

Reasons and Procedures for Corporate Giving  
Biblical Theology of the Diaconate #43  
2023.07.23 Sabbath School class

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Our gracious God and our heavenly Father. How we thank you and praise you. For your design for us. To know you and To make you known to image you To bring you glory. We thank you for this world that you have created. By which we may do both of those things.

Which is a good tool for us. For both of those things. We pray that you would help us to understand your word. That we might. No better what to do with the things of this world. In a way that Enjoys you your goodness, you yourself. And, Displays you, as Our great treasure.

Even with our earthly treasures. We ask this in Jesus name meth,

So, we're Aiming this morning to finish up the section on The apostolic church and the instruction that came in the context of the apostolic church. Then Lord willing. Next Lord's day, we will begin with Uh, first Timothy And especially in first and second Timothy, then You have the Transition.

To the post apostolic church. Paul writing as an apostle, giving Timothy instruction. For the churches as the apostolic age. Will be closing. And the bible. Will be completed as we will be. Hearing about and thinking about, This week and next week, even in our second, Timothy readings. Uh, but today, we are still thinking about corporate needs those things that sometimes you have Giving through the church because there are a large number of recipients.

For instance, we saw earlier. In the book of Acts, those who did have A very large amount wanting to take care. Of widows and such. And anyone as they had need And whenever there was need, they would sell and they would bring the money and lay it before the apostles.

And the apostles would ever see distribution and that actually occasion, the need for deacons because there was so much distribution that some people were falling through the cracks. Some people were being overlooked. And so that's one. Uh, reason to give corporately. Well, another may be the anonymity. You don't want.

Necessarily someone in the church to feel like you are their personal patron. And feel beholden to you in that way or Or humiliated or humbled before you in that way. And then, there is the Almost on the other end. Corporate giving because the needs that exists is so big that it requires the giving of many people.

In order to Cover the need and then there's corporate giving that is corporate because it's from church to church. And that's what we've been considering the last few weeks the churches in Judea. Needing help generally. Among them. And therefore the corporate giving of the churches in Macedonia. And okay, and Asia.

Uh, giving For that reason. And that's what he is. Uh, What he's talking about already. We've been in second Corinthians 8 9, but what he's talking about already in first Corinthians 16 and here. We have not just the need for corporate giving because it's church to church, but a little bit of instruction.

About the, you know, some of the logistics. Some That biblically wise and we'll see in a moment. Uh, mandated logistics. For corporate giving. Or particularly for collecting. So, first Corinthians 16 verses 1 to 4 Now, concerning the collection for the saints. Oops. Sorry, I had forgotten to unmute the stream.

Now concerning the collection for the saints as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia. So you must do also 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.

And when I come, Whomever you approved by your letters. I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. But if it is fitting that I go also, They will go with me. So the first thing we see is that this is something that the apostles directing and he hasn't just directing it for quoric.

This is something that he has. Uh, given as instruction as order command direction. To the churches of Galatia as well. Now, this is something that is important. Of course, throughout the bible, we want to know which things are. Unique to a particular. Congregation or a particular culture. Which things are generally for all the churches and in the Corinthian letters in particular, he will say things like We have no other practice nor do all the churches and so the the Lord gives us, the spirit gives us, please like that.

That say, okay, here's something that is broader than just for corn. Are broader just for Galatian. And so, this this idea then Of. Uh, the collecting Or actually not collecting, but the laying aside. Being something that is done. Uh, the first day of the week, Paul actually didn't want.

Corporate collection, he wanted individual laying a sign. So that that would be Handed over to those who are certified by letter. So, he says, 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.

And when I come whomever you approve by your letters, And again, this picks something up that we saw in second Corinthians 8 and 9 this value of That that they set upon integrity. I think. Sometimes. Well, not sometimes I have often heard. You know, we should just trust one another.

We should just trust one another, and it's not really an issue of Uh, desiring. And assuming the best things about one another and giving and judgment of charity. There is a love for uprightness. There's a value upon uprightness and integrity And so he actually had these congregations each one certified by letter.

That, who the one who would carry the money. To Jerusalem is. And that person. Would then. Also, return and attest to what was done? What was done with the money? There's a there's a very Very high value here. Placed upon integrity, in fact, Paul himself. A, if this was his project desiring for the collection, in Judea And so, he knew that there would at least be the appearance of a vested interest.

B, he's a Jew. And so, Uh, this collection of Of gentile, generally Christian funds for for Jewish Christian churches. I'm sure you can. Imagine how? From your own experience. How easily the people's hearts are given to suspicion and if they're not careful to obey the law, God they're tons become Un careful to.

To subscription, right after their hearts. And so, Paul himself was saying I'm not even assuming that you're going to certify me. If it is fitting, you could put my name on the letter that says I can carry for you. Uh, but if not that's fine, just certifying me will.

And will send whomever you certify? And so, there's this. Individual responsibility, each one determining for himself. What to lay aside. Uh, there's this Uh, intentionality and diligence. Many of you are familiar with this, even in your own kind of personal finances of your household. If there's something that you want to be able to give a lot of money, to one of the better ways to do that, is to decide how much you are going to.

To lay aside for that. And over. An extended period of time. Then little by little, what is laid, aside becomes stored up Uh, like he says here. So, the the idea is That by By each first day of the week, each first day. First day sabbath. Each one lays something aside.

He is able to store up as the Lord prospers him instead of spending as the Lord prospers in and which case you don't store up anything, Um, but those of us Who. Who are convinced of the wisdom of that for saving for ourselves. Uh, see how much you can end up giving.

For to the lord. And for his work. If? Your systematically over time. Uh, you know, i know probably each one of us Has this. Similar experience of rejoicing. You you decide in your heart cheerfully generously according to what? The lord has enabled you to be able to do and you give us significant amount.

And it seems significant enough, you know, for the weekly amount that you give Uh but then by the end of the year, you add up all those weeks and you're actually amazed at how much you've been able to get And, What a what a great blessing. It is to be able to do that, but then, especially if there are people giving in that way, it becomes all the more important to have this integrity with accounting.

Integrity with administration. Uh, with this bursting. Uh, what what has been given? And so those two things. Are tied together.

Notice. Uh, notice he does not consider it part of his. Apostolic function to be involved in the collecting or the carrying. There's something analogous there. Uh, to The apostles divesting themselves of Um, Of being the ones before him, the Money is laid and the ones who administered the gift thinking back to our time in acts.

Now, one of the reasons that it is important that this be done with deacons, Now and not so much. Elders is Because, Very quickly, the apostles themselves. Uh, got their living from Their ministry and there were elders than as we're going to hear when we get to First Timothy chapter 5 who got their living from the ministry, the older is worthy.

Of a double honor. I happen to think. And this would, i know it's Uh, different from from where we are. Uh, i happen to think that the use of those words when we get there. First Timothy 5. Uh, it means that every elder Should receive. Uh well, it should be doing.

Work to that extent as well. But he should receive To, to such an to such an extent that You know, double the median or double the average, Uh, overall, but there's a there's a ministry of elders that we covered in Act 20, That is also expected. But in first Timothy 5, there's also that especially who labors and preaching and teaching Well, one of the things that paul had done Is that paul had not taken?

Uh, Advantage, is not the, the right word. It's not really taking advantage. Paul had not claimed that which was rightly his jew as an apostle, as one who was Ministering and spiritual things. And this was one of the reasons why This was one of the reasons why that people some people in Corinth were not esteeming, paul's teachings.

The guys who came in and they had the Uh, the really slick presentations. And they sounded great. They are also the ones who charged the big speakers fees. And so, there were those in Corinth who were listening to the guys with the big speakers fees even more than they listen to paul the apostle.

And when he's Uh, when he's correcting them. Uh, for that, he wanders, out loud to them if he's made a mistake. And not claiming that, which would that, which is rightly his view that they Share with him in material things. As he is, the one by him, the lord is ministering to them in spiritual things.

He says, am i not an apostle? Am i not free? Have i not seen jesus christ, our lord, are you not my work and the lord. If i'm not an apostle to other hit, that was i am to you. For your, the seal of my apostleship in the lord.

This is a chapter 9. First Corinthians 9. My defense to those who examine me is this? Do we have? No right to eat and drink? Do we have? No right to take a long, a believing wife as do also, the other apostles. The brothers of the lord. And c-fest.

Or is it only barnabas? And i who have no right to refrain from working. Whoever goes to war in his own expense. Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit. Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock. Do i say these things as a mere man or does not the law, say the same.

Also, For it is written in the law of Moses. You shall not muzzle an ox, while it treads out the grain. Is it oxen god is concerned about Or does he say it altogether for our sakes? For hours sakes. No doubt this is written. That he who plows should plow and hope and he, who threshes and hopes should be partakers partaker of his hope.

If we have sown spiritual things for you, Is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this, right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless, we have not used this, right? But endure, all things lest we hinder the gospel of christ.

You not know that those who minister the holy things, each the thing of the things of the temple, those who serve at the ultra part of the offerings of the altar, even. So the lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. And so this is a special corporate need that there would, there would be those who are the ones who are getting their living from preaching the gospel.

Uh, there's been An increase. I've actually seen it promoted by a home missions agency of Um,

Of a napark denomination that may or may not be densely centered in north and south carolina. Uh, a value upon what is called, bi-vocational ministry. The apostle Paul, and 1st Corinthians 9 actually says by vocational ministry is not desirable. It's not something that That is the ordinary way. The lord wishes to provide preaching for his people.

The lord wishes, the lord wills. To call and gift and grace. Men who will give their life. To preaching. And so, Their ministry in the means of grace is going to take up so much of their time that they actually aren't able. To spend time earning earning, the money that is necessary.

Not only for themselves. To eat, but for their wife to eat. Uh, now You know, don't don't take me wrong. We are content. We are well cared for, we are, well provided for this is not, you know, personal on my part. In fact. If, if you all and yeah, several Of you, young men may end up being Called to the ministry and Uh, you know, something that You need to hear is.

A big part of being having the grace, the graces and the Of the spirit from the ministry, is the ability to be content with little And not to claim your right to to teach the congregation. What the right of the minister is. Well saying and i gladly give up my rights.

But that's for the minister to do. Um, Uh, oh, i forget what the The, there's a cheeky saying among Um, Uk churches, you You keep them humble lord, we'll keep him for or something like that. Um, But the Uh, the the minister has a duty to value. Uh, the communication of the gospel, the effectiveness of the ministry.

Uh, so much that his compensation never becomes an issue. Uh, for the congregation. On the other hand, the congregation ought to value the ministry so much That his compensation never becomes an issue for the minister. There's a goal then on both sides. That the preaching of the gospel, the ministry.

Of the word. Would be the great thing. And this is one of those then. Corporate collection things. So a so that the minister can be well cared for but b, to take this Um, this Personal. Patronage or interest that we're talking about. Before in the In the charitable giving.

A few minutes ago to take that out of the equation. That that would not be the main thing, but that is a special corporate need and every congregation Should be committed. To. Taking care of the one who is preaching. So that as verse 14 Concludes that section saying even so the lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

I didn't expect to finish that quickly. So we will. Start. Uh, first Timothy in a moment. Uh, but any Any questions? Anything in those passages? That you, you Noticed and didn't hear or wondering about Okay. Oh, praise god. Let's go on, then Into what is grayed out on your outlines?

Uh, new creatures and christ's kingdom in the post, apostolic age of the spirit. Uh, you remember we have been And you can actually flip your Page over if you can see the really light gray. There. There's God, who made us to know him, and to image him. And so he created the world for To be useful for that.

But then we fell. And of course, a great part of the fall is misusing the things of this world. Uh, not receiving them as from god and not employing them as for God. And god very quickly. Uh, By his grace, begin redeeming. Uh, actually immediately begin redeeming. And in the covenant of grace, with abraham and Well, with the covenant of grace begins.

Even in. Just outside the garden with adam. Uh, but we saw Uh, we saw Uh, with Adam and Noah and then abraham and the nation. That god. Had a nation in this world to him, he gave laws that showed everything that we have as to be received as a gift from god.

Everything that we have is to be used As something that is entrusted to us for service to god. And there was Uh, There was not only then the nation of israel but then god himself invaded his world. And the lord, jesus came teaching and practicing Uh, And then, The lord jesus having Completed his earthly ministry and ascended to glory.

He poured out his spirit and the church that he formed Is. Is now using material things, receiving them as an as gifts from god and using them. Uh, in the service of god and they become his diagonal people. So we are in, we are in the period of the second invasion of god into his world.

God invaded in the sun and the incarnation, he invades, by his spirit, in a special way at Pentecost, when the sun, pours, at the spirit. And one of the marks of the Of the new covenant. As opposed to. The church before christ, before pentecost, is now not just the spirit making people alive, not just the spirit, helping people, but the spirits dwelling in people, And the Uh, you know, the one who is in.

Who is in christ being new creation. And so we as christians in whom this, the holy spirit dwells, we as christians being the inaugural new creation, So the the new creation that we're waiting for that we longed for a new heavens and a new earth. Uh, it already exists or it's already here.

In believers. And therefore, even while we use, Uh, that which is from the creation that continues to groan and continues and bondage to corruption and decay. It is still employed. According to the spirit. And bringing not just god glory, then As. The one who gave you? What? You have.

So everything you have children. You glorify god. By receiving it as something from him and then you realize it's something you want to use for him. But you don't just glorify god generally you glorified christ. Because that that desire in your heart to do that and the follow-through in your actions to do that, that only comes from union with christ.

As we've been hearing, especially In the, in the midweek sermons. In Romans 8, recently. But not only do you glorify christ, but who is it that we have been hearing about The last two weeks of midweek, sermons that has come and dwell to dwell in our hearts to live in our hearts.

And when he comes to live in our hearts, and this will give it away. If you don't remember already, the father, and the son come and make their home with us by the spirit, Oh, we just gave it away. So, you glorify the spirit, especially as the one dwelling in you, as the one who who makes you grateful and the one who makes you generous and the one who Who works in you to apply the resurrection of jesus to you so that you consider every member of who you are.

And remember that wasn't just body parts. Right. As we've been going through romans every member of who you are. Is every aspect your time, your possessions everything. As a service. Unto the lord. Well, those things are established in the apostolic church but now the ministry of the word that the spirit uses to bring people to christ to unite them to him, And then the spirit coming to dwell in their hearts because they are the children of god.

That is not just for the apostolic period, that's for now. That's for your day by day, week by week. That's what we've been so excited about as the apostle you know, is often using the first person Romans 7 and And Romans 8 and talking about himself, but we see that this continues with us as well, and we rejoice To see the triune glory of god un display.

Even in things like What you do with the stuff that belongs to you how you view it? And what you do with it. So that needs to continue, but Already even in paul's ministry there have been those who resist this view of themselves. This view of earthly life as being devoted unto god for holiness and service and And hailing sin is putting it away.

And, You're trying to have some idea of justification without sanctification. And, As the apostle. Uh, can is thinking about and by the holy spirit writing to timothy about this transition from the apostolic period when Uh, when churches are being planted and started. By apostles to the period in which Timothy is going to be not just ministering in his own right.

But what have we seen him especially in second Timothy Emphasizing. That Timothy needs to. Uh, to entrust these things to faithful men who will also teach others who will also teach others. And so forth, down through the generations. So, Uh,

I think we're gonna. Stop there. We're gonna quickly get into First Timothy 3. Which I want to, which I want to save. For next week. But we are about that about that time. Y'all look tired. Well, let's try.

Our father in heaven. You know how strong our remaining fleshliness is. And, it's resistance. To gratitude and contentment on the one hand. And generosity and zella service on the other hand. And so we thank you that you have not left us in our flesh. But that you have brought us into Christ.

And that we are now not in the flesh that in the spirit. So that your spirit dwells in us and Christ dwells in us, We pray. Lord for your spirits use. Of your word and particularly as we come now. To worship you by the meanings of your grace. To be engaged by you and to engage you to act upon you.

Um, in the public worship. We pray that you would be forming Christ in us. Lord, we thank you for Giving us much. Of the good things that you have put in this world, so that we might have much opportunity for thanksgiving. So that we might have much opportunity for stewardship and for service.

But Lord, as As this was one of the ways. That your people even, during the time of Paul, and then during the time of Timothy, and even now, as this is one of the Uh, the ways that The difference between living according to the flesh and living according to your spirit came out.

We pray that you would help us. We want you to be glorified o God in our hearts. We want Christ. To be glorified as the one who has transformed us. We want your spirit to be glorified as the one who dwells in a and applies crisis to us. Forgive us.

Lord, that we don't think this way. As frequently or as richly as we ought. And grant that. By your patient and persistent working on us. Uh, by your word by your spirit. That we would more and more think this way. Until you have removed from us. Every spot or wrinkle or impurity.

That we might be presented at the last. To the Lord Jesus. Holy and blameless and glorious. Come now and help us in the worship. We ask in Jesus name, Amen.