

Teaching Sound Doctrine

The Worship of the Lord's Church as God Would Have It Part 5

CONTRIBUTION

The Bible has a great deal to say about man and his money. In those instructions, man is instructed to give of his money to the work of the church. Paul writes,

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Several times in the Corinthian letter Paul, by inspiration, says that what he wrote to Corinth was also for all churches everywhere (1 Cor. 1:2; 4:17; 7:17). Thus, when he gives orders to the church in Galatia and now to Corinth, Paul is setting forth God's commands for all churches including us.

Paul informs us of the day the church is to take up a collection. The day is the first day of the week. This is the day our Lord rose from the dead (Mark 16:9), and the church was established (Acts 2). It is the day that is referred to as the Lord's day (Rev. 1:10), and is the day the church regularly assembled to engage in worship to Him (Acts 20:7). It comes every week and is Sunday.

What is commanded is for every person to put money into the common public treasury of the church. He tells us we are to give in accordance with the blessings we have received of God. As one studies 2 Corinthians 8-9 we learn that we are to give of a willing mind, liberally, bountifully, cheerfully, sacrificially, purposefully, not sparingly, and not grudgingly. Remembering that all things belong to God and we have only been entrusted with its care will help us to give in this way. Also remembering what God has given for us (His only begotten Son; John 3:16) will help us to give properly. When we give as God has instructed, we are laying up treasure for ourselves in heaven (Mat. 6:19-21; Phil. 4:17-18).

If you are contributing of your means for the support of the church, be liberal; don't insult God by giving what you would be ashamed for your closest friends to see you give. Purpose to give liberally, and promise to do so, so you will have a double incentive to be liberal. Believe that every dime you give will be laid up to your account in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21; Phil. 4:14-18.) Then trust God to take care of you, and don't be afraid that he will go back on his promises (Nichols 265).

Paul uses the Macedonian brethren as an illustration for giving (2 Cor. 8:1-5). They gave even though they were in deep poverty themselves, but they were rich in their liberality. They were so liberal that they went “beyond their power” in their giving. They viewed their giving as an opportunity, not an imposition, and thus they intreated Paul to accept their gift. The reason they had such Christian liberality is because they “first gave their own selves to the Lord.” When we give ourselves to God then our treasure will follow. “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mat. 6:19).

The purpose of placing this money into the common treasury is to meet the needs that arise. The church has certain needs which arise (supporting the preaching of the gospel, helping needy people, money associated with our worshiping God, etc.) and money is to be placed into this treasury to prepare for and have the money to meet those needs. While Paul was dealing with a specific need (a collection for the saints who were in poverty at Jerusalem), there are still needs that must be met today and the church is to have the treasury to meet those needs.

The summation of this is that the church is only to receive its financial support from freewill offerings. The church is not to go into business to gain its money, and it is not to have cake or pie sales, garage sales, other types of money-making schemes to gain its support.

PREACHING

When the church gathered together to worship, there was preaching or teaching taking place. “And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7). Immediately after the establishment of the church we observe: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). Doctrine is teaching, thus they continued in preaching and teaching, and that preaching was a part of their worship.

Preaching demands a preacher, as Paul was doing at Troas (Acts 20:7). A preacher’s work is to preach the Bible. Paul gives a great charge to a young preacher: “I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:1-2). He is to be preaching the Word no matter what people think about it, or as one reportedly said, “When they like it and when they don’t like it.” In that preaching they are to reprove, rebuke, and exhort. It is interesting to note that two of the three are what men refer to as negative preaching. *Reproving* is to bring something to light or expose, then to convict someone of something and thus to correct them. *Rebuking* is to charge

or admonish sharply. It is what our Lord did in regard to evil spirits (Mat. 17:18; Mark 1:25; 9:25; Luke 4:35, 41; 9:42), the winds (Mat. 8:26; Mark 4:39; Luke 8:24), a fever (Luke 4:39), and the disciples (Mark 8:33; Luke 9:55). *Exhorting* is to give comfort to and to encourage, strengthen, and admonish.

In preaching the Word we must preach **all** the Word. Paul was free from the blood of all men because he declared all of God's Word. "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27). If we fail to preach parts of the Bible dealing with man's eternal destiny and men are lost because of it, then preachers and elders will also be lost (see Eze. 3:17-21; 33:1-9).

In preaching we must "hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13). In holding fast the sound Word, we will warn against false doctrine. Paul tells the young preacher, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:3). Later in this letter Paul informs us that the Spirit has spoken clearly concerning those who will "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1). After specifying some false doctrines which will cause some to fall away, he tells Timothy, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained" (1 Tim. 4:6). One cannot adequately warn against false doctrine without exposing the false teacher. This is what inspiration by the hand of Paul did as we read of Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20), Phygellus and Hermogenes (2 Tim. 1:15), Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:17-18), Demas (2 Tim. 4:10), and Alexander the coppersmith (2 Tim. 4:14). Likewise, in our preaching today we must expose false doctrines (such as grace or faith only, divorce and remarriage, instrumental music, etc.) and the people who teach such (such as Ruble Shelly, Max Lucado, Jim Woodroof, Marvin Phillips, etc.)

The preacher must not be an ear-tickler. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4). The preaching is to please God, not man. "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). Thus, the faithful preacher will preach the powerful gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17) knowing that it alone has the power to save man's soul. He will not change or alter God's message. He recognizes the solemnity of the occasion and does not turn the preaching service into a time to entertain people or simply give nice after-dinner speeches. He recognizes that preaching the truth is not a preaching of a social gospel (dealing with the social ills of society). He realizes

that the work of the church is spiritual (John 18:36) to save souls (Luke 19:10) and only the pure unadulterated gospel can save. Thus, his goal is to “take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Tim. 4:16).

CONCLUSION

What a wonderful privilege God has granted to us, that we can worship the God who made all things. Yet, even as God gave a pattern to make the tabernacle in the Old Testament, God has given us a pattern by which to worship Him today. For our worship to be acceptable to Him, we must follow that pattern as well as worship with the proper attitude of heart. May we ever set our mind to worship our God in spirit and in truth.

WORK CITED

Nichols, Gus. “The Church of Christ—Its Worship (Specific).” *The Church of Christ—Essential, All-Sufficient, Indestructible, Perpetually Relevant*. Ed. Thomas B. Warren. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1971.