

“Money Matters” - 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 – May 8th, 2016

- The title I've chosen for Today's teaching is, "Money Matters."
- This is one of those times when I'm so glad to be teaching God's Word book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter and verse-by-verse.
- The reason is the expositional teaching of God's Word is such that you'll only talk about money when the text is about money.

- Enter today's text where the Apostle Paul addresses the matter of money, specifically related to receiving tithes and offerings.
- Even more specifically the who, what, where, how and why of giving financially to the Lord in order to fund the work of the Lord.
- Before we jump into our text there are two things we need to first understand about what was happening in the early church.

- First it's important to understand during this time, there was a famine of sorts, and tremendous financial hardship for Christians.
- This because, coming to Christ came at a great cost, so much so, that many of the Jews lost their livelihood and even families.
- This is why we have scriptures that exhort Christians to first count the cost, knowing that doing so could cost them everything.

- The second thing we need to understand is that the Corinthian Christians, to their credit, had asked Paul about the collections.
- From chapter seven on through chapter sixteen, which is the last chapter in Paul's first epistle, he's answering their questions.
- This would seem to indicate that giving was a concern of theirs, which is why Paul starts by saying, "concerning the collection."

- I'm hoping you'll kindly allow me to teach this in question form so as to clear up much of the confusion surrounding the tithe.
- While I am keenly aware that there are those who believe tithing is Old Testament law and as such does not apply to us today.
- However, it could be argued that the tithe is pre-law by virtue of the principle of first mention with Melchizedek back in Genesis.

Genesis 14:18–21 (NKJV) — 18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all. 21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."

You'll forgive me for quoting often the late Larry Burkett of Christian Financial Concepts, but as a student of his one of the things I learned is that tithing for the Christian represents the minimum. He actually delineated between tithes, offerings and alms to the poor in the sense that tithing was the minimum that we give to the church as the storehouse, offerings were over and above to support other ministries and missionaries, and alms over and above the tithes and offerings were to be given to the poor.

- Be that as it may, in our text today what Paul has to say is general in the sense that he deals with the topic of our overall giving.
- In so doing, Paul provides us with answers to the questions of who is to give, why, when, and even how much we are to give.
- What follows, in order of how Paul by the Holy Spirit writes this, in verses 1 through 4, are answers to four of these questions.

Question #1: When are we to give?

- The answer to the question of when is quite simply that we're to give systematically on a regular basis be it weekly or monthly.
- Notice in the first part of verse two where Paul says on the first day of the week," which was weekly on Sunday when they met.
- Giving consistently is an important principle because as Christians we're less prone to give emotionally or under compulsion.

2 Corinthians 9:6–10 (NIV) — 6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, 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: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their 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.

- Another reason consistent giving is an important principle is because it's a much needed reminder of our being good stewards.
- In other words, when we give regularly, it reminds us that we are only the stewards of that which God has entrusted us with.
- When we give cheerfully and regularly, we're in affect transferring ownership of our treasures to their rightful owner in heaven.

Again, Larry Burkett of this said, "The one principle that surrounds everything else is that of stewardship; that we are the managers of everything that God has given us."

Question #2: Who is to give?

- The answer to this is also found in the first part of verse 2, where Paul says each one of us should lay something aside to give.
- Simply put, every one of us is to give to the Lord's work so there will be plenty in the storehouse as it were to fund the work.
- This is another financial principle Larry Burkett taught, as it relates to the only time in the Bible where God tells us to test Him.

Malachi 3:8–13 - 8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. 11 "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts; 12 And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land," Says the LORD of hosts.

Question #3 - How much are we to give?

- Paul's answer to this is also in verse two where he says that we are to give as we prosper. In other words, give on the increase.
- The truth of the matter is that the scriptures are replete with passages that teach us to how the Lord has prospered us.
- This principle actually dovetails into our 4th question, which has to do with why we are to give, or what should be our motivation.

Question #4 - Why are we to give?

- I would argue that this is perhaps one of the most important if not the most principles concerning giving financially to the Lord.
- Notice the end of verse two where Paul says he doesn't want there to be a collection of the money when he's there with them.
- This begs the question of why he wants the collection prior to his arrival. One would think they'd give more if Paul were there.

- I would suggest that this is precisely why he doesn't want them to collect it while he's there. He doesn't want it to be a got too.
- Also, he doesn't want them to receive tithes and offerings while he's there because he doesn't want this to be all about money.
- Sadly, many a pastor and preacher has made it all about the money, which has poor mouthed God as if He needs the money.

- It's not that God needs us to give, it's that God made us to need to give. Giving is not about the money; it's about the Christian.
- Perhaps better said, God does not need us to give, we need to give because of what giving does both in us and through us.
- What giving does in us is that it frees us from the financial worries that come as a result of holding on too tightly to our money.

Larry Burkett of this said, "When we surrender every area of our lives- including our finances-to God, then we are free to trust Him to meet our needs. But if we would rather hold tightly to those things that we possess, then we find ourselves in bondage to those very things."

Matthew 6:19-34 - 19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. 25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? 28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

- This brings us to what God does through us in our giving, which is that He's chosen to provide for His work through His people.
- If you think about it God could speak gold and silver into existence but instead has chosen to fund His work through His people.
- Giving is an act of worship of the Lord, this when we give unto the Lord, which in turn is an indicator of our service for the Lord.

I'll close with Larry Burkett, "How we use our money is the clearest outside indicator of what we really believe. ... If someone is a true disciple of Jesus Christ, the evidence will be found in that person's everyday life - including his or her use of money."