

GIVING: BLESSING OR BURDEN?

INTRODUCTION:

- 1 The book of Haggai provides for us an insight as to how God views His work and how He views our attitude toward it. Consider these themes:
 - a In order to motivate people it requires good soil -- hearts that can be stirred
 - b There is a need for timely, penetrating questions:
 - c God's people face certain specific obligations:
 - d Affluence can be dangerous

- 2 We need to remind ourselves of how God views giving:
 - a **Grace** -- *"Therefore, as ye abound in every [thing, in] faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and [in] all diligence, and [in] your love to us, [see] that ye abound in this grace also" (II Corinthians 8:7).*
 - b **Proof of love** -- *"I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love" (II Corinthians 8:8).*
 - c **See the example of heaven's giving:** *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9).*

5. Preaching on money and dealing with someone's children are two areas which are very sensitive:
 - a. [Goodpasture] -- 17 of 36 parables of the Lord dealt with money.
 - b. Yet, it is important to our soul so we need to consider it.

I. INSTRUCTIONS REGULATING OUR GIVING

- A. **Personal -- who is to give?**
 1. *"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye" (I Corinthians 16:1). "Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Corinthians 16:2).*
 2. *"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).*
 3. *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10).*
 4. *"[Is it] time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house [lie] waste?" (Haggai 1:4). "Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways" (Haggai 1:5).*
 5. Giving is part of our worship -- who is to worship?
 - a. *"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I P 2:5).*
 - b. God desires true worshippers: *"God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).*
 - c. A person not giving on the Lord's day as he has been prospered is not worshipping.

- B. **Planned -- how are we to give?**
1. *"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 Corinthians 9:7).*
 2. Thus our giving should be planned in our household:
 - a. Bills should be compiled with the contribution in mind.
 - b. Purchases should be according to how it affects our contribution.
 - c. Christmas time is around the corner -- will we consider God in our planning?
 - d. Children should be taught by example and by mouth by the parents in this area -- they should see God comes first.
- C. **Periodic -- when are we to give?**
1. *"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye" (I Corinthians 16:1). "Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Corinthians 16:2).*
 2. *"And upon the first [day] of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7).*

II. RESTRICTIONS REGARDING OUR GIVING

- A. **Proportionate -- how much should we give?**
1. **What if the Lord blessed us with ten times what we give?**
 2. *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (III John 1:2).*
 3. What is the Lord blessed us materially and physically (health) in proportion as our soul prospers? -- What if He blessed us as compared to how we obey the command to give.
 4. Some say, "How much do we **HAVE** to give?" - Sign of heart problems - assembling also
- B. **Perspective -- what should be our attitude?**
1. *"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 Corinthians 9:7).*
 2. We should not begrudge giving, but rather, we should view it as a privilege.
 3. We should not view giving as a means to "get back at the elders, preacher, or leaders of the church."
 - a. Sometimes contributions are withheld because the preacher is not liked.
 - b. Sometimes contributions are withheld because the elders are not liked or some decision they make is not liked.
 4. **We must remember we give to the Lord and not to men -- men will be accountable as to how the contribution is used, but we will be held responsible for how we give!!**

III. COMPLICATIONS AS A RESULT OF OUR NOT GIVING

A. Suffering of the Lord's work

1. Missions efforts may have to be abandoned because of insufficient funds.
2. Would be sad for us on judgment day if, because of our lack of giving, souls were not allowed the opportunity of hearing the gospel.
3. We have the responsibility of taking the gospel around the world and it takes men and women to go and it takes money to send them.
4. There are various means of taking the gospel (preaching, writing, etc.) and we need to be using whatever we can.

B. Soul's separation from God

1. Our salvation depends upon our keeping the commandments -- we can not "earn" salvation nor will we be accepted if we do not worship and work as we ought.
2. Giving is part of our worship and our soul's salvation depends upon true worship to God.
3. By not giving as we should, we cause ourselves to be separated from God and if not corrected, eternally so.

C. Strain on those who are giving

1. Been said that 90% of the giving is done by 10% of the people -- [general rule]
2. We are members of the body and each member is important (I Cor. 12, Rom. 12).
 - a. Some prosper more than others, but all prosper and are accountable.
 - b. As each member of the physical body is important, each member's contribution is important to the ongoing of the local work.

D. Shepherds of a congregation are placed in a difficult position

1. ***"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).***
2. **Each member needs to feel his responsibility to the local congregation in attendance and giving.**
 - a. **By placing membership in a local congregation, a person commits himself to work of that local congregation and becomes a member of the body there -- thus having responsibility.**
 - b. **If a member misses he needs to "make up" his contribution as the work continues whether he is here this Sunday or not.**
3. Some people feel no one has a right to know what they are giving, but this thinking is not right.
 - a. Those responsible need to know so they can watch over the souls of the people.
 - b. Jesus sees exactly how much we put in no matter how tight we roll it: ***"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" (Mark 12:41).***
 - c. If elders are to give account, then they must show an interest in our giving.

E. Stealing from God

1. ***"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:8). "Ye [are] cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, [even] this whole nation" (Malachi 3:9). "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]" (Malachi 3:10).***
2. God expects His people to give as they have been prospered and when we do not we actually rob God.
3. He set the example for us by giving us His son: ***"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).***

CONCLUSION:

1. We need to remember we are just stewards of God's wealth and will give account of how we spent it.
2. When we count our blessings and be honest with ourselves in the counting, how many of us are truly giving as God has prospered us?
3. The love of money will cause many people to be separated in the end: ***"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" (I Timothy 6:9). "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" (I Timothy 6:10). "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (I Timothy 6:11).***
4. It is not wrong to have money, but the Lord warns many situations will follow those who have money: ***"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;" (I Timothy 6:17). "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;" (I Timothy 6:18). "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (I Timothy 6:19).***
5. When we consider the entire world and place our wealth alongside the entire world's, we are in the **RICH** category!!