

Why Givers Are So Blessed, Part 1 - Philippians 4:14-16 – April 7th, 2019

- Today's teaching is part one of a series about those who give to God's work, and why it is that they are so blessed by the Lord.
- Before we jump into this, I think it would be good to provide a preface of sorts concerning the touchy topic of money and giving.
- This because, churches and pastors have rightly been accused of always talking about money making it the central focal point.

- In going through book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter, and verse-by-verse, we only talk about it when God's Word talks about it.
- Actually, God's Word has a lot to say about money, and one might be surprised to learn just how much the Bible speaks to this.
- What follows are what I will call fast facts about the topic of money in the Bible and specifically how much Jesus talked about it.

- Fact #1 – In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, approximately one out of every six verses deals in some way with money.
Fact #2 – Sixteen of the twenty-nine parables, or over 55%, that Jesus taught deal with both our money and our possessions.
Fact #3 – The Bible has approximately 500 verses on prayer less than 500 verses on faith but more than 2000 verses on money.
Fact #4 – Jesus taught more about the topic of money and possessions than all of his teachings on heaven and hell combined.

- Enter our text today, where the Apostle Paul echo's the Savior's teachings, specifically as it relates to the blessing of giving.
- In the book of Acts the twentieth chapter, Paul quotes Jesus when he says that it is more blessed to give than it is to receive.
- Within this context Paul ends his letter by thanking them for their generosity, and reminding them of why givers are so blessed.

1. Givers are commended (Verse 14)

14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

- Here, Paul tells them, it was good of them, to give, and in so doing they were also sharing in the many troubles that Paul had.
- The word for troubles is an interesting one in that it carries the idea of a crushing pressure on ones chest so they can't breath.
- It's important to understand it was the Christians in the Philippian church who supported Paul during his difficulties and trials.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 - 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.

2. Givers are rare (Verse 15)

15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;

- What Paul is saying here is that of all the churches he had planted none of them had financially supported him in his ministry.
- Sadly, nothing has changed since then when it comes to just how rare it is to find a Christian who gives, let alone generously.
- You might be surprised to know some of the statistics of the small percentages of those who give to the work of the kingdom.

According to a Gallup poll, of the 17% of Christians who say they tithe, only 3% actually do.

<https://www.gallup.com/home.aspx>

- Listen to the top five reasons, according to another survey, that what is arguably 97% of Christians don't tithe to their church:
- 38 percent said they could not afford to tithe
- 33 percent said they had too many debts
- 18 percent said the spouses did not agree on tithing
- 15 percent said they believed in proportionate giving
- 14 percent said their bookkeeping/finances were a mess

<http://www.ecfa.org/Documents/News/20-Truths-About-Tithers-Executive-Summary-eBook-Report.pdf>

3. Givers are appreciated (Verse 16)

16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

- Here Paul is expressing his profound appreciation for their continued and even consistent giving when he was in Thessalonica.
- Paul went through tremendous difficulty and opposition in Thessalonica and yet his one memory is how the Philippians helped.
- In other words, it was the giving of the Philippians that were the greatest help to Paul, at a time of the greatest need for Paul.

Charles Spurgeon - "Probably the gift does not come to very much, if estimated in Roman coin; but he makes a great deal of it, and sits down to write a letter of thanks abounding in rich expressions like these."

Adam Clarke - "While laboring to plant the church there, he was supported partly by working with his hands, 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9; and partly by the contributions sent him from Philippi. Even the Thessalonians had contributed little to his maintenance: this is not spoken to their credit."

- In closing I would like to take this opportunity to express to all of you my profound appreciating for your giving to this ministry.
- Both to our church locally and to our online church globally, I cannot even being to thank you enough for your giving to the Lord.
- I would venture to say that none of us, myself included, have any idea how far reaching our financial support is for the Kingdom.