

The Truth about Giving. Part 3: Giving Today

Part 1:

- What was the tithe
- Who benefited from it
- Where did it go
- Christ's perspective on it
- We also saw that the tithe was the minimum and that even the poor gave back from what they got.

Part 2:

- God's Provision for His people in the OT

Part 3 (Tonight)

We are going to look at:

- Giving in the NT
- Application for us today

Acts 4:32-35

³²All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. ³³With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. ³⁴There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Acts 6:1-4

1In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

Acts 11:29-30

29The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. 30This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Romans 15:26-27

26For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. 27They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

1And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. 6So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

8I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. 9For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

10And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. 11Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. 12For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

13Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. 14At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, 15as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."

Exodus 16:17-18

¹⁷ *The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little.* ¹⁸ *And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. Each one gathered as much as he needed.*

2 Corinthians 9:1-11

¹*There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints.* ²*For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action.* ³*But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be.* ⁴*For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident.* ⁵*So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.*

⁶*Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.* ⁷*Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.* ⁸*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.* ⁹*As it is written:*

*"He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever."* ¹⁰*Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.* ¹¹*You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*

1 Thessalonians 2:9

⁹*Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.*

2 Thessalonians 3:6-10

⁶*In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.* ⁷*For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you,* ⁸*nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and*

day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. ⁹We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

1 Timothy 5:3-4, 8, 16

³Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. ⁴But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.

⁸If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

¹⁶If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

James 2:14-17

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ¹⁵Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

1 John 3:16-18

¹⁶This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ¹⁷If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

Matthew 6:1-4

¹"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²"So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be

honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

So how do we give today?

Let's recap on what we have read tonight and see what example the believers living under the New Covenant did:

- First and foremost in the book of **Acts** there was unity: "they were of one heart and one mind".
- They were willing to share "everything they had" and because of that there were "no needy persons among them"
- Others ("from time to time") sold their property and the money from it was distributed to those among them that had need.
- They gave according to their ability
- They provided help for their brothers (we know from **Matt 12:50** that our brothers are "those who do the will of the Father").

In the **Corinthian** church they:

- Gave as much as they were able, and "even beyond their ability".
- They had a desire to give
- Their willingness to give had to be matched by their completion of it and it was according to their means
- They helped each other out in times of need.
- Paul gave the example of the distribution of manna in Exodus as far as the model of giving was concerned
- He instructed them to give generously and not grudgingly
- Their reaping would be in direct proportion to their sowing
- Each man was to give according to what he had "decided to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion"
- God loves a cheerful giver
- Generosity results in thanksgiving to God

The church at **Thessalonica** was instructed not to be idle, to work hard with their own hands and that if they didn't work that they shouldn't eat. So there is an onus on the redeemed to work and to take care of their food.

Paul also wrote to **Timothy** to instruct the churches to:

- Make provision for widows
- But first and foremost they were to be cared for by their own family
- Taking care of the needs within their family pleased God
- If the immediate family didn't do that they are worse than unbelievers!!

Both **James** and **John** teach us that it is wrong to see your brother in need physically and do nothing to help them when you have the wherewithal to do so.

Then in the gospel of **Matthew** we see that Christ teaches us that our giving is to be done in secret so that our Heavenly Father, who sees "what is done in secret", can reward us.

Next meeting is on Wednesday 22nd Sept at 7.30pm