

The Faith Promise Concept of Giving

Text: II Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6, 7

After Christ's resurrection, we were given a clear command from our Lord, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). John says, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). This is called the Great Commission and as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, our accountability to see that the Gospel is spread throughout the world is inescapable. Acts 1:8 says, "...ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). It has been said we are all to be missionaries, either going or sending. When churches (as ours) hold the annual missions conference, it is a good time to reevaluate and reassess our responsibility. To underwrite our part as sending missionaries, we incorporate the biblical method of faith promise giving. Several years ago, we chose to take missions giving out of our general budget and place it right in the lap of the membership. The plan is to promise God to give so much to missions, as He supplies.

1. WE BEGIN WITH OUR TITHE.

The Bible says, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him..." (I Corinthians 16:2).

III John verse 2: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." The word "prosper" (Greek *euodoo*) means to help on the road, have a prosperous journey i.e. succeed in reaching; figuratively, to succeed in business affairs.

There is a promised blessing upon all who give ten percent of their income to God. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 3:10, 11). "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase" (Proverbs 3:9). Remember, God owns it all, including us. 1 Corinthians 10:26: "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Giving God ten percent of our gross income acknowledges that God is Lord of my entire life!

2. FAITH PROMISE IS ABOVE OUR TITHE.

Tithing is not a matter of generosity; it is a matter of honesty. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:8). Giving truly begins after the tithe as well as the manifold blessings of God as promised by Jesus Himself. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38).

3. FAITH PROMISE COULD AND SHOULD BE MADE BY EVERYONE NO MATTER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

Paul said, "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality" (II Corinthians 8:2). The people of Corinth were being challenged by the example of the Macedonians to give even though they were in a trial. Some believe they should not make a commitment to give unless they can see where and how the finances will come in. Faith is making a commitment when you don't see how God will work it out. The Bible says, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7). It had never rained in the history of the world, but for 120 years Noah prepared, warned and preached (Genesis 6:3) that it was coming. God informed Noah of "...things not seen as yet." Noah had never seen, felt or experienced rain, but God told Him it was coming so He stood firm on the promise of God. God honors faith. He declares, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

4. FAITH PROMISE ENABLES THE CHRISTIAN TO GIVE BEYOND THEIR EXPECTATION.

Again, Paul using the admonition of the Macedonians said, "For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves" (II Corinthians 8:3). Please understand, we are not promoting ignoring your bills or letting your children go hungry. If God doesn't provide above and beyond, then you are not obligated to go above and beyond. If God supplies, are you willing to give what God supplies? That is the paramount question. We know from Scriptures and experience that God is able to supply, but are we willing to go with His plan? The Word of God says, "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Corinthians 8:12). God will get the glory when He supplies what we don't have, in order to give back to Him for the advancement of His kingdom on earth.

5. FAITH PROMISE IS THE SUREST WAY TO RECEIVE A RETURN FROM YOUR INVESTMENT.

II Corinthians 9:6-11: "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every

man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.” When we give in the faith promise way, we disperse abroad the seed, which is the Word of God. Luke 8:11: “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.” We obligate God (according to His own promises) to meet our needs so we may continually (through His giving back to us) meet the needs of our missionaries. “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days” (Ecclesiastes 11:1). Proverbs 13:7: “There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.”

In conclusion, we all know there are trials beyond our comprehension that may set us back temporarily, but I have never known firsthand nor even heard of someone venturing out in faith-giving to fall short financially on a regular basis. The norm, according to Jesus, is “Give, and it shall be given to you...” (Luke 6:38a). Make note of this piece of wisdom from Solomon: “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine” (Proverbs 3:9, 10). God wants the witness to go throughout the world and He will bless those who partner with Him to see that it is done. “And go quickly, and tell...” (Matthew 28:7). “And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room” (Luke 14:22).

How much more may we do? Remember, “...He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully...” (II Corinthians 9:6).

-Johnny Pope-