

“Greeting Team”

For Sunday, September 15th

Remember: Meet in the coat room @ **10:30 am** for brief prayer & then go “welcome” people! NOTE: Keep an eye on the auditorium for those who slipped past!

Greeters this week:

Randy Ehlers Monday Night

- 1st— Odin Dart Thursday Night;
- 2nd— Justin Taylor Sunday Night;
- 3rd—Randy Ehlers Monday Night;
- 4th—Curt Mastbergen Sunday Noon; Tackett Sunday Night

Small Groups @ MBC

Are committed to developing new leaders through apprenticeship— Small Group leaders are intentional about reproducing themselves

Announcements

1. Going To The “**Women’s Retreat**”? Sept 13-15. See flyer at the Welcome Desk
2. Going To The “**Men’s Retreat**”? Sept 27-28 Camp Assurance. See flyer at the Welcome Desk!

Don’t Give Out Of Extortion

When I was a Bible College student, I concluded that I didn’t need to give a “tithe” or an “offering” to the church because I was paying my tuition to a “Christian” college! So, I thought, that was like just as good as giving it to my church! Apparently NOT! I remember needing some repair work done on my car— and, it was a sizeable amount! I remember sensing a Holy Spirit “inspired” thought like God telling me, “*I WILL get your offering even if I have to TAKE it through an auto repair!*” I’m not sure if it was actually the Holy Spirit prompting that thought, or my guilty conscience! In Paul’s letter to the Church of Corinth, he made an interesting statement, “*Therefore I considered it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance the generous gift you promised, so that it will be ready as a gift and not as an extortion*” 2 Corinthians 9:5. That’s an interesting choice of words! Paul’s like saying, “*Don’t MAKE me TAKE that from you*”; or, “*Don’t MAKE me EXTORT it...or, take it by COERCION.*” He’s saying, “*Don’t make me STEAL it from you.*” That’s NOT how you give an offering to the Lord! That’s NOT how you give to the work of the Gospel! That’s NOT how you give to needy people! “*Don’t give,*” Paul says, “*ONLY because you’re FORCED to give.*” God won’t bless your gift if He has to EXTORT it from you! In the next verse, Paul continues, “*Remember this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously*” 2 Corinthians 9:6. Don’t give “sparingly.” So, what exactly does that word mean? We don’t use the word “sparingly” very often. We’re more familiar with the word “spare.” If someone begs you to spare their life, they mean, “*Let me keep it! Don’t take it from me!*” If a coach tells his team, “*Spare no effort*” he means, “*Don’t hold back any of your efforts! Give ALL your effort!*” In Romans 8:32 it says, “*God did not even SPARE His own Son, but offered Him up for us all.*” That means that God didn’t hold Him back! He didn’t keep Jesus for himself! He SHARED Him with us! So, if we give “sparingly” it means, in our heart, that we want to HOLD BACK! We don’t want to SHARE!

How “Not” To Give

When we give “sparingly”, we’re not thinking about how much we can GIVE; but, about how much we can KEEP & HOLD onto! In the next verse, Paul tells the Corinthian believers not to give “reluctantly”— “*Each person should do as he has decided in his heart— not reluctantly or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver*” 2 Corinthians 9:7. Some translations use the word “GRUDGINGLY”—don’t give your offering with a “grudge.” Don’t hold it against God like He’s asking too much from us! If we’re not careful, it’s easy to harbor a bitter spirit against God about His giving requirements! However, that’s acting like an “OWNER”— which we are NOT! We’re a “steward” or a “manager” of a portion of God’s estate! It’s all His! Nothing belongs to us— “*You brought nothing into this world & you can’t take anything out*” 1 Tim 6:7.