

## New Testament Giving

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Giving on the first day of the week is common to most churches that claim to follow Christ, except those who erroneously teach we are to worship on Saturday, the O.T. Sabbath.
  - A. These churches still take up a collection, but do so with no N.T. authority.
  - B. We who take up a collection on Sunday do so according to biblical authority (1 Cor. 16:1-2 – “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: <sup>2</sup> On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”).
2. Of course, the question we must answer is what obligations this command and others related to it place upon us and the congregation today concerning storing up money for the Lord’s work.
  - A. That is what I want to talk about today—the obligations we have as individuals and a local church concerning the collection of money for the work of the Lord.
  - B. I hope in doing so that we will examine ourselves and our practice in giving so that we might better fulfill God’s will and bring Him glory through this act of worship.

### BODY:

#### **I. Why a collection on Sunday, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week?**

- A. There is O.T. precedence for God’s people monetarily supporting God’s spiritual work.
  1. When Abraham met Melchizedek he gave him 10<sup>th</sup> of his spoils (Heb. 7:1-3 – “For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, <sup>2</sup> **to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all**, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” <sup>3</sup> without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.”).
    - a. Melchizedek is a type of the Christ.
    - b. Thus, Christ would possess greater honor and right to receive such gifts from His people today!
  2. Later, God established the tithe for Israel, requiring giving of 10% back to God (Lev. 27:30, 32 – “And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s. It is holy to the Lord...<sup>32</sup> And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord.”).
    - a. Israel also had to offer sacrifices, free-will offerings, etc., while being responsible for taxes owed to overseeing governments (Mt. 22:17-22).
    - b. This tithe supported the Levites who were responsible for the spiritual workings of God’s kingdom (Num. 18:23-24 – “But the **Levites shall perform the work of the tabernacle of meeting**, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a statute forever, throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. <sup>24</sup> **For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer up as a heave** (lifted up, rp) **offering to the Lord, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance**; therefore I have said to them, ‘Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.’”).
  3. So, we have O.T. precedent in tithing the wealth of God’s people for the support of His work and worship!
- B. Not surprising is the fact that we find similar New Testament examples and instructions:
  1. When a need arose, early Christians willingly gave of their means into a church treasury to address these needs (Acts 4:34-35 – “Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were **possessors of lands or houses sold them**, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, <sup>35</sup> **and laid them at the apostles’ feet**; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.”). *Someone what amazing attitudes of sacrifice for their brethren!*
  2. Later, we find Paul giving orders, or commands, to *churches* to establish a treasury to support the work of the Lord.

- a. Background: Paul's visit to Jerusalem to meet with the other apostles (Gal. 2:9-10 - "and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. <sup>10</sup> They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.")
- b. Paul spent several years doing this, which included commanding churches to collect funds to help the poor saints in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-2 - "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: <sup>2</sup> On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.")
3. From Paul's instructions to the church at Corinth we learn...
  - a. That when a scriptural need existed, churches were **commanded** to fulfill these needs.
    - 1) These instructions were not optional.
    - 2) And, brethren, I am unsure how we could consider them optional for us when we know there are scriptural needs and works we are obligated to meet and support.
  - b. Churches were commanded to act on "**every** first day of the week." (ESV, NASB, NIV)
    - 1) This was a weekly obligation for the church to fulfill.
    - 2) So, individual Christians must see their duty as requiring a weekly commitment.
  - c. What was required was for **individual Christians to set aside funds** on a weekly basis to be stored up, or **put in a treasury**, for the work of the Lord.
    - 1) Every Christian, young or old, rich or poor, male or female, must put something aside, or lit. "take to him/herself," what he/she intends to be stored up for future use.
    - 2) Even if you are just given an allowance, or are on government income, etc., you give!
  - d. Individual Christians determine the amount they give based how the Lord had **prospered** them or **carried them on their journey** of life.
    - 1) One is to *purpose*, determine beforehand, to give in proper comparison to how God has provided for one's life.
    - 2) This is more than just giving of our "surplus," but requires giving based on how we live, on what God has supplied for us to live, which for most is a generous income.
      - a) I think we would be in the category of living with abundance, which would require that our giving be characterized as abundant.
      - b) How often do you eat out, go to Walmart, etc.? However we are prospered, our giving must correspond to that!
  - e. This money was to be collected, or stored up, in **a church treasury**.
    - 1) First, there was a special day for this to be done—the first day of the week—the day in which the church came together to worship (Acts 20:7).
    - 2) Second, this regular "storing up," or treasuring up, was part of the command to the local church at Corinth, indicating church action and some sort of church treasury.
    - 3) Third, this was to be done so "no collections/collecting" would have to take place when Paul arrived, which would not be the case if people did this storing up at home.
4. Although I realize these incidents involved benevolent work, the local church must also provide monetary support for teaching and preaching of the gospel.
  - a. 1 Cor. 9:11, 13-14 - "If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?... <sup>13</sup> Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? <sup>14</sup> Even so the Lord has **commanded** that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel."
  - b. Local churches did support the preaching and teaching of the word.
    - 1) Phil. 4:15-16 - "Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. <sup>16</sup> For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities."

- 2) 2 Cor. 11:8 – “I robbed other churches, taking **wages** from them to minister to you.”
- 3) For *local churches* to fulfill this command to support the gospel in providing wages to those who preach, etc., some sort of sustained, church funds had to be maintained.
5. So, the question is, “how can churches maintain a sustained fund to support God’s work today?”
  - a. We know, without question, that it is right for money to be collected by freewill giving.
  - b. We know, without question, that this collection can be made on the first day of the week.
  - c. We know, without question, that what is given can be stored, or treasured, up for future use.
  - d. We know, without question, that collected funds were used for various scriptural purposes.
  - e. So, when we combine these facts, we see that a local church treasury sustained by freewill giving to be used for the work of the Lord is scriptural, and we have an individual responsibility to support it!

## II. Questions answered:

### A. What is a proper attitude in giving?

1. We can learn something from the O.T. tithe:
  - a. **Holding back in tithing** was considered robbing God (Mal. 3:8 – “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.”).
  - b. The tithe **required honesty** (Deut. 26:12-13 – “When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year—the year of tithing—and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, <sup>13</sup> **then you shall say before the Lord your God:** ‘I have removed the holy tithe from my house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them.”).
    - 1) We are very adamant about keeping the amount of our giving basically secret.
    - 2) How would you feel if you had to verbalize this before God with each giving?
    - 3) God knows, even if our brethren do not know, what we are saying by our giving.
  - c. I know we are quick to point out that the tithe has passed with the O.T.
    - 1) In Christ we have it so much better in every way than did Israel (i.e., better sacrifice, better high priest, better covenant, better promises, better priesthood, etc.).
    - 2) God would, then, expect much more from us, not less!
2. N.T. guidelines?
  - a. Our giving must be motivated by Christ’s act of giving Himself for our salvation (2 Cor. 8:8-9 – “I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. <sup>9</sup> For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”).
    - 1) How much do we appreciate the sacrifice of Christ?
    - 2) Again, our giving is to be an expression of our appreciation of this!
  - b. Concerning this collection, Paul said, “For if there is first a **willing mind**, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have” (2 Cor. 8:12).
    - 1) If we are **willing** to give, God will accept our giving according to what we **have**.
    - 2) He doesn’t expect us to give more than we have, but to give according to how He has blessed us—how we live, including all the amenities and luxuries that we have!
  - c. God blesses those who give *cheerfully* (2 Cor. 9:6-7 – “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup> So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”).

- 1) As you must sow ample seed to reap an ample harvest, you must sow your blessings bountifully upon God's work to reap God's blessings in bountiful fashion.
  - 2) We sow our blessings willingly, *not grudgingly*, or in sorrow or grief, but *cheerfully*.
- B. How much should I give?
1. God must take priority (Matt. 6:31-33 – “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’”<sup>32</sup> For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.<sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”).
    - a. We don't use all our money the way we want and then give what is left to God.
    - b. We are to purpose, to determine ahead, to give a proper amount which may, in turn, affect how much we do of the other things, not vice-versa.
  2. The amount we give is dependent upon our income and situation.
    - a. If your income and work benefits allow you to have good health, a nice home, cars, entertainment, luxuries, to eat out, etc., then your generosity must reflect this.
    - b. A good rule of thumb would be the following: 1) Take your weekly contribution and multiply it by 10; 2) Ask God to provide you a weekly income of that amount.
  3. Extraordinary circumstances demand extraordinary sacrifices (Acts 4:33-35 – “And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And **great grace was upon them all**.”<sup>34</sup> Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were **possessors of lands or houses sold them**, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,<sup>35</sup> and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.”).

CONCLUSION:

1. I hope I have given you some things to consider relating to your giving to the Lord.
2. I hope that if your giving is inadequate, that you will do better, making a greater commitment to God and His work.
3. And, if you are giving as you should, I hope you will continue to do your best in this.
4. With that said I hope that God will bless each of us abundantly as we trust in Him and seek to honor Him with our gift to support His work.