

Giving Freely

The Bible tells us to give freely--what does this mean?

In the Bible 100% of what Christians gave went to the Gospel.

We should first recognize what the Gospel is--the purposes and functions of the Gospel...

18* The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19* To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4)

In these verses Jesus outlines His Gospel purposes---He came to bring a Gospel of salvation, healing and deliverance--to the poor and needy. So the giving in Jesus' ministry was to the poor and needy--the blind the bruised. Jesus told us elsewhere to care for the homeless and visit those in prison...these are the areas of function that the Gospel is meant to go toward---it is truly giving freely---

Giving freely means to give without expectation of return from the person you are giving to.

Many times I have heard Christians teachers quote this part of a verse in the Bible

“.....freely ye have received, freely give.....”

It seems to fit what has happened in the process of their teaching. They have received teaching from that person, and now they should give freely. But this is out of context with the bible--lets read the rest of what Jesus taught in this context...

8* Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

9* Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

10* Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. (Matthew 10: 8-10)

Here Jesus is sending His apostles and giving them instruction on how to conduct their ministry. Notice it fits with Luke 4:18-19---they are being released to preach the Gospel--to heal the sick and do deliverance ministry....this is what they are supposed to be doing as their ministry and they are supposed to give it freely. They have received freely the authority of God to carry on His ministry and so they must give it freely those in

need...and specifically not take money for it, since Jesus tells them to NOT provide gold silver or brass (money) in their purses.

They are not going to go out there and ask money from the people they minister to.

Remember how Jesus told us to give...

3* But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4* That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. (Matthew 6: 3-4)

Giving freely--giving secretly--this is what Jesus asked us to do.

It is not an exchange

It is not an exchange for services rendered.

The world operates through exchange--it is a very familiar way to do things. When we need to have a plumber come and fix a leaky pipe in our house--the plumber comes out and does the job--and we pay him or her--it's an exchange for services rendered--it seems fair to us--it seems right.....but it's the way the devil works.

16* And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17* And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (Rev 13:16-17)

At the end times the Beast of Revelation will at some point be in control of buying and selling in the earth. This certainly tells us that Satan operates in the realm of buying and selling.

Tradition trains Christians to be very familiar with exchange. Each week they are taught by someone--they receive a service--and it seems fair and right (and Godly) to pay that person for the services they have rendered. In Christianity the teaching ministry is choking the Gospel ministry. Look around and see how much of believers' wealth is given to teachers of the Bible--to people who are Christian who are teaching other Christians. Now

compare that with how much goes directly to the poor--to all the needs of the Gospel ministry. Again I will say this---every Christian church gives some of what they have to the Gospel. Catholic churches and protestant and home churches and every church does, to some degree give to the Gospel ministry. But then think of how much giving goes to the teaching ministry....consider the percentages.

Some might think that it is impossible to give 100% to the Gospel. But if we were functioning in the new covenant ways of operating the Church it would be very simple. The Christians in the Bible were mostly meeting in their own homes, so there was not any building fund. Teaching among them was simple and direct among themselves--God was teaching them through the scriptures--certainly the writers of the Bible were not charging them for the letters they wrote. And think of today how easily we can communicate the Word of God to one another--through e-mail--through the internet--the Bible is more available for free today than at any other time in history! Today it is extremely easy for a believer to be taught the Word of God.

The process of giving worked was like everything in the Church it was lead by God. The groups of believer met frequently and in their prayer they were asking God how and where and when and whom should witness the gospel Who and where a they ought to be sent (the greek word sent is apostello--apostleship the 1st ministry of the church--1Co 12:28)..and on an ongoing basis the #1 function of the Church was to send people outward with the gospel. Some might have been sent across the street--others might have occasionally been sent long distances...and here is where they may have the need to "live of the Gospel"...

14* Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. (1Co 9:14)

This area of scripture is Paul's explanation of instructions to the Corinthian church..He has asked them to set aside some goods--so that He and his group of apostles can deliver those goods to the poor in Jerusalem. This is absolutely Gospel function. He has the right to ask for goods from other believers in his type of Godly mission,,and he makes the point that while people are ministering the Gospel, they have the right to live of it while they are accomplishing what God has set for them. In other words they have the right to take some of the food and goods for themselves to live on while they are carrying out this ministry. (A very important point--ministry is NOT

a permanent position!--in the Christian Church function one person might be called by God to minister the Gospel--another time it might be another person' turn--it is God who is meant to call out who minister--and it is not a permanent position)

But "living of the Gospel" not at all a rule--in fact if you read all of what Paul says in this context he makes the point that he did not accept anything for his ministry to the Corinthian church--he preached the Gospel without charge when he witnessed to them--which is exactly the way it is supposed to go. The gospel is a free gift from God--we cannot earn it or pay for it. The giving to those in need is free.

You don't give to the person who gave teaching to you, you give to those who do not have.

Giving is not repetitive--its not giving to ourselves.

The devil's highest plan is to choke the Gospel among believers

One of the ways he has done this among believers is to trick Christians into giving to themselves. He has put in traditions to fund building which are for our own use--and the person who teaches is the one who receives pay (very hard to find this idea in the Bible folks!). In the Bible "them that minister the Gospel" are the ones who might possibly live of the Gospel if it's a necessity.

The giving in the early church in Jerusalem was to the apostles--not because they were teaching everyone--but so that they could distribute to everyone who had need (again I will put forth that the "need" others might have had was not just for food but also for their own Gospel ministry needs)..Note that the giving was not to the pastor, or to the teacher of the church--but to the apostles--to those who were "sent" with the Gospel.

This was not laying up money of the use of Christians if times got bad. this was direct and real need---again not giving to ourselves. This was not a storehouse--they were not putting money in a mutual savings account. They saw the true needs of the poor around them (both within and without the Church) and giving freely to those need--expecting nothing in return (but for the reward that all of us are familiar with--=the reward that God gives when we give to the poor!)...it was not an exchange for services rendered it was not Christians giving to themselves.