

## The How and Why of Proportionate Giving

- Give careful thought to your ways. How we began ST emph last week, sermon Hag 1. Israelites back home in Jerusalem after their captivity in Bab. But instead rebuilding God's temple, only interested in rebuilding their own homes. Maxed out Home Depot ccs on paneled houses, while Lord's house in ruins. So Hag urged people stop putting selves first, start putting God first.
- We need put God first in our lives too, in every aspect of life, inc area of financial ST. God wants us be good stewards, faithful managers of his wealth that he entrusts to us to use way he wants it used – that's Xian ST. That's putting God first with our \$. That's what we talked re last wk.
- Today talk re how. How do we, pracly speaking, honor God with our wealth? We want to, be good stewards – but how do that? Week 2 of 10/10 emph (today) has the practical sermon; nuts/bolts of \$ST, the how/why of ST. And all has to do with proportionate giving.
- In gospel, man journey, entrusts his wealth to 3 servants. Right off bat, see: it's master's \$, not servants'. Everything we own (houses, cars, phones, finances, posses, toys, retirement acts) belongs to God; and he entrusts it to us with com: be faithful stewards. In parb, 2 servants faithful; 1 not. Really doesn't matter how many bags gold each servant received, just like today doesn't matter how much wealth Lord has given you, whether rich/poor. God is looking for faithful ST. The 2 faithful servants worked hard, doubled \$. Last guy didn't care. Didn't love master enough obey him; too lazy to do hard work of being faithful steward. And master in parb could not accept that! **Vs. 30** – direct ref to God banishing to hell those of us who don't love him enough to obey him, too lazy to do hard work of being faithful steward. So yes, ST is big deal to God! How we spend our \$ matters to him! That's why today we need think re the how and the why of prop giving.
- If we turn 1<sup>st</sup> lesson, 1 Cor 16, we get some very prac advice on the how. **Vs. 2**. Key phrase: in keeping with income. Means: prop giving. Means: giving % of what you earn. In OT God com 10%; that was his rule. In NT he has not made 10% a com/rule. However, great spiritual benefit from ancient practice of tithing. Word tithing = giving 10% income as off. That's why our ST emph is called 10/10 – we are encouraging you to give 10% of your income as off to Lord for 10 straight weeks. But here's thing: you don't have stop after 10 wks! The real goal here: for you see blessings of tithing and make it your new norm, so that tithing just becomes part of your regular practice.
- Couple personal examples. My off statement from 99, Jr yr; Mrs. Jacobs yard; I was 17. Sammy's envelopes (normally when conf); he's 10. Not to call attention my fam, BUT: tithing is doable, even when 17 or 10! I always teach Cat students re tithing – 7<sup>th</sup> Com – don't steal from God. Weekend work; babysitting – get in habit. When start young and establish tithing as normal practice, you'll carry that into adulthood, less tempted to be like servant in parb who buried bag of gold in ground.
- Paul, **vs. 2**. That requires little math. If ann salary is \$50k, \$5k to church. If \$200k, \$20k to church. If earn \$1710 from Mrs. Jacobs, \$171 to church. See: really doesn't matter how much you earn; what matters is how you use it. Prop giving = giving % of what you earn; that's in keeping with income.
- Also: **vs. 2a**. Means regularly. When Paul wrote, most workers got paid every day, at end of day. Today, I don't think too many people get daily paycheck; not practical. Most today get paid every two weeks or once/mo. So when Paul **vs. 2a**, means regularly. What Sarah and I do with our fam finances (I don't mind telling – I think good system): give offs monthly. At end of every month, Sarah & I sit down, calc month's income; before we pay monthly bills (mortgage, utils) first thing always do write check to church based on what earned that month. It's regular, intentional, %-based. And it's what Paul teaching all us to do when **vs. 2**. If it's not your practice already, I suggest you try sitting down every month, calculating your income, giving % to church – whether you're a high school kid babysitting on weekends or career adult. Or, if want divide your annual income by 52 and give check every week, that's fine, too.

- But here's what shouldn't do: come church, during off say 'oh yeah, forgot re that;' look in wallet; 'got change from coffee;' throw that in. You need give offs some thought. Need plan them out, just like 2 servants in parb made careful plans for bags of gold. Prop giving means that offs not afterthought; they're carefully planned out.
- Here's another practice piece advice for how to do prop giving. We're all familiar with envelope system. Get envelopes in Dec for upcoming year. Cash or check. Today, lot people don't use cash or check; everything paid by card or online. Well, for last several wks our church office been working very hard to offer our cong an alternative to envelopes – online giving. And today in this sermon I'm happy tell you: as of Nov we've completely revamped our online giving program. Now, go church website, top click "Online Giving," choose various funds, give online. Or, even use mobile device, like smart phone; download app "Give Plus," select our cong, give right from phone or tablet. Instructions for how do this on table in narthex, or simply call church office. But these new online giving options are now a very practical way for you to give proportionately.
- Finally, while looking at those narthex tables, be sure pick up one of these. Little brochure re tithing. Very well written. Covers everything we're saying today re how tithing is beneficial & why it's imp.
- That's the how; now let's remem the why of prop giving. Why would we do this anyway – give full tenth of income to church? Well, go back to parb. Those 2 servants who doubled master's \$ were not sinless, perfect. They were sinful too; deserved be thrown out into darkness w/ weeping, teeth. None of us perfect, sinless when comes to financial ST either. By nature we're greedy, self-centered; sometimes we bury our gold; we don't like giving offs; we feel entitled to that \$ bec it's ours. So we too deserve be thrown out into darkness with weeping, teeth. But instead casting us away, God chose cast away a perfect, sinless substitute – his own Son, our Savior JC. J endured agony of cross and darkness of hell (with weeping, teeth) for all our sins – incl sin of poor ST. He did that for us bec he loves us, does not want us cast into darkness. So he took our punishment for us. And now, with all our sins forgiven and with J risen from dead, now God sees us the way master in parb saw 2 servants: faithfully taking care of his bags of gold. And what master say those servants? **Vs. 21ac**. Despite our poor ST, God still calls us good/faithful and gives us heaven as free gift grace. We don't deserve that. But that's God's love for us through Xp.
- Makes me think of another psg Paul wrote to Corinthians, this time in 2 Cor 8:9 – "**You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich**" (heaven, angels, all glory), "**yet for your sake he became poor**" (left heaven, became human, suffered, died), "**so that you through his poverty**" (thru this suff/death on cross) "**might become rich.**" And rich we are rich, no matter how much \$ we have, bec God of heaven/earth says to us, **vs. 21ac**. That's what makes us rich!
- And that's the why of prop giving: Xp died for you, you're forgiven, and someday going heaven! That's the why. We give offs to Lord to thank him for saving us. And those offs are used to share good news of salvation with others! That's how God uses our offs! That's why ST is big deal to him.
- So today consider the how & why of prop giving. I urge you to give 10% of your earned income for 10 wks, then maybe you make it your new norm. Give monthly or weekly. Give through envelopes or online. Give joyly, regly, and proply – that's the how. And the why? Because God gave 100% for you. In Xp he gave you everything, made you rich! So give careful thought to your ways: on how and why you, thru prop giving, can be a faithful Xian steward to glory of God.

**1 Corinthians 16:2** <sup>2</sup> On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income.

**Matthew 25:21, 30** <sup>21</sup> "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

<sup>30</sup> And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'