

July 4th, 2010

## Stewardship -Christian Giving

([Ex 36:2-7](#), [Ps 116:12-19](#),[2 Cor 9;16-15](#),[Lk 21:1-4](#))

Life is God's gift and nothing is ours in this world. Investing it for his glory is glorifying Him. God said," the one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies" ([Ps 50:23](#)). Each one of us individually is His house, His dwelling. Collectively we are His house, His Holy temple which He is building and we are His stewards. Christian stewardship is to do whatever he has asked us to do with whatever He has given to us. The first thing we need to realize is that we are His possession because he has purchased us with His precious blood. Therefore we are to glorify him with our bodies and with whatever is given to us by Him. Before we give anything to Him we have to first give our hearts because He will never despise broken and contrite heart. Without offering this He will not be pleased with whatever we may give to Him. In today's gospel lesson He commended the poor widows' offering because by giving whatever she had ,she offered herself as living sacrifice([Rom 12:1](#)).Many view Stewardship only as giving money to God. Christian stewardship also involves use of our time, talents and treasure for His glory. This is today's Old Testament lesson. God is teaching us in today's epistle lesson how to give .One day our Master is coming back and we have to give account of what we have done with what is given to each one of us, the Time, the Treasure and the Talents. Therefore as good stewards let us strive to please Him .This is God's call in today's scripture lessons.

### The Gospel Lesson: [Luke 21-4](#)

#### **Our lives are not ours; they belong to God**

Both Mark and Luke have given account of this poor widow in their Gospels. She gave only two pennies, but Jesus commended her. God knows how much we are giving and how much we are keeping for ourselves. He also knows what we are doing with what we have kept for us. Giving 10<sup>th</sup> of ours is our least responsibility. I have seen abundance in the lives of people who follow this. Therefore we have to grow in this grace . When the widow had put her offering Jesus was in women's court of the temple where boxes for temple taxes and freewill offering were kept. What Jesus saw and commended was her attitude of dependence wholly on God by putting what all she had in the box. Therefore we must first of all offer ourselves as living sacrifices([Rom 12:1](#)) before we give anything to God. That means we must

be saved. The great man of God, Bro. Bhaktasingh used to tell people not to give anything if they were not saved. God will never leave or forsake those who depend on Him like the poor widow in today's gospel lesson. Therefore we must strive to give beyond our capacity. We are supposed to give not only our money but also our time and talents. This is today's Old Testament lesson.

### **The Old Testament Lesson: [Exodus 36:2-7](#)**

#### **The talents we have also belong to God.**

In the Old Testament the tabernacle is the Holy Sanctuary that is to be built by His people for Him to dwell ([Ex 25:8](#)). In the New Testament the dwelling place God has chosen is His Church. As God has chosen skilled craftsmen like Bezalel and Oholiab in building the Tabernacle and doing the work that the Lord has commanded then, now He has chosen people like D.L. Moody, George Whitefield, Bill Graham, Sadhu Sunder sikh, Bhakta Singh and many more and the Lord has put the skill in them to build His Temple, His church. Hence everybody in the church should be a living stone and use their talents in building God's house.

Therefore to do what God has commanded regarding his temple, i.e to build it so that it can be a house of prayer for many gentiles to come we should give freely and wholeheartedly much more than enough like the Israelites who gave for the ministry of the Tabernacle to the ministry of the Gospel. If we can give to the Gospel work like the Israelites who gave much more than enough we don't need funds from outside India for the missions and God will bless us and our country immensely as He has been blessing USA, UK and Netherlands. This is today's epistle lesson.

### **The Epistle Lesson: [2 Cor 9:6-15](#)**

#### **Let us sow in the Spirit and reap eternal harvest**

The reason why people are not able to give is because they haven't been saved yet, recognizing Jesus Christ as the inexpressible gift from God. When we are born of the Spirit we begin to love God and our fellow beings and be concerned about their needs. Now our churches are like the church at Corinth in Paul's time. They pledge to give but don't keep their

word. God is asking us not to be like the Corinthians who lagged behind in this grace but give and be blessed. Those who truly love God won't give that they may receive blessing. But God will always bless those who give whole heartedly. So when we give to God or to some cause in the church we should give

1. Not grudgingly or under compulsion but cheerfully
2. Generously
3. What we have decided in our hearts

When we give like this, God

1. Loves us and blesses us bountifully
2. Extends His grace to do every good work
3. Increase the harvest of our righteousness

Our lives are like the fields of land given to us by God. Authentic spirituality is to cultivate them and to bear fruit for His glory. We always are very active in every other thing in the world but when it comes to spiritual things we are too lazy. Because of this the fields of our life are like the field in [Proverbs 24](#), full of thorns and weeds ([Pro 24:30-31](#)). Thorns and weeds symbolize love of money and worldliness. Love of money is the root of all kinds of evils. Our hearts become hardened when we hoard selfishly and don't give to God or to those who are in need. Our selfishness blinds our eyes. We become fruitless without love.

More than anything God has lavished His grace upon us. We are supposed to be stewards of His varied grace and use whatever gift we have received from Him to serve one another ([1 Pet 4:10-11](#)). So let us first of all receive this grace that has come to us in Christ Jesus ([Tit 2:11](#)) by accepting him as our savior. Only then we become His stewards. The next step is to take His yoke and begin to learn of Him the principle of cultivating the fields of the hearts of our lives ([Mt 11:28, 29](#)) by plowing the hardened areas in them and start sowing the word of righteousness in spirit. Then we reap the bountiful harvest of the fruit of the spirit of love of the life eternal ([Gal 6:8](#), [Hosea 10:12](#)). May God help us to seek Him for this is the time to seek Him and make us His good stewards of Grace!

### **Life Application:**

1. Let us offer ourselves as living sacrifices to God and realize our stewardship.

2. As good stewards of God given time, talents and treasure may we use them for His glory!
3. Let us not be slothful in cultivating the fields of our lives but let us sow the seeds of righteousness in spirit and bring forth bountiful harvest of Eternal life which is the fruit of the spirit, love.
4. Let us seek the Lord for this is the time to seek Him.

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