is there more we can do? Do we need to spend some time reflecting on how God has blessed us and how we are using those blessings? Do we need to take a long hard look at our life and our budget? Do we have a budget? Someone once said, “If you give what you do not need, it isn’t giving.” And remember God said, *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Matthew 6:21).

Generous

By Wilson Adams

People who aren’t generous usually think, “When I have more, I’ll give more.” Not really.

Generosity is not about what we have or don’t have. **Generosity is about our heart.** I’ve known poor people who were stingy and I’ve known poor people who gave sacrificially. I’ve known rich people who changed lives with their generosity, and rich people who squeeze every penny. **Generosity is about... our heart.**

Statistically and reality: if we had more money, chances are we wouldn’t give more, but less. Americans who made

- less than \$25,000 annually gave away 7.7% of their income
- between \$25,000-\$50,000 gave away 4.6%
- between \$50,000 and \$75,000 gave away 3.5%
- between \$75,000 and \$100,000 gave away 3%

Giving doesn’t go up the more we make; it goes down. Why? People who make more, spend more -they find more stuff to buy. They don’t give more when they make more because it was never about the amount they made. **It was always about their hearts.**

Jesus told a story that illustrates: something about a rich man and more stuff and building more barns. More money doesn’t change who we are, it just reveals who we are. If we want to be generous when we have more, be generous when we have less. Jesus saw that, too. He watched a poor widow give with a grateful heart. The disciples didn’t notice her, but He did.

Bless her heart (literally). I know some just like her.