

Christian Stewardship

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Printed in Canada by
Bethel Baptist Print Ministry
4212 Campbell St. N.
London, ON. N6P 1A6
Phone: 519-652-2619
www.bethelbaptist.ca

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THE SECRET TO GOD'S BLESSINGS

Text: John 6:1-13

Introduction: The miracle of the feeding of 5000 appears in all four gospels. This is the only miracle that appears that way. Because this is so, we might be able to say that it was a universal miracle, in that it was given to all four Gospel writers who wrote to all people groups. It could also be said that all should universally appreciate the truth of this miracle. This miracle shows the way God blesses.

Nothing is more comforting and re-assuring to the child of God than to have God's blessings. This study gives us seven principles involving the way that God blesses us, and it also tells us how we can receive those blessings... May we be helped as we study these Principles.

I. THE MIRACLE OF THE BLESSING. (Vv. 1-9)

Jesus is going to do a creation miracle to demonstrate His power over His creation. We must keep in mind, that there are two different kinds of miracles. There is the *providential miracle* and the *creation miracle*.

The providential miracle is the miracle that involves God's work of providence, with the *emphasis* being on His providence. The word providence comes from two Latin words, *pro* meaning "before", and *video* meaning, "to see". Providence means that God within His Omniscience "sees before". One will notice God's providence is also at work even when a creation miracle is taking place, such as noted in verse 6 when he said, "for he himself knew what he would do". An example of a miracle of providence would involve someone praying for a need to be met, and then God touching someone's heart to meet that need.

A *creation miracle* is different in that it involves a miracle that uses God's creation powers. The turning of the

water into wine would be an example of this kind of miracle. Here, the feeding of the 5000 is another example.

The miracle being described here is that of the Lord meeting a need. The people are very hungry, but have no means of satisfying their appetites.

May we now notice these seven principles concerning the way that God blesses.

A. First Principle: God Shows The Greatness Of The Blessing In Direct Proportion To The Need. (Vv. 1-7).

In God's economy one will discover that greater the need, the greater the blessing. He knows just what we need, and He knows when we are in need. In verse six, we are told that Jesus knew what He was going to do about the situation. In verse five, Jesus asked Philip concerning their need, not for information for He knew their need but to prove or test Philip.

B. Second Principle: God Shows That He Can Take What We Have And Make A Blessing. (Vv. 8-9).

The little lad had just a little lunch, but "little is much when God is in it". It may help us if we remember:

- 1. God Owns Everything**
- 2. God Has Given You Something**
- 3. That Makes You A Steward**
- 4. You Must Give Account Of Your Stewardship**

Had the little lad been selfish with what he had, and had he been unwilling to share, he would have missed the blessing of seeing so many fed because of his generosity. I feel that the Lord would have taken care of the need in some other manner, had the boy not been willing to give, but the lad would have forever missed the blessing. He would have been a poor steward of what God had blessed

Him with.

II. THE MANNER OF THE BLESSING (Vv. 10-12).

In this section, we find that the Lord initiated the blessing, but the Lord called upon the disciples for the purpose of involving them in carrying out the blessing.

This should remind us that everything that we are capable of doing is because of His provisions. The blessings came to the 5000 because first there was obedience.

A. Third Principle: To Receive God's Blessings There Must Be Obedience To God.

1. Notice How Foolish The Command Must Have Seemed.

They were told to sit down for a meal when they seemed not to have anything to eat. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". *Hopefully* as they were sitting down they were exercising a kind of faith that is described in Hebrews 11:1. They had already witnessed his miracles as noted in verse 2. Yet, even with the previous miracles having already taken place, they may still be doubtful of Jesus doing anything for them at this sitting. *We all are so prone to forget the past blessings of the Lord.*

2. Notice How Faithless The Crowd Must Have Been.

When the Lord said, "Make the men sit down", He may have said that because of a natural reluctance on the part of the great multitude to sit down to eat when there seemed to be nothing to eat. Let us think about that for a moment.

This is the way that it is when there is a real need, *before* God blesses. Everything seems so impossible, and so hopeless. That is exactly the way that it is until the Lord brings the *blessing*.

To have the blessings of God come upon you, it will always be in obedience, and also after believing God's Word. For our church to receive the blessing, we must preface that blessing with sound Bible teaching, and preaching, knowing that *"faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God..."*

B. Fourth Principle: *How much of a blessing that you receive is based upon your desire. (V.11).*

The Word of God reminds us that we have not because we ask not. I do not believe that when Jesus was feeding the 5000 that He only gave them a taste. A taste would have been wonderful with them being hungry, but having all that they wanted would have been much better. That was exactly the case when this miracle took place. They were able to have all that they wanted.

This fourth principle is greatly illustrated in 2 Kings 4:1-7. Also, the principle of God using what you have (principle two) is illustrated in this Old Testament passage. A mother who had two sons, lost her husband to death, cries to the man of God for help. He asked her what did she have in the house. She told him nothing but a pot of oil. He said go to all thy neighbors and borrow empty vessels making sure that you do not borrow just a few. The prophet knew that she had a great need and wanted her to be blessed according to that need (principle one).

When she got all the vessels inside and shut her door, pouring the oil into the vessels, she continued to do so until the last vessel was full. In other words, she had all the oil that she wanted. According to this fourth principle that I have shared with you, she was able to have what she desired. *God's supply was just as large as the women's faith and obedience was.*

C. Fifth Principle: *God does not want the blessings taken for granted.* (V. 12).

When the instructions were given that they were to gather all that remained, he wanted them to not take the added blessings for granted. If you get more than you think that you need, that only means that you needed more than you thought, or that God wants you to be a blessing to someone else with the extra. When you establish in your own heart the need, and pray to God for the provisions to be met, and then God does more than you expected, then very carefully pray for further instructions from the Lord as to how the extra should be used.

III. THE MAGNITUDE OF THE BLESSING.
(Vv. 13,14)

The blessing proved to be more than enough to meet the need. That is the way the Lord blesses. Thinking back to verse number nine, it reads, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" In this verse, the numerical combination of each ingredient is of great significance. As I think of the number of loaves being five, I am reminded that number five once again is the grace number and number two is the number for witness. The fish also has been a symbol for the Gospel witness. It was as though the Lord was communicating and showing forth His grace to the hungry multitudes, witnessed by all. To me it was no accident that the numbers add up this way. Speaking of "adding up", the addition of five plus two equals seven, which is a perfect or complete number, showing that the Lord could take a big problem and bring about a perfect solution. When God met all of their needs and then provided extra, He wanted them to share with others what He had provided. This brings us to our sixth principle.

A. Sixth Principle: *God wants the blessings to be Shared and continued.* (V. 13).

The whole concept of Christianity requires that there is an ongoing sharing mentality. This is the reason that we are told, "Give and it shall be given". *For the Lord's work to be perpetuated, there must be the constant surrender of what we have so that He can make it more or bigger.*

The little lad surrendered his little lunch, and people are still talking about it!

B. Seventh Principle: *When God blesses, Truth is authenticated.* (V. 14).

"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world."

A miracle of God is an opportunity for His power to be manifested. God works miracles through His people to show Himself strong.

Conclusion: As previously mentioned, this miracle appears in all four Gospels as a testimony to its importance. I trust that it has challenged us to trust God even more. Remember, "Little is much when God is in it". Also, "*Remember that much is much when God is in it*".

DO YOU WANT TO BE REALLY RICH?

TEXT: 1 Timothy 6:1-23

INTRODUCTION: Paul is warning the early Christians that they need to learn contentment. Even if they are slaves and think that they have nothing, he wants them to know that true riches come from the Lord. If you have the Lord, and He has you, you have everything.

Paul is showing Timothy that pride which comes either from riches or from the desire for the same can cause much heartache. I want to ask you, “Do you really want to be rich?” and if so do you understand what true riches are. This lesson will help you if you let it...

I. THE COVETING OF RICHES. (Vv. 1-9).

Money buys things, but I am afraid that money also buys people. There is a power in money that allows the Lord to call money unrighteous mammon. To personify money this way, giving it life like characteristics, shows just how powerful and controlling money can be. The improper love for money begins with discontentment.

In Paul’s day, the slaves were becoming discontent and it was even affecting the Christian slaves. This does not mean that slavery was the ideal, or to even be desired, but it was during Paul’s day a cultural accepted fact. Paul is telling them not to envy their masters and not to be jealous of their masters, while robbing them of the honor that was theirs. In our case, by way of application, we can become envious of those around us who have more than we have.

A. Coveting Starts With A Strong Desire. (Vv. 1-8).

We must be careful that our desires and passions do not rule us. I know people who will take jobs that take them out of Church so that they can have the things that they want. In a coarser way, I know of people who have murdered to

get what they want.

1. A desire to be great. (Vv. 1-3).

Desiring greatness when it absolutely does not involve violating Biblical principles is O.K. But when you have to hurt and destroy others to achieve greatness that is terribly wrong. If you must lie or become dishonest to achieve greatness, then you have not become great at all. In the eyes of God, you have become even smaller.

2. A desire for base gain. (Vv. 4-8).

Never should a Christian be motivated by a desire for wealth or things. There should be a contentment that far exceeds this kind of desire. It is honorable to desire things to provide for those whom you love, or to support the minister of the church, or to help those who are in need; but one should not desire things to impress others, or to control others. You have heard the saying, that “People buy things that they can’t afford, that they don’t even want, to impress people that they don’t even like.” This is not the proper use of wealth.

B. COVETING STOPS WITH A SORROWFUL DESTRUCTION. (V. 9).

Our text says, “they that will be rich fall...” There is no better way to describe the foolish pursuit of riches than this. The rich who selfishly aspire for carnal greatness and riches will fall. Their failure will be great. It may not be detected in this life, but every person has eternity to deal with. The rich man in hell did not even have a drop of water to cool his parched tongue.

1. The coveter has a disturbing path. (V. 9a).

Snares will be in the path of the covetous. One who has a strong desire for wealth will even covet other things. I have personally seen men use their wealth to attract women to their hurt. His misery will far exceed his joy from fulfilling his passions.

2. The coveter has a destructive path. (V. 9b.).

The Scriptures tell us in our text that, “they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” This speaks of the sure destruction that comes to the wicked rich person. The path did not seem to start out this way. It may have seemed very innocent at first, but led otherwise...

II. THE CASUALTY OF RICHES. (Vv. 10-16).

These verses show how the love of money can be a casualty or a liability rather than an asset.

A. THE SORROWS OF THE CASUALTY. (V. 10).

Our text tells us “they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Any reliance on anything other than the Lord will involve erring from the faith. When men trust their own abilities more than the Lord, then they are erring from the faith. If they trust their bank account or their properties more than the Lord, they are erring from the faith. The list could continue on, in that anything that you place your trust in other than the Lord is to err.

1. It begins with a love of money. (V. 10a.).

Please notice that our Scripture does not tell us that money is the root of all evil, but instead, “the love of money is the root of all evil”. Money is a very necessary commodity that we must have. But it should never have us. Satan will give you the illusion that if you have money then you have everything. Nothing could be further from the truth. If you only have money, then you really have nothing.

2. It ends with a life of misery. (V. 10b.).

Those who acquire money for base gain are usually very greedy people. When they are like this, they do not usually

give more, they just want more. Christians are those who know that their blessings come from the Lord, and their giving is in that spirit. They recognize that their money blessings are an opportunity to do more for the Lord.

**B. THE SAFEGUARDS AGAINST THE CASUALTY.
(Vv. 11-16).**

There are safeguards against money failures. It involves three major things, Fleeing, Following, and Fighting.

1. The safeguard of fleeing. (V. 11a).

One should flee the subtle temptation of going after money. I have seen people who struggled with their finances and asked God for help. He helped them get what they needed and often so much more, and yet they failed to share what God gave them by giving it back into the Lord's work. With the passing of time these kinds of people become more greedy and removed from the Lord's work. They also become more miserable.

2. The safeguard of following. (V. 11b.).

There are six wonderful things to follow after as listed in our text:

- a. follow after righteousness
- b. follow after godliness
- c. follow after faith
- d. follow after love
- e. follow after patience
- f. follow after meekness

3.The safeguard of fighting. (Vv. 12-16).

There is no greater protection against lusting after riches than *fighting the good fight of faith*. If you stay in the faith fight, riches and things will not distract you. When you put Him first, all of those things will be added unto you, so says the Gospel of Matthew.

III. THE COMMUNICATING OF RICHES.

(Vv. 17-21).

When one communicates, he makes something known. There is a kind of riches that Paul says should be distributed and communicated. The riches mentioned in this sense are the greatest riches of all. It is being rich in good works. May we make known to others our good works.

A. COMMUNICATE THE RICHES THAT COME FROM GOD.

That which has the greatest value comes from God. *Every good gift and every perfect gift comes from above...* (James 1:17). If you claim all that God has for you, you will have all that you need. You then share what God has given you with others. Kindness is such a gift. Being a helper to those who need it is such a gift. Working in the nursery is such a gift. Singing in the choir is a means of communicating the riches of good works. Teaching a Sunday school class is such a gift. The list can go on. Just do as Jesus would do...

1. Real riches come from God. (V.17).

Satan will give you that which is counterfeit. He will let you have things to the extent that the things will have you. But if you seek first the kingdom of God, then all these things will be given unto you.

2. Revealing riches communicate our God. (V. 18).

When God enriches you with true riches, you then can share those riches with others and you are then communicating the heart of God.

B. COMMUNICATING THE RICHES THAT COUNT FOR GOOD. (VV. 19-21).

When you are sharing the true riches that God blesses you with, you will be laying those kind of treasures in

heaven.

1. By developing a good foundation. (V. 19).

This speaks of the judgment seat of Christ. It is there that the rewards of practicing good stewardship will come into effect.

2. By declaring a great faith. (Vv. 20-21).

We do this by the proper use of the true riches that God has blessed us with.

Conclusion: The Word of God gives us the true definition of real riches. If you learn what God values, then you will know what true riches are.

IT IS BETTER NOT TO ROB GOD

Malachi 3:6-12

Introduction: The question is asked in Malachi chapter 3, “Will a man rob God?” I could understand a “yes” answer to this question if it was being asked to a lost man, but I cannot understand why a saved man would even think about robbing God. Have you thought lately about all the good things that God has done for you? Have you thought about the way that He gave Himself on the cross to save you, and all the blessings that He permits you to have on an ongoing basis? Yet, there are saved people in this church today who either have or may presently be robbing God.

From this most interesting text, I can prove from the Scriptures that it is far better not to rob God. If you really love God, as you should, why would you ever want to steal from God? Would you steal from your own mother; would you steal from the bank that you do business with? Would you go next door to your neighbor’s house, and steal the gas out of his car. Even with Gas being as expensive as it is, I can’t imagine you going next door and stealing your neighbor’s gasoline. Yet some of the good people that I am referring to, would never think of stealing one cent from someone else, but have been guilty stealing from God. The Bible says that such a person is cursed with a curse. I say again, “It is better not to rob God”. In addressing this subject, and also while helping our church, I wish to consider two thoughts this morning. 1. The People’s Rebuke for Not Giving. 2. The Promised Result of Ones Giving.

I. THE PEOPLE’S REBUKE FOR NOT GIVING. (Vv. 6-9).

The Mosaic law had a sophisticated system of giving that was based on the tithe (10%); but tithing predated the law (Genesis 14:18-20). Contrary to what many believe, the tithe continued after the law on into the New Testament as these verses clearly show:

Matt. 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay **tithe** of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier [matters] of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Luke 11:42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye **tithe** mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Our text shows us that when the people failed to give God the entire tithe, they were in fact robbing Him. The giving of the tithe was a way of acknowledging that God owns everything; if you failed to pay your tithe, you were assessed a 20% penalty (Leviticus 5:14-16; 22:14; 27:31-32). God wanted His people to have an awareness of the severity of robbing God. The very fact that God uses the very strong word “rob” shows just how serious that it is to withhold the tithes and the offerings from the Lord.

A. The People Were Rebuked For Their Failure In Giving. (Vv.6-8).

When people do not give, there is a failure. It is a failure involving ones *faith*, and it is also a failure that involves *fear*. II Corinthians 8:1-3 shows us that you prove your love by your giving. It calls giving a *grace*. Notice, these verses:

II Cor. 8:1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

II Cor. 8:2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

II Cor. 8:3 For to [their] power, I bear record, yea, and beyond [their] power [they were] willing of themselves;

When there is not proper Biblical giving taking place, then that is an indication that something Spiritually is wrong. It indicates that one is failing to appropriate the grace that God has for all that we do, which includes the grace that is necessary for giving.

The Nation of Israel was in disobedience because they had departed or “gone away” from the ordinances of God. This disobedience was their failure, and it is the same for those of us who now live in the church age.

B. The People Were Rebuked For Their Faithlessness In Giving. (Cf. V. 10)

When giving is exercised with the proper motive, the giver is demonstrating his confidence in the Word of God. A person that believes the Bible to be the very Word of God will demonstrate it in a very practical way, and will also prove his love for the Lord as he gives. The nation of Israel had gone away, in unbelief from the ordinances of God, and God is seen in our text challenging them to return to Him and “prove” Him, as to His faithfulness, by their giving the tithes and the offerings.

C. The People Were Rebuked For Their Fruitlessness In Giving. (Cf. V.11).

There is a giving principle found in II Corinthians 9:6-8 that shows how God gives when we give. He likens our giving to a farmer planting his seeds. This passage of Scripture also shows the way God wants us to give. He wants us to give cheerfully, with a thankful heart.

II Cor. 9:6 But this [I say], He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

II Cor. 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let him give]; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

II Cor. 9:8 And God [is] able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all [things], may abound to every good work:

When unselfish giving is not taking place, then God is not pleased. God may give you a wonderful job with many benefits, but if you selfishly hold on to what He has blessed you with, He may let the devourer of your crops take the

blessings away. You may even lose the job, or much worse. People may criticize me for believing and saying this, but I recall several times when I withheld the tithes and the uncanniest things begin happening. You cannot convince me that it was not God chastening me for the purpose of teaching me to trust Him, always.

II. THE PROMISED RESULT OF ONES GIVING.

(Vv. 10-12).

This first section of this study shows the way that the Lord describes the Nation of Israel when they left the will of the Lord, and how it showed up in their lack of giving. Now, the Lord is showing what will happen if they would come back to Him. We can compare all of this to the local church. In doing so, we can show the blessings of obeying God, and trusting Him as well. As the song says we should “Trust and obey”. To trust Him, and to obey Him is the only way to enjoy the good results of the Lord. May we notice some of the real blessings that come from obeying Him, and trusting Him.

A. There Will Be Provisions For The Work Of The Lord. (10a.).

Malachi 3:10a. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house,

I know that all of Malachi was written in the economy of the Old Testament, yet God’s Word is to be interpreted, and applied in its entirety to all people in all time periods. The student of Scripture will discover that there are many applications for the local church that comes from the nation of Israel. The reason that this is true is that the principles that we learn from God do not change. This is because Truth never changes. The principles that apply to the nation of Israel almost always apply to the church, as well. This is true when considering the giving principles that are found in this study. The church does not compare exactly to the storehouse, but it does somewhat. Just as there had to be a

discipline for giving to maintain the operation of the Old Testament storehouse, there also must be a discipline of giving involving the New Testament Church. When faithful giving is taking place, the work of the Lord can continue to operate allowing the stewardship of giving to function as God intended. As your pastor, I must call your attention to the ongoing responsibilities of each of us who comprises this church. As the overseer, I must first be mindful of the responsibilities that we have in maintaining the ministries that God has entrusted us with, and then communicate to you our responsibility to each other, and to the Lord. Good, faithful giving ensures that we have the provisions to do the work that God has given us to do.

**B. There Will Be Prosperity From The Lord.
(V. 10b.)**

Malachi 3:10 Bring Ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

God is not stingy; He is the great giver. Everything that we enjoy within the realm of creation, He gave. He gave His only begotten Son. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, so says James 1:17. There is a principle that is found in the book of Ecclesiastes that says, Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Ecc. 11:1. This verse describes those who with great courage would set sail with their harvest of grain and go into the foreign countries and sell their goods, bringing their profit back with them. As a giving principle, one will cast his money to the work of the Lord, and God will bring it back in many different ways, as an increased blessing. This is one of the meanings of Give and it shall be given.

**C. There Will Be Protection From The Lord.
(V. 11)**

Malachi 3:11. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

This is a great verse of promise that gives comfort to the believer. Just knowing that you will have the protective blessings of God upon you as you give, should make you give with more boldness. Some will say, “I don’t give, but I never have any problems”. The Psalmist Asaph learned why this may be the case. It is because God’s goodness leads men to repentance. But Asaph said that such a person who is presuming on God is standing in slippery places. (Psalm 73). Malachi was talking to an agricultural people when he spoke, thus he used agricultural terms. God may let the washing machine or the automobile run longer, and you may be able to stay out of the doctor’s office as God rebukes your devourer.

**D. There Will Be Praises For Obeying The Lord.
(V. 12).**

When it is obvious that you have the blessings of the Lord upon you, people will know it. It will be a part of your testimony. Likewise, when God’s blessings are missing, people will also notice it. When people fail to give, there develops blight upon the church. The people become demoralized, and cannot pay their bills. As we move into this new church, we must assume our responsibilities to take care of what God has entrusted us with. I am convinced that if we have a giving, and a sacrificial spirit in supporting this good work, that God will bring many handfuls on purpose to help us do the work. We will see precious souls come into the church with the same good desire that you have to be good stewards. We are having some dear families who are joining our church who also desire to plug in and do the good work that we do. That is

God's way, and that is so wonderful! God Bless You!

Conclusion: There was a blessing, and there was a curse in our lesson today. I recall many years ago, that I fell on my face in a church in Greenville, S.C. and promised God that I was going to prove God, and be faithful in my giving. I did that over 32 years ago. I kept my word to God, but more than that, God kept His word to me. Today, thirty-two years later, I wonder if there is someone who will do as your pastor did. If so, you will never regret it. That will especially be so at the judgment seat of Christ.

GLORIOUS GIVING

2 Corinthians 9:1-15

INTRODUCTION: There is no giving that is so glorious as Godly giving. This section will show how such giving takes place when Paul reminds the church at Corinth that they had made a commitment nearly a year earlier, and had not followed through with it. In a very tactful, but also in a very firm way he is letting them know that much is at stake if they failed to be responsible to their word. **It would affect the reputation of the church, of Paul, and of Christ.**

Paul tells the church that he has three men coming to collect the gift, and then in effect tells them that there is no giving like Godly giving. Godly giving is *glorious giving*. In this study we will show, from our text, three things that characterizes the glorious giver.

I. THE GLORIOUS GIVER IS SENSITIVE TO THE NEED. (Vv. 1-5).

Paul wants to do right, and he wants the church at Corinth to do right. Paul is not questioning their willingness to do right; he just wants to make sure that they do not procrastinate doing what they had promised. The church at Jerusalem had needs and needed their needs met in a timely manner. Christians, having good character ought to be punctual in keeping their appointments and their promises, and this is what Paul is telling the church at Corinth.

A. He Is Sensitive With Purpose. (V.1).

“ministering to the saints”

The purpose that Paul had was to help the Church of Jerusalem. He was very sensitive to their needs, even though the church at Jerusalem could have been

undeserving, the entire concept of Grace giving allows one to give whether it is deserved or not.

1 John 3:17 SAYS, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

This passage is an indictment against having a hard heart against a brother who is in need. When a brother is in need, those who are blessed in having the goods of this world should be sensitive to that need. This principle deals with the importance of being sensitive to the needs of others. *Keep in mind that it is a principle, and that there are other principles in the word of God to be considered when helping others.* When it is obvious that someone is under the chastening hand of God, it is inappropriate to offset what God is doing by helping undo what God might be doing. *Being sensitive means that you are first sensitive to God.*

B. He Is Sensitive Without Procrastination. (V.4).

"ye may be ready"

Paul wanted the church at Corinth to have more than good intentions. Someone said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Serving God should have the same urgency as the clause, "Today is the day of salvation". The devil's today is tomorrow. We have a wonderful opportunity to serve God today, with no promise of tomorrow. As we support our missionaries, and as we conduct our local ministries, we need to do it now... and keep on doing it until the Lord comes, or until it is our time to go.

So many think that any thing that they do for the Lord will only be rewarded in heaven, and that there are no earthly enjoyed benefits. John Calvin knew different:

"This harvest should be understood both in terms of the spiritual reward of eternal life and also referring to the earthly blessings with which God honours the beneficent. Not only in heaven does God reward the well- doing of the godly, but in this world as well."

C. He Is Sensitive By Being Prepared. (V.4-5).

“ that the same might be ready”

In the case of what Paul is referring to in our text, he is exhorting the church to be ready for those collecting the money, and the gifts. He told them that if they were not prepared, that there would be a reason for their being ashamed for boasting of being ready when they actually were not.

Likewise, in regards to our mission giving, would it not be sad and shameful to tell our missionaries that we no longer can take care of them, because we have not properly prepared ourselves to be a blessing to them. Would it not be a poor testimony to the good name of this church to start dropping our missionaries? Thank God, we do not have to do this. Having studies like this, which prepare our hearts to give, is simply applying what Paul was referring to in this passage of Scripture.

II. THE GLORIOUS GIVER WILL SOW TO THE NEED. (Vv. 6-9).

When a farmer releases from his hand the precious seed, he does so with great anticipation of a bumper crop. For every one seed, which he drops, he expects much more in return. He understands in his humble way the law of sowing and reaping. This is a universal law that is necessary for healthy survival. In church giving, you do not need to fear releasing that which God has blessed you to hold. He will never bless the squeezed hand as he does the open hand. Bible Baptist Church has for fifty years been an open-handed church. May it continue to be so...

A. In Respect To The Law Of Sowing. (V. 6).

Paul takes the commonly understood law of sowing and reaping, and uses it to challenge the giving ministry of the church at Corinth. He wanted to impress upon their minds that they were investing in eternity. He wanted them to

know that the returns will far exceed the investment. There are at least four principles that relate to this law.

- **1. The Principle of Investment: *you reap only as you sow...***

If you fail to sow you obviously will not grow.

- **2. The Principle of Identity: *you reap only what you sow.***

This law applies to everything. If you plant hate then you will grow hatred. If you plant love you will reap love in return. The blessings or the curse will come back in like kind.

- **3. The Principle of Increase: *you reap more than you sow.***

This is the law that guarantees our survival. Churches across our land have closed their doors for the last time because they do not understand this law.

- **4. The Principle of Interval: *you reap after you sow.***

This is the law that demands faith and patience as you give.

B. In Respect To The Love Of Sowing. (V. 7).

Giving involves a Godly love. God loves a cheerful giver because He loves giving. Giving should never be done without one preparing his heart so that he can give in a loving way. When one gives this way he will find a joy that cannot be described. Notice the poet Carlyle describing a giving experience that took place when he was a little boy. Giving God's way can be even better than what Carlyle describes, and can be repeated over and over again.

The poet Carlyle said that when he was a boy, a beggar came to the door when his parents were gone. On a youthful impulse, he rushed to his room, broke his piggy bank and gave the beggar all

the money. He said that never before or since had he known such sheer happiness as came to him in that moment.

The more that one experiences the love of God, the more one will give in a cheerful manner. May every aspect of our giving be done in this manner.

**C. In Respect To The Latitude Of Sowing.
(Vv. 8,9).**

God determines the latitude of our giving. When I say latitude, I am referring to the blessed potential that comes when God blesses. Be mindful that every commitment ought to be made to God, and through God. Every giving commitment should take in consideration that God is the supplier, because "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:"

If every time that you give you have calculated it, and you feel that you are able to do it. Why not give and give when you are not able to calculate how you are going to do it? Why not get alone with God, and find out what God wants you to do? Have you ever given in such a way that you appear to be taking a risk, but then you are impressed by God that that is exactly what you should do I have found my greatest giving joy when I gave this way, believing that God will supply. I give this way from time to time just to make sure that I do not get to the place that I am afraid to trust God. God has not once let me down.

**III. THE GLORIOUS GIVER WILL BE SUPPLIED
FOR THE NEED. (Vv. 10-15).**

God is the supplier of our needs, so that we can meet the needs of others. Paul is showing that many good things are happening when you are cheerful, and not fearful in your giving. He is showing that many good things are happening when you are glad, and not sad or mad in your giving.

**A. The Glorious Giver's Need Will Be Supplied
By The Generosity Of God. (Vv. 10-12).**

The glorious giver has absolutely no reason to mistrust the goodness of God. God has shown His goodness to all in every way. The Book of Romans tells us that the goodness of God leadeth men to repentance. And it is the goodness of God that allows the seed to go to the sower as verse 10 tells us, *"Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness"*.

The gift to be given, in our text, is referred to as seed. Seed has such a small beginning, yet has so much growth potential. The word "multiply" is used in verse 10 to illustrate this in a quantitative sense. As you support the giving ministries of Bible Baptist Church, you will find just how generous God is to the generous giver. May I please remind us, that we cannot out-give God.

**B. The Glorious Giver's Need Will Be Supplied
By The Grace Of God. (Vv. 13-15).**

Whether we deserve it or not, God will continue to be our strength and our portion because of His wonderful Amazing Grace. As we give, He will continue to give through us, and for us.

CONCLUSION: Just knowing that God loves a cheerful giver should be enough to inspire and challenge us to give, as we ought to. I trust that we will. May God bless you!

GRACE GIVING

II Corinthians 8:1-15

INTRODUCTION: This portion of Scripture describes the grace giver. The grace giver gives with Christ Jesus in mind. Every gift that Christ Jesus has given us has been a gift of Grace. We deserve nothing any better. Nothing that He gave us did we deserve. When we get to the place that we give as Jesus did, then we certainly are doing well...

The grace giver also gives with heaven in mind. When one has heaven in mind, it will affect his attitude towards the things of the earth. The giver will not at all mind turning loose the earthly to gain the heavenly.

In this study, may we look at the character of the grace giver; then, let us look at the charity of the grace giver. Thirdly, let us look at the continuing of the grace giver.

I. THE CHARACTER OF THE GRACE GIVER.

(Vv. 1-6).

Paul is complementing the giving practices of the Macedonians as he encourages the Corinthians to give. **The northern part of** Greece was called Macedonia, the southern part was called Achaia; Corinth was in Achaia. The Macedonians who were the northern neighbors of Corinth were very generous in their giving to the ministries that Paul was involved in. They gave this way though they were very poor. The Lord gives this as an example in His Word to show that a person does not have to be wealthy to exercise faith promise giving.

A. They Gave Out Of Their Poverty. (Vv. 1-2a).

The poverty of the Macedonians is confirmed historically after the land of Alexander the Great was conquered by the Romans. This land was several hundred

years earlier the home of Alexander the Great, with all of its wealth. During the time of Paul a people wealthier than what they were in Alexander's day occupied it. But their wealth was of a different kind. It had a people who were materially poor, but who were rich in God's grace.

Verse number two describes this kind of giving: *"How that in a great trial of afflictions the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality."*

It is wonderful that the church at Macedonia did not allow their afflictions to affect in a negative way their giving.

B. They Gave With A Liberality. (V. 2b).

The word "liberality" means openhearted generosity. The described generosity here is of the sacrificial kind. It was with joy that they made their gifts unto the Lord; they did it sacrificially. Paul witnessed this willingness, by Macedonia in their giving in the manner in which they did.

Paul gave this church as an example to challenge the church at Corinth to give; we too should also give. **Our giving should not be determined by our bank accounts, but by God's riches in glory.** He has far more than we have. This becomes the basis of **"Faith Promise Giving"**. This also is the highest level of giving. It is given prayerfully believing that God is directing your giving, while trusting God to provide the gift.

C. They Gave Beyond Their Ability. (Vv. 3-4).

This was not careless giving, it was faith giving. The Macedonia Church did not know exactly where their gifts were going to come from, but they would know Whom the gifts were coming from. **As we support the ministries of the Bible Baptist Church, we shall do it as a faith ministry.** To operate by faith may have the appearances of doing so foolishly. It is as someone said,

“You never test the resources of God until you attempt the impossible”. Many modern day testimonies abound as to the way God blesses when one gives by faith.

The story of the *poor widow* illustrates sacrificial giving. She gave everything that she owned. She was beggarly poor. God used her as an example of total sacrifice, as illustrated in Mark 12.

12:41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

12:42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

12:43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

12:44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

D. They Gave Very Unselfishly. (Vv. 5-6).

The Macedonians *“first gave their own selves to the Lord,”* First things first... God wants you first. Do just as the Macedonians did. When a person absolutely gives himself to the Lord, then God has all that that one has including all of his potential. Grace giving is a kind of giving that must require God for it to truly be grace giving. God by His Spirit directs the gift. It is the highest form of unselfish giving. **It is a kind of giving that surrenders the gift with absolutely no strings attached.** It is a kind of giving that can give even if the gift is undeserved. After all, when Christ gave Himself to us, not one of us deserved it. God gave Himself proving that His love is an unselfish love. Grace giving requires the same kind of love. In our next section, we will consider the love or the CHARITY of the grace giver.

II. THE CHARITY OF THE GRACE GIVER (Vv.7-9)

Paul commended those things that he could kindly say about the church at Corinth, such as their abounding in “faith, utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence”. He also complemented their love that they had for Paul and his ministry. But he still wanted them to have the same giving spirit, as did the churches in Macedonia. It seemed that the church at Corinth did not have a giving spirit. **This could be for many reasons, with the biggest being that they had become accustomed to having things and may have been reluctant to give up those things which could be bought with money.**

Paul challenges their giving by telling them that they could mature beyond where they were, and in doing so prove the sincerity of their love.

A. Charity Or Love Expressed. (Vv. 7,8).

There is a very practical way of demonstrating or proving your love. Paul told the church at Corinth that they could prove their love by their giving. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. He expressed this love as He gave Himself on the cross. In the 8th verse of our text, Paul tells how Jesus who was rich became poor. This giving involved what Christ did on the cross; this was the way that He expressed His love.

Our giving to the church proves our love for Christ and His church. Our love for missions is proven as we support missions in a financial way. Our love for anything is expressed by our giving. You give to what you love. You support what you love. This church has faithfully demonstrated this truth for over fifty years.

B. Charity Or Love’s Example. (Vv. 9).

Notice the greatness of this verse pertaining to Christ.

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye though his poverty might be rich.”

The Creator God of the universe, and Creator of all that there is, voluntarily gave up His all becoming poor. **He demonstrated that He was willing to make Himself poor that we might be rich.** Such love! There is no greater example of grace giving than this. His example is our challenge.

May we be challenged, by the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ Jesus. May His total sacrifice, be a challenge for us to willingly sacrifice for the things that God loves. God loves our Church, the souls of men, and our mission program. When you give to these, you will certainly be proving you love in a very practical way. 2 Cor. 8:24)

III. THE CONTINUING OF THE GRACE GIVER.

(Vv. 10-15).

The giving that is described in these verses, beginning in verse 10, is based upon what possession that one has. Paul is speaking to the Corinthians, being mindful that they had not followed through with what they had already committed. It seems that he recognizes that they do not have the same sacrificial spirit that the churches in Macedonia had. He is telling them that they do not have to give to the extent that they will deprive themselves.

Their immaturity in their giving must be addressed. That is what Paul is doing. This provides us with the lesson that not everyone will give as the Macedonians gave, but should be encouraged to give at whatever level they will. In the next chapter Paul will encourage the Corinthians further by saying that the person that sows sparingly will also reap that way, and the person that sows bountifully will then reap that way. Hopefully, when one starts giving and begins to prove God, seeing the way He blesses, he will get to the place that he will by faith give what he does not

even have. When the giver gets to that place, he is then practicing the highest level of giving.

A. The Grace Giver Will Continue If He Has A Will To. (Vv. 10-12)

Verse 12, says that, *“there be first a willing mind”*. Every consistent and continuing giver must first have a willing mind. He must be willing to give to whatever need that there is, for the giving to continue.

B. The Grace Giver Will Continue If He Sees A “Want”. (Vv.13-15)

The giver needs to clearly see where the want or the need is. **If he does not see the need, he will not likely give with the commitment that is needed.** As your Pastor, I have been patiently laying the ground work for the purpose of letting you know that as we support the ministries of the Bible Baptist Church, we are supporting something of infinitely more value than “Sam Walton” or “Donald Trump” enterprises. **When you support the ministries here, you are plugging into something that will offer eternal dividends, and benefits. When you help our missionaries, you are having a part in spreading the gospel throughout the world.** When you are helping retire the debt on this new edifice, you are having a part in paying for a wonderful light house that will be shining as a bright light in dark places until the Lord comes to take up His own.

PROSPERITY GIVING

Text: I Corinthians 16:1-3; Philippians 4:10-19

Introduction: May I say at the beginning that my definition of prosperity theology or prosperity giving may be much different than some of the TV religious charlatans, who are scheming to get your money, and the church's money. The Apostle Paul gives us helpful insight, and instruction that pertains to Scriptural giving. As God prospers us, He gives us directions on how to use that prosperity. Keep in mind as the Lord does this, that He provides for our needs as we continue to meet the needs of others.

May we look at two different passages of Scripture that shows us the proper way of giving, and how God makes it all possible. First, we will look at, The Program That The Lord Gave For Our Stewardship; Then, The Provisions That The Lord Gives For Our Stewardship.

I. THE PROGRAM THAT THE LORD GAVE FOR OUR STEWARDSHIP (1 Cor. 16:1-3)

A. When Should We Give? (V. 1) “Now”

The word “now” is a word that moves with time. Obviously, when Paul wrote the church at Corinth, he was writing for the purpose of either instructing, or correcting their improper stewardship. The carnal Corinthians had many aspects of their ministry that needed correcting. The instructions that were given to this church were very valid for the day in which they were given, but the same must be said for today. This is based upon the concept that “Truth does not ever change”. Realizing that the word, “Now” may be applied to our church this morning, just as it was given to the Church at Corinth, we need to give great heed to these ancient instructions that are more up to date than

tomorrows newspaper.

B. What We Should Give. (V. 1). “Collections”

Within the context of our text, the collections were a form of giving that was to minister to saints who were not a part of the Church at Corinth. It would be similar to our faith promise mission giving in that it was given to be a blessing to those who had needs outside of the church. Yet, in the spirit of grace giving, it was to be done with not only a sensitivity involving saints who had needs, but in respect to the givers ongoing personal needs as well.

The word “collection” means that it was the actual taking up of money. The cornerstone word of the Christian faith is the word Give. No one illustrates a greater pattern for giving than did Christ Jesus when He gave Himself as a ransom for many. Obviously, the collections could never happen unless there were those who had the heart to give. Collections were not taken just to have collections. They were taken with purpose in mind. As we give, we should give with purpose just as Christ Jesus gave of Himself in such an unselfish manner.

A strong, and a healthy church is fired, and moved by great purpose. Purpose should be a major part of the churches passion. This purpose should originate in ones heart even as it did with Daniel, in Daniel 1:8. When either a church, in a collective sense, or a person in an individual sense loses its sense of purpose, that person or church is in a dying state. Our church not only needs to evaluate its reason for its existence, but should be exercising that reason through its giving. Before a person will give his money as a collection, he must have first given himself. Paul talked more of this in his second letter. We will examine this more later.

C. Who Should Give? (V. 1). “saints”

Paul was using this word to describe believers. Saved believers are “saints”. He was using this word to

emphasize that saved people are sanctified people who have been set apart for the master's use. Each one of us today is no different than those in Paul's day. We too have been set apart for the Master's purpose. This purpose involving giving is to be exercised by and through the local church. The systematic taking up of collections has been practiced for over 2000 years. It is still God's way. The Lord's work is to be done through the collection of offerings. We do not finance the Lord's work through raffles, bake sales, car washes, etc. When our students in our school do this, they are doing it as a means to raise money for their school activities. When it comes to the church operations, we support it through the tithes and the offerings.

D. Where Should We Give? (V. 1) "churches"

We have already been emphasizing the importance of supporting the ministries through the local church. The instructions for doing this are immediately given in the very first verse. This is no accident; this shows the importance of our giving taking place in, and through the local New Testament church. God should have first place, and this will be demonstrated in a very practical way through your giving to the church. You support most what you love the most. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also". (Matthew 6:21).

E. How Should We Give? (V. 2 "let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him").

During the time that Paul wrote this letter, much of the giving was done with crops, or animals that had been raised by the giver. That practice continued to some degree right up until recent times. The circuit-riding preacher was often paid with a cured ham or with a sack of meal. It seems that God has always used the unselfish, and the generous to take care of the church and God's man. It will be no exception

here. As long as there are people like you who recognize the blessings of God upon your lives, you will do right.

If you notice our text, the giving is not predicated on the need as much as it is upon the way God prospers you. God is saying here that there should be a deliberate time that you appraise the way that God has been blessing you, and to give accordingly. God's program requires this to happen on the first day of the week, which is the Lord's day, which is Sunday on our calendar. The wisdom of God in letting you monitor your giving by the way that He prospers you is for the purpose of you always being conscious of the ongoing blessings that you receive from Him. When a person really begins to see how blessed he is, and then regards the way that Christ is blessing him, it should inspire one to be very sensitive to the needs of others. I have learned that if God is prospering me, then I should let that be a signal that there is someone whom I should share my prosperity with. Today's corrupt prosperity *theology* teaching says, "Don't wait until the bye and bye to get your pie in the sky...get it now". This is absolutely not God's way of teaching. His teaching is a selfless, rather than a selfish teaching. When you are sensitive to others, then God will take care of you. We will develop this thought further in our next section.

F. Why Should We Give? (V. 3) "that there be no gatherings when I come."

There is a practical reason that Paul issued these instructions as he did. He wanted attention given to the need in a planned manner. The first verse indicates this when Paul said, "as I have given order". The purpose of order is to give an arrangement or a pattern. Can you imagine how it would be to live in a world without order? Imagine teaching the alphabet or numbers in a random or mixed up order. The numbers would only become sounds without meaning. The proper order of the numbers makes the numbers useable. A church needs order with everything

being done “decently and in order”. The way that giving is prescribed by Paul, helps the congregation to practice giving by a design, and by a plan rather than by only crisis, and emotion. Paul outlined the instructions pertaining to giving in order to bring strength to the local assembly.

II. THE PROVISIONS THAT THE LORD GIVES FOR OUR STEWARDSHIP (Philippians 4:10-19).

Paul, in this section, tells us what it is like going to school...God’s school that is. Many of us have gone to His school. His school is not always the easiest, but it is always the best. I would not take anything for some of the lessons that the Lord has taught me.

Paul began this section with the expression, “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly”. Paul then said, “I have learned” meaning he’s been to school. Because he had been to school, he was able to say in verse 12, “I know”. He also said, “I am instructed”. With the progression of his learning, in the Lord’s school, he was able to say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

Paul was able to pass on that which he had learned, through divine inspiration on to the church.

A. Provides Care For The Ministry. (V. 10).

Paul rejoiced in the Lord over the blessings that he had received from the church at Philippi. The church at Philippi was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey. It was the first European church to be founded by him. In a very cordial way, Paul is expressing his joy over the care that was extended to him when he was experiencing great need. That same joy is being felt today when this church, and churches like this are helping others. We have been a blessing to so many missionaries and preachers down through the years. Thank you for being faithful in this area.

If there are those of you who for any reason have never,

or maybe you are not presently supporting our missionary program, please begin today. You may have a part in bringing joy to others by *your care* in Giving. This letter by Paul is a thank you letter.

**B. Provides Contentment In The Ministry.
(Vv. 11,12).**

Contentment is a learned characteristic. Paul “learned in whatsoever state” that he was, therewith to be content. He found that the provisions of God were always adequate to meet his needs. He learned to depend upon the Lord as the churches cared for him.. He also learned contentment from the Lord as the churches cared for him. In handling money as God’s money managers or as stewards, we should strive to have contentment like Paul as we do.

**C. The Provisions Provide Confidence To Do
The Ministry. (Vv. 13-19).**

When Paul said that he could do all things through Christ which strengtheneth him, he was expressing a confidence that came from being faithful to the Lord, but more than that he had gained confidence from the Lord being faithful to him... For this reason in verse 19, he said, “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

D.L. Moody said of the promises of verse 19.

“**My God**” - The name of the firm printed on the check.

“**Shall supply**” - The promise to pay.

“**all your need**” – The amount to be paid.

“**according to his riches**” - The deposit in the account against which the check is drawn.

“**in glory**” - The address of the bank.

“**by Christ Jesus**” - The signature which appears on the check.

Moody said, “All that it takes to cash it is the endorsement of faith!”

Conclusion: The Lord has both a program, and provisions in which to practice good stewardship.

TREASURE GIVING

TEXT: Matthew 6:16-33

May 23rd, 2004

W. Max Alderman

INTRODUCTION: By examining the gospels, we learn that the secret to success is threefold: (1) if we want to be successful in the eyes of God, we must **first answer Christ's call for our lives**. (2) Because of what God has given us, **He holds us accountable for how we use our success**. As part of God's kingdom, we need to store our treasures in heaven, for *"FOR A MAN'S LIFE CONSISTETH NOT IN THE ABUNDANCE OF THE THINGS WHICH HE POSSETH."* (Luke 12:15). (3) Even amidst success, we must realize that **we are not self sufficient; we need a relationship with our Lord**.

With these thoughts in mind, may we consider the concept of **Treasure Giving**.

I. WE SHOULD PATTERN OUR GIVING... **(Matt. 6:33)**

A. God Certainly Has A Plan For Our Giving.

This verse gives us a wonderful pattern for all of our giving. If we really understand God's concept of stewardship, it is only because we would first understand the Truth of this great verse. *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* (V. 33).

Everything that we do ought to be with the kingdom of God in mind. For our dispensation, or the economy that we live, this is performed through the local New Testament Church. Therefore, we pattern not our **giving worship** after the *heathen*, but after *heaven*. This entire 6th chapter insists that everything that we do is to be done with the motive of being seen by God, and not to be seen by men.

The chapter begins with this command: *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them...* then in verse number 5, the Scriptures read: *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.* Verse 16 continues this warning in regards to fasting, *Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

B. God Certainly Has A Purpose For Our Giving.

First, we should give, but actually before we even give, we should question our motives for giving. One may be obedient in the fact that he gives, but does not do so with the proper motive. Some think that by giving, that it is like an insurance policy in that one's giving is protecting that one from any negative events taking place in his life. Another may think that it is a sure way to increase his or her standard of living. **God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving.**

C. God Certainly Has Provisions For Our Giving.

Next, we should give *of the Lord*, and *to the Lord*. Even our capacity to give is of the Lord. Verse 25 through verse 32 proves this truth. Verse 32 ends this way: *for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* For this reason, we do not need to be over anxious for anything. When the Scriptures say, *Take no thought for your life* that is exactly what the Scriptures are implying.

II. WE SHOULD PLACE OUR GIVING... **(Vv. 19,20).**

A. The Place Of Healthy Giving

The place of our kingdom giving is the local Church. Our government is from above, but has the far-reaching effects of touching us all. God's government originates in the throne room. See Romans 13:1. *The way that His government is implemented for today's Christian is either through the local Church, or in respect to the local church.* For this reason, the Christian does not make a distinction between the *secular* and the *sacred*. To the believer all things are given sacred consideration. This is especially true in regards to giving. The handling of God's money is a sacred trust, and the Truth of it is, that everything belongs to Him. There is no healthier, or safer giving than that which is given through the local Church. God will see to that. We never should develop the mentality that says, "This money is mine, and this money is Gods". It all belongs to Him.

We are instructed in Matthew 6:19, and 20 to, *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*

A. The Place Of Heathen Giving

There are two particular places of giving that are referred to in our text. One place I will call your attention to is the place of *heathen giving*. The other place is the place of *heaven giving*. Both terms are mentioned in our text. The place of heathen giving has as its emphasis, the earth and with all that which is of the earth. One who is like this has the ambition of building his personal empire while upon this earth. A person gives indication of being in this state

when he is constantly focusing upon the earthly, rather than upon the heavenly. His priorities in life reflect this. It shows up in his church attendance, and also in the ways that he spends his money. *Ecc 10:19 A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all [things]*. So much can be determined about a person either by the way he earns or either by the way that he spends his money.

B. The Place Of Heaven Giving

When one is giving with heaven in mind, he is making deposits that are eternal in value. When we give God's way, we are actually investing in our own eternity. I must say that I find enormous comfort in this. Just knowing that the dividends will be calculated for all eternity **nearly blows my mind**. There is no such program here upon the earth that is found among the heathen. You chose to either lay your treasures upon the earth or in heaven. Which will it be?

III. WE SHOLD PERFORM OUR GIVING... Vv.20-31)

A. The Responsibility Of Our Performance

Giving God's way is an absolutely wonderful way in that it has such lasting results. This does not mean that you cannot make investments here upon the earth. There are Bible principles that allow for this and even encourages this. Yet, the overwhelming emphasis for a Christian's giving or investing should not be here upon this earth. When you notice our text verse, it says: *But lay for yourselves treasures in heaven*. Notice, that it said, *lay for yourselves*. The Lord allows us to invest eternally for ourselves. This means that our giving ought to be done obediently, by faith; with great hope and anticipation of the way God will bless such giving. The verb "lay" indicates that there is a performance on our part. To often Christians take

a position that is *reactive* rather than *proactive*. We should give with both purpose, and with direction.

B. The Rewards Of Our Performance

This means that God certainly should be consulted as we give our money to His work. He, who blesses us to give, should be consulted as we give. Remember that he owns it anyway; we are simply His **money managers**. The term steward means just that. We should be constantly investing wisely. When you give to the local church, you are actually giving *through* the local church. Bible Baptist, as it supports nearly 180 missionaries has been doing so because there are those of you who understand the concept of both helping our missionaries down here, and investing for all eternity up there. Every soul that is saved, you are having a part in it. When you give God's way, you are actually having a part in keeping souls out of hell. That is a wonderful example of proactive giving. This kind of giving is to be cheerful giving rather than fearful giving. It is to be glad giving rather than mad, or sad giving. If you do not lay up your treasures in heaven, what will that mean both personally and eternally for you when you stand at the judgment seat? That is certainly something to think about.

IV. WE SHOULD PROTECT OUR GIVING... **(Vv. 19,20).**

A. Notice The Protection Of The Investment.

There is no better protection for your investments than when you invest in heaven. Unless you really believe the Bible to be the Word of God you will find what I am saying difficult to believe. This entire concept is based upon faith. For this reason, and also for the reason that so many people are looking for instant gratification, they are unwilling to put this plan into effect. Even saved people can develop an epicurean philosophy that says, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for we shall soon die".

When the Scriptures say, *where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt*, it is describing the way your investments are protected when it is given God's way. The word treasure is used to describe the quality of the gift. God will protect the treasure for what it really is, a treasure. For this reason one does not have to worry whether inflation will erode away the value of the treasure that is regularly being deposited into heaven. Nor does one need to worry about the market crashing.

B. Notice The Protection Of The Investor.

There is not only the protection that comes to our eternal investments, but there is the daily protection that comes to the *investor*. This is what the Scriptures mean when it says; *Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink...* Read verses 25 through verses 34 and see how well God takes care of the wise Investor. I learned many years ago that giving God's way is a NO-LOSE situation, and that I need not to worry.

CONCLUSION: This study should cause each of us to realize what true riches are, and to realize where true riches are. It should cause us to trust in the Lord rather than riches. May I conclude this study with these verses, for you to consider:

I Timothy 6: 9,10 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Verse 17, 18 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

TRUE RICHES Vs. UNCERTAIN RICHES

TEXT: 1 Timothy 6:6-19 W. Max Alderman

INTRODUCTION: America has a standard for comparing the relative value of those things that are in the material realm. We use what we refer to as the Gold Standard.

For ages people of all lands and cultural groups have defined value according to the standard of gold.

The Lord has a different standard for considering value. In this study, I wish to consider with you what I believe should be the spiritual standard that appraises true worth or value. Verse number 6 gives us the standard that I am referring to, “godliness with contentment”. We will closely examine in our Text what this truly means. We must understand and know what God considers to be of true worth and value. In making this study, I will be contrasting true riches vs. uncertain riches.

I will look first at, I. The PROBLEM of Uncertain Riches; II. The PROTECTION Against Uncertain Riches; III. The PROSPERITY From Certain Riches.

I. THE PROBLEM OF UNCERTAIN RICHES. (Vv. 6-10)

One would think that money would be the problem solver rather than the problem maker. Sadly, money is not the panacea to ones problems. There needs to be much teaching regarding this statement when considering that so much of what we do and experience is related to money and to our spending habits. It has been said that you can tell much about a person by the way that he spends his money. When a person puts his confidence in that which he has, including money, he is doomed to failure. The expression has been given, “He is so poor, because he only has money”. In these verses, we will notice some of the

problems pertaining to uncertain riches.

A. Uncertain Riches Can Be A Distraction. (Vv. 6-9a)

“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare” (V. 9a)

1. Can get you “out of focus”.

The love of money that results when one puts his trust in uncertain riches can certainly cause one to get out of focus. This happens when one commits that sin that “doth so easily beset us”. This sin is the sin of taking ones eyes off of Jesus (Hebrews 12). Anything that causes us to take our eyes off of Jesus will get us out of focus spiritually. The love of money can certainly do this. I personally have witnessed people who began to make money and more money and then turned that money into a god of its own. They trusted their money and their job for their provisions. They were out of focus spiritually and no longer knew where they were going.

2. Can get you “out of faith”

Men ought to walk by faith rather than by sight. The trusting in uncertain riches lays a snare that will trap you suddenly and get you out of faith. It will hinder your faith walk and it is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11). The love of money traps many a good person. It happens so suddenly. People began trusting in their uncertain riches rather than their God.

B. Uncertain Riches Can Bring On Defilement.

The phrase “many foolish and hurtful lusts” means exactly what it says. There will be many lusts that will consume the person who follows after riches. Satan has many appetizing packages in which to put his devices. Lusts of many different kinds have brought down many

strong men and women. Satan has had much time in which to plan his traps and snares. When riches consume a person, he is also defiled.

C. Uncertain Riches Can Bring About Destruction.

The phrase, “which drown men in destruction” shows just how devastating the pursuit of uncertain riches can be. The *drown* word indicates this. To me, one of the most horrible and helpless ways that a person can die is by drowning. I have often thought about the drowning person; it generally happens so suddenly and unexpected. That is what is being expressed here in our Text. People have the potential of drowning in there own riches.

The Scriptures tell us also, that such have “erred from the faith”. This means by them trusting in uncertain riches that they in error have departed from the faith of the Scriptures. Money has a way of causing displaced trust. Instead of trusting God for the needed provisions, these who trust in uncertain riches trust in their riches only. God certainly is not pleased when this happens.

In addition to those who erred from the faith, they have also “pierced themselves through with many sorrows”. People have killed over money, stolen, lied, cheated and on and on the list goes. These are some of the ways that sorrows come upon people when they put their trust in uncertain riches.

III. THE PROTECTION AGAINST UNCERTAIN RICHES (Vv. 11-17)

Even as the Word of God has warnings to protect us, it also has instructions to help us. God’s instructions are never difficult to understand. The instructions that He gives us here are very simply put so that one need not question what he should do to guard against the dangers of uncertain riches.

A. Flee These Things (V. 11a)

The man of God should have discernment enough to recognize the luring effects of uncertain riches and just as he would flee from the very appearance of evil, he should likewise flee from the enticements of uncertain riches. There is a real danger in becoming comfortable with the things that can trap and destroy you especially if it is money. For this reason, we are told that “that the love of money is the root of all evil”. From God’s Word this is very wisely said. Though it is true, so many go into a state of denial just as one would when he goes after strange flesh or after a strange woman thinking that nothing will become of it.

1. Flee the things that will trap you.

2. Flee the things that will tempt you.

B. Follow After These Things (11b.).

Our Text gives us six very important things to follow after that will help keep us from being destroyed by uncertain riches. Notice very carefully the value of these things as given in this list. You will find that each word explains itself. Following the right things as given in this list will protect you from following after the wrong things.

1. Follow after righteousness

2. Follow after godliness

3. Follow after faith

4. Follow after love

5. Follow after patience

6. Follow after meekness

C. Fight The Good Fight Of Faith. (Vv. 12-17)

The greatest fight that you will ever be connected with will be the good fight of faith. It certainly is a battle when

avoiding the things that are associated with uncertain riches. You will have to earnestly contend for the faith as Jude so clearly put it. The lustful passions that we have can be overwhelming if we fail to appropriate the strength and the grace that God has for us. If one would take the six things that are mentioned here and follow after them, he will not have an opportunity to fall into a money trap of Satan called uncertain riches. This is what the good fight of faith is all about and the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself is our example.

1. Fight to witness the Christ. (12-16)

2. Fight to win the crown. (V. 17).

III. THE PROSPERITY FROM CERTAIN RICHES. (Vv. 18, 19)

Certain riches are the kind that only the Lord is capable of providing. I, and all of you who are in the family of faith should desire to experience the wonderful benefits of grace that the Lord has for us. True wealth will be the treasures that are laid up in heaven. These treasures can neither be stolen nor corrupted. They have an eternal value about them. As we entertain our earthly pilgrimage down here, we should be mindful that our activities and attitudes down here would affect what goes *up* there...

A. By Having the Correct Attitude Regarding Riches.

By now we should absolutely know what the correct attitude is towards riches. It is having a godly contentment with what God has blessed us with. It is true that we each have different measures of His blessings, but none is inferior to the other. If we indeed have the correct attitude about what constitutes true value and true worth, then we will endeavor to have correct actions.

B. By Having The Correct Activity.

Below as indicated in our Text are five actions that should mark us in regards to our stewardship and to the use of the money that the Lord has entrusted us with.

- 1. “do good”**
- 2. “be rich in good works”**
- 3. “ready to distribute” (don’t give to the church... give through the church)**
- 4. “willing to communicate”**
- 5. “Laying up in store”**

This study should cause us to have a clearer understanding of what God and the Scriptures has to say about true riches vs. uncertain riches. May we practically apply these truths as we exercise practical Christianity.

