***Till Death Do Us Part***

**The Covenant of Our Giving; I Corinthians 16:1-4, II Corinthians 9:6-15**

**Giving as a Reflection of the Condition of Our Heart**

Matthew 6:19-21“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

**The Covenant of Our Giving**

I. Uses of Financial Resources by the Church

* To support the poor, Matthew 6:2-4, Mark 9:41, Acts 2:44-45, Acts 4:32-37, Acts 11:29-30, Romans 12:6-8, Romans 15:25-27, I Corinthians 16:1-3, II Corinthians 8-9, Galatians 2:10, Ephesians 4:28, I Timothy 6:17-19, Hebrews 13:16, James 2:2-6, James 2:15-16, I John 3:17
* To support evangelism, Luke 10:1-16, I Corinthians 9:12-18, Philippians 4:15-16
* To support the local ministry of the church, I Corinthians 9:8-11, Galatians 6:6, I Timothy 5:17-18

II. Principles, I Corinthians 16:1-2

* Giving applies to everyone
* In proportion to our means
* Done regularly and systematically
	+ Examples: first fruits and the tithe

III. Promises, II Corinthians 9:6-8

* The Promise of Sowing and Reaping: God’s incredible math
* The Promise of God’s Affection: God loves cheerful givers
* The Promise of Abundance for Good Deeds: God’s motive for the extra supply

***Till Death Do Us Part***

**The Covenant of Our Giving; II Corinthians 9:6-15**

**Scripture Reading and Prayer by Steve Hines, II Corinthians 9:6-15 (slides)**

**I. Introduction**

* Silent Monastic order, once a year one person would be appointed to speak on a particular day. Twelve months passed with no one saying a word and the individual
* Do not assume that my goal is that our giving will increase because of this sermon
* Because, I don’t want us to give more unless we are going to give more in the manner consistent with God’s plan for giving
* It is possible that some have been giving with wrong motive
* If so, I want you to stop giving until you have the right heart attitude
* This sermon could result in fewer people giving because I am going to make the case that not giving is a mark of disobedience to God, but so is giving out of wrong attitude
* First, let me say, that I believe many of Matthew Road Baptist Church are giving regularly to the ministries of the church
* I don’t know what any individual family gave, other than my own
* However, just from some general statics – half our membership gave at least $1,000 in 2009 and 40% of the congregation families gave at least $2,000, around 100 families
* So this is not a fundraising sermon, this is a sermon designed to give myself and all who regularly give to the work of the Lord a reminder of these basic principles
* It is clear to me that many of us are giving faithfully and consistently and regularly, and I am so thankful to God for that
* As we do, let’s just do a quick check to maximize our joy in giving
* That said, there may be a few families that need to re assess their giving and their priorities
* There are half the families in our congregation that gave very little to the work of God here at Matthew Road – some have lost jobs and it was beyond their control and some are widows living on very little resources
* This means that half the congregation is coming each week and receiving the benefits of the church relationship while not participating in the support of the ministry

**II. Background**

* Marks of the covenant community
* **Our Saving Faith:** The glory of God through the exaltation of His Son Jesus Christ
* **Our Calling:** The glory of God through the proclamation of His Son Jesus Christ
* **Our Love:** The glory of God through the imitation of His Son Jesus Christ
* **Our Giving:** The glory of God through the grateful use of His resources
* If an individual claims to have professed faith in Christ and has no compulsion to get the gospel to the ends of the world, then I am skeptical of their claim
* If an individual claims to have professed faith in Christ and has no compulsion to love and good deeds toward other believers, then I am skeptical of their claim
* If an individual claims to have professed faith in Christ and has no compulsion to give out of their resources, then I am skeptical of their claim
* This is true of individuals and is also true of churches
* If a church claims to be a Spirit filled church of born again believers in Christ and that church is not marked by a passion for fulfilling the Great Commission and loving service and faithful giving, then I am skeptical of that church’s claims
* **Giving as a Reflection of the Condition of Our Heart**
* **Read Matthew 6:19-20 (Slide 2)**
* **Read Matthew 6:21 (Slide 3)**
* Where your treasure is – is our treasure in our homes, cars, food, clothes, sports?
* If you say, my treasure is Christ and His kingdom, then what we do with our money will reflect treasuring Christ above all else

**III. Uses of Financial Resources by the Church**

* To support the poor, Matthew 6:2-4, Mark 9:41, Acts 2:44-45, Acts 4:32-37, Acts 11:29-30, Romans 12:6-8, Romans 15:25-27, I Corinthians 16:1-3, II Corinthians 8-9, Galatians 2:10, Ephesians 4:28, I Timothy 6:17-19, Hebrews 13:16, James 2:2-6, James 2:15-16, I John 3:17
* To support evangelism, Luke 10:1-16, I Corinthians 9:12-18, Philippians 4:15-16
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**IV. The Covenant of Our Giving**

* **II. Principles of Giving**
* **Read I Corinthians 16:1-2 (Slide 4)**
* Giving applies to everyone - “Each one…”
* In proportion to our means - “As he may prosper”
* Done regularly and systematically - “On the first day of each week…”
	+ Examples: first fruits and the tithe
* The case for tithing
* **Read Matthew 23:23(Slide 5)**
* Baby sitter, you know how gifted she is with children, years go by, she now has a degree in childhood development – simply proving what you already knew about her
* So you hire her to watch the kids for an evening out, when you come home will you pay her less than you paid her before her degree and all the external evidence to what you already knew to be true? That is what the response of those who say, “Tithing is purely an Old Testament thing.”
* The case for tithing on a pre-tax basis
* The principle of first fruits, as the first set of the crops were coming into harvest, that was the tithe, the first fruits – before any other expenditures, they brought their first fruits to the Lord
* So, before the government, before paying ourselves, we place our gifts to the Lord
* **III. Promises for Giving**
* **Read II Corinthians 9:6 (Slide 6)**
* 1. God’s irregular mathematics
* Most of us think – “I will have more if I give less.”
* “10 minus 1 is 9 and 10 minus 0 is 10.” You have more if you don’t give
* “10 minus 1 plus God equals is ??”
* 5 loaves and 2 fish and feeds over 5,000 people
* This removes the false idea that claims, “when we get more money, then we will give to the work of the Lord in this place.” NO YOU WON’T! God knows your heart. If you are not giving regularly now, you will not do so later. This is the lie from the adversary
* If you are sowing sparingly right now, you will reap sparingly later
* When Kim and I were first married, living on graduate assistance pay, we gave regularly and faithfully to the church we attended – it wasn’t even $100 per month
* When I saw the statistics for church members’ giving, I was appalled when I discovered from the business meeting that we had given more than 2/3rds of the congregation in 92
* **Read II Corinthians 9:7 (Slide 7)**
* 2. God places His love on cheerful givers
* God being like a father, instead is irritated by it
* Praying hands illustrations from John Piper
* Little boy in an art class at school made “I made these hands the size of mine, and make a promise to, will you please take these hands of mine as a sign that I will pray for you.”
* And the kids is so excited that mom’s about to open it, “Will you sit still. No one cares about those stupid clay hands anyway.”
* If God were like that my universe would collapse
* God loves it when we bounce on the chair
* God loves our joy, God loves our happiness and He wants to maximize our enjoyment so He provides a physical universe
* **Read II Corinthians 9:8 (Slide 8)**
* 3. God promises to provide enough for ourselves and extra for others
* How this separates us from the televangelists – In Two ways
* Number 1 – God will provide more in many cases, for you to build greater eternal reward by doing more good works
* Number 2 – Jesus says don’t cast your pearls before swine
* The existence of a physical universe and the prohibition against idolatry
* Israel and her exit from Egyptian bondage – Egyptians handed over resources
* When the Israelites get into the wilderness, they gave of those resources to the ministry of the nation in the building of the tabernacle
* God gave you resources, limited as they may be, for you to do good

**V. Application**

* In covenant community we commit to sharing our resources for the greater glory of God
* If someone claims to follow Christ, their checkbook will reflect that claim
* If someone claims to be part of the community of faith, they will support the local ministry of the church
* Challenge, if you are not giving regularly to the ministry of the church, make a commitment to regular, systematic, proportionate giving–if its $50 a month, then so be it
* But don’t do nothing, if you do nothing it reflects where your treasure is
* If you are giving regularly, but it is substantially below 10%, then I challenge you to increase that giving at least a little bit – you’ve been giving $50 a month, increase it by $10 and give $60 a month
* See how God will provide if we follow Him in obedience
* Heart check, all of these done with grateful hearts
* Serve, especially in the nursery
* **Give to Texas Baptist Men for filtration purchases for Haiti, $30 per system to provided clean drinking water (Slide 10)**

I Corinthians 16:1-4

1Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. 2On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. 3When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; 4and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me.

II Corinthians 9:6-15

**2 Corinthians 9**

**God Gives Most**

1For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints; 2for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, *namely,* that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them. 3But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, so that, as I was saying, you may be prepared; 4otherwise if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to speak of you—will be put to shame by this confidence. 5So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness.

6Now this *I say,* he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; 9as it is written,

 “He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor,

 His righteousness endures forever.”

10Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; 11you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. 12For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. 13Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for *your* obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, 14while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. 15Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!