

GIVING TO THE WORK OF THE LORD

TEXT: I Corinthians 16:1-4

Someone has written "You Will Never Be Sorry:"

- For telling the truth
- For living a pure life
- For your faith in Christ
- For acknowledging your sins
- For doing your best
- For forgiving your enemies
- For helping a fallen brother
- For being honest in business
- For standing by your principles
- For bridling a slanderous tongue
- For being courteous and kind
- AND FINALLY, FOR MONEY GIVEN TO THE LORD'S WORK.

I say "Amen" to all them and especially the last one. No one has ever been or ever will be sorry for the money they have given or will give to the Lord's work.

Anyone who has learned to give to God's work has discovered that somewhere and somehow God returns what we give. No one has ever been sorry that they gave to God's work.

I read about a fellow who bought a new boomerang and killed himself trying to throw the old one away. Giving has a boomerang effect. It always comes back to us with blessed rewards.

"When it comes to giving, some people will stop at nothing." I also say "Amen" to that. I think of how tragic that is when you realize that God blesses our giving.

In **Chapters 1-15**, Paul has dealt with moral and doctrinal issues. In the last chapter he deals with personal matters.

We read in **verse 1, "Now concerning the collection for the saints..."** I find the word **"collection"** a very interesting word to be used for giving. As used here it simply speaks of the gathering of money.

The word **"collection"** says something about a person. **A persons giving is a tattletale of the heart.**

Our giving says volumes about our love for God, a faith in God, and our obedience to God.

The offerings that are received each week say a lot about a Church. A good measuring stick of a Church's commitment and spiritual depth is the offerings on Sunday. A growing people are a giving people. If people are growing spiritually the offerings will grow numerically.

I. 'WHO' IS INVOLVED TO GIVE

In verse 2 notice the words, "**let every one of you.**" This tells us who is to give. The "who" of giving is identified in the words of **verse 1, "as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye."**

Who is to give? To be specific, the members of the churches were the ones that received this direction and order from Paul. To put it very simply, if you are a Christian, you are to be a giver.

A. GIVING IS AN INDIVIDUAL MATTER.

Paul says "**you.**" When we read the words "**let everyone of you**" we should read it as if Paul were writing directly to each of us and not just the Corinthians. I am to be a giver. I am to give to God's work.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Americans spend their income as follows:

- 23% shelter
- 21% transportation
- 15% food
- 8% retirement
- 7% utilities
- 5% clothing
- 5% entertainment
- 5% medical care
- 3% savings
- 1% insurance (excluding care and home)
- 7% Miscellaneous²

I found it interesting that charitable giving was not listed. I am not sure if it was included in miscellaneous spending, but it would appear that charitable giving does not play a large part in how Americans spend their money.

When it comes to Christians, giving to the work of God should always be a part of how we spend our money. Why? We are told by God to give.

Each one of us is to be a giver.

A. GIVING IS AN INDIVIDUAL MATTER.

B. IT IS AN INCLUSIVE MATTER.

Paul says, "**let everyone of you.**" When we gather on Sunday every person should participate in the giving. I am to give, but also everyone here is to give.

I wonder if on Sunday when the offering is received if every person gives. I seriously doubt it. But everyone is to give.

When you come to church on Sunday you should bring your checkbook. Every one of you should bring your checkbook. The "who" of giving is every one of us. None of us is excluded. All are included. Each individual is to give.

I. 'WHO' IS INVOLVED TO GIVE

II. 'WHERE' WE ARE INSTRUCTED TO GIVE!

The order that Paul gives is to the "**churches,**" which would indicate the church is to be your place of giving.

A. THE CHURCH IS TO BE A PLACE WHERE WE GATHER.

In verse 2, we read the words, "**Upon the first day of the week.**" The first day of the week is Sunday, the day that Paul implies believers were gathering for worship.

To the early church, the first day of the week was recognized as the "**Lord's Day**" and became the day that Christians met to worship.

Christians are to gather weekly. We as believers are to go to church every week. The church is a place of gathering.

A. THE CHURCH IS TO BE A PLACE WHERE WE GATHER.

B. THE CHURCH IS TO BE A PLACE WHERE WE GIVE.

Not only should we gather at Church but also we should give to the Church. We read in verse 2 that each of us is to **"lay by him in store."**

The words **"in store,"** transliterated TREASURE The ideal is of a treasury. Treasuries were associated with religious temples much like banks today, in which people put their money and valuables for safekeeping.

Paul's words would indicate that the early church had developed their own treasuries, place of safekeeping; accounts, as we would call them today, for people to put money in for the work of God. To put it simply, the church took up offerings and managed the money people gave for the work they were doing.

The Church is to be your place of giving. This is not to say that we are not to give to others beside our Church, but that the Church is to be the primary place of our giving.

Every believer is to give, as God has commanded us to give, to the Church in which we belong. That is the 'where' of our giving. When we gather on the first day of the week, one part of our gathering is giving.

I. 'WHO' IS INVOLVED TO GIVE

II. 'WHERE' WE ARE INSTRUCTED TO GIVE!

III. 'WHAT' WE ARE INTENDED GIVE!

What we are to give is described by the words, **"as God hath prospered him."** Paul's words do not give us a specific amount to give but they do say a lot about what we are to give or the amount we are to give.

A. THE AMOUNT OF OUR GIVING.

The amount of our giving depends on how we have prospered. In other words, we are to give based on how much we have.

As we have seen, everyone is to give. No one is excluded in the giving. What each is to give is based on what they have and are able to give. One may be able to give a large amount. Another may only have a small amount to give. What we give depends on what we have or how we have prospered.

An independent study found that households with incomes below \$10,000 give an average of 2.8% on their income, while households with incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000 give only 1.5%. Nearly half of the total contributions to the church in the U.S. come from households with incomes below \$30,000. The average total giving to the church per household was \$790.00.

This study found that the average church member gives \$790.00 a year. That is a little over \$15.00 a week. If your income is a little more than \$7,000 a year, there would be nothing wrong with that amount. But if you make \$14,000 a year you are only giving half of what you should give.

If you make \$20,000 a year you should give at least \$2,000 a year. If \$30,000 a year, our giving should at least be \$3,000 a year and etc. In most cases \$790.00 is both a shame and a sin.

When God looks at our giving He does not look at the amount. He looks at what we have and what we have left. Giving is to be in proportion to what we have.

A. THE AMOUNT OF OUR GIVING.

B. THE APPRECIATION OF OUR GIVING.

Notice carefully that Paul says, "**as God hath prospered us.**" He recognizes that God is the source of all we have. It is God that hath prospered us and all we have we owe to Him.

The measure of our giving is to be based on what we have and the motive of our giving is based on our appreciation to God for what He has given us.

When we give it is an act of thanksgiving and gratitude. It is an expression of appreciation.

I. 'WHO' IS INVOLVED TO GIVE

II. 'WHERE' WE ARE INSTRUCTED TO GIVE!

III. 'WHAT' WE ARE INTENDED GIVE!

4. 'WHY' WE ARE INFORMED TO GIVE!

We have seen that we ought to give because we are commanded to give and that it is a way of showing our appreciation. But there is also another reason why we ought to give as demonstrated in our text.

A. THE MINISTRY OF THE MONEY GIVEN.

We read in verse 1 that the collection was "**for the saints.**"

We see in **verse 3 that the saints referred to were the saints in Jerusalem.**

The Jerusalem church was experiencing great persecution and living in dire poverty. They had limited resources and going through great difficulty. The other churches were using money that was given to help these believers. The money was used in ministry.

One of the reasons for our giving is to provide for the ministry of the Church. Churches could not engage in ministry if people did not give.

A. THE MINISTRY OF THE MONEY GIVEN.

B. THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MONEY GIVEN.

We read in verse 3-4, **"And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. [4] And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me."**

In closing let me say that it is a blessing to give. The passage before us does not bother me or disturb me. It is a delightful passage and that is because I have learned the joy of giving. I have learned the joy of giving each week and giving in proportion to how God has blessed me. I give to show my love to God as well as obey His command. Many of you do the same. Some of you need to begin to practice what the passage says.