

INTRODUCTION

1. We come now to the 16th chapter of 1 Corinthians
2. We have completed 15 of the 16 chapters in this letter
3. Last week we completed chapter 15 with the wonderful truth concerning our "Victory Over Death"
4. And now Paul turns his attention to the collection for the saints
5. The phrase "Now concerning" has occurred 5 other times in 1 Corinthians to indicate questions the

Corinthians had concerning these topics:

1. 7:1 concerning singleness and marriage
2. 7:25 concerning virgins
3. 8:1 concerning things sacrificed to idols
4. 12:1 concerning spiritual gifts
5. 16:12 concerning Apollos
6. These were questions that the Corinthians had
7. So since chapter 7 Paul has spent a considerable amount of time answering those questions
8. And now in chapter 16 he addresses the collection
9. Notice what he says in the first 4 verses:

(1) Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.

(2) On 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.

(3) When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem;

(4) and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me.

1 Corinthians 16:1-4 - NASB

10. God has always been concerned about the poor and needy
11. So much so that James 1:27 tells us "Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their

distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world."

12. This is the hallmarks of true Christianity
13. Because Deuteronomy 15:11 says, "For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.'
14. Therefore we are to help the poor
15. It is not to be publicized but done in secret
16. Matthew 6:3 says, "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."
17. God promises blessing to those who remember the poor

18. For kings, Proverbs 29:14 says, "If a king judges the poor with truth, His throne will be established forever."
19. For others, Proverbs 22:9 says, "He who is generous will be blessed, For he gives some of his food to the poor."
20. "Happy is he who is gracious to the poor" Proverbs 14:21 says.
21. Proverbs 29:7 says, "The "righteous [are] concerned for the rights of the poor, the wicked does not understand such concern."
22. Since the poor are always among us (Matthew 26:11), they are not to be "oppressed"
23. Neither "the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another'" Zechariah 7:10 says.

24. Because Proverbs 22:6 says, "He who oppresses the poor to make more for himself or who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty."
25. So be kind, gracious and generous because the Lord is the maker of all, even the poor
26. "(2) So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. (3) But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, (4) so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you" (Matthew 6:2-4).
27. Now as we come to chapter 16, Paul is doing exactly what Scripture

commands

28. He is remembering the poor

29. Specifically the poor in Jerusalem
(v.3)

LESSON

I. THE COLLECTION (v.1)

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also."

As we have noted, the poor exist in our world, whether saved or lost

So they are also in the church

Paul mentions the collection was...

1. It is "for the saints" in Jerusalem (v.3)

1. Extreme poverty was common in ancient times
2. In NT times, Jerusalem was a poor city
3. Because it was the religious center for Jews it was often overpopulated
4. So its resources were always strained
5. But wealthy Jews living outside of Jerusalem helped to maintain it
6. According to Acts 11:28, some years earlier there had been a severe famine
7. Many were still suffering from it
8. Christians in Jerusalem were also persecuted

1. Many were put out of their homes
 2. Some were stripped of their possessions
 3. Some were prevented from getting good jobs
 4. Some were even imprisoned (Acts 8:1-3; 1 Thess.2:14)
9. All of this added to their economic problems
2. The primary purpose of giving in the NT is to support the saints, the church
 1. That's their first obligation to support fellow believers
 2. They are to do this individually and collectively

3. The church's first financial responsibility is to invest in its own life and people

1. 2 Corinthians 8:1-5

2. 2 Corinthians 9:12-15

3. Philippians 4:14-16

4. Scripture makes it clear that we should also minister personally and financially to anyone in need:

1. The example of the Good Samaritan - Luke 10:25-37

2. Galatians 6:10 says we should "do good to all men, especially those who are of the household of faith."

3. The instructions here are the same as the Galatian churches

It is not simply that one local church supports its own membership and work, as did the first Christians in Jerusalem, but that all churches support other believers and churches as there is need.

As he had on other occasions (Acts 11:29–30; cf. Gal. 2:10), Paul promoted a collection in one group of churches to help meet the needs of another church or group of churches.

MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

Notice beginning at verse 2, Paul gives principles for giving:

First he gives...

II. THE TIME (v.2a)

When are we to give?

Paul say in verse 2 "on the first day of every the week"

1. This is one of the earliest references to Sunday as the day of worship (Vang, Preben. [1 Corinthians](#). Ed. Mark L. Strauss. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014. Print. Teach the Text Commentary Series.)
2. The Christian community moved its worship to Sunday to celebrate Christ's resurrection
 1. John 20:1, "Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene *came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and *saw the stone already taken away from the tomb."

2. Matthew 28:1, "Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave."
3. Mark 16:2, "Very early on the first day of the week, they *came to the tomb when the sun had risen."
4. Luke 24:1, "But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared."
5. Acts 20:7, "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight."

3. Sunday quickly came to be interpreted as "the Lord's day"

John said in Revelation 1:10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet."

So our giving should first be "on the Lord's day" and secondly...

III. THE PLACE (v.2b)

"each one of you is to put aside and save"

1. This sounds like we are to "put aside and save" at home

There is nothing wrong with having an account for special needs...

2. But since Paul connects the "collection" to the first day of the

week, that implies a public collection

3. He does not simply envision that each family puts funds aside at home to have them ready when He comes. They could have done that on any day of the week (Vang)
4. The word "save" (thesautizo, pres.act.verb) represents a storehouse, treasury, chest, or the like where valuables were stored
5. In both the pagan and Jewish cultures of New Testament times, treasuries were associated with religious temples
6. The treasuries in many Greek temples not only were repositories of gifts to the temple itself but served as banks in which citizens kept their personal money and other valuables for safekeeping

7. Paul's use of a verb form of this term for treasury suggests that the putting aside was to be in the church, in some sort of repository designated for the offerings (MacArthur)
8. Just as giving is primarily *for* the church, it is also primarily *to* and *through* the church (MacArthur)
9. In the first account of Christian giving, immediately after Pentecost, when the church was new and unorganized, converts simply shared directly with each other as needs arose (Acts 2:44–45)
10. Shortly after that time, however, believers began bringing gifts to the apostles for them to distribute (4:35, 37; 5:2)
11. The basic pattern, therefore, was to bring offerings to the church, to be

disbursed as the leaders saw fit
(MacArthur)

How much are we to give?

Some say it is 10%, the tithe

But what does Paul say in verse 2?

IV. THE AMOUNT (v.2c)

"as he may prosper"

First let me say something about the tithe

"The only references to tithes found in the New Testament take us back into the Old Testament, Heb. 7:5–9, or criticize the Pharisees at Christ's time, Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:42; 18:12." (Lenski, R. C. H. [*The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians.*](#) Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963. Print.)

In the Mosaic law 10 percent is prescribed for the first time by God.

“Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s; it is holy to the Lord” (Lev. 27:30).

That tithe was “to the sons of Levi, ... for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting” (Num. 18:21).

From those tithes of the people, the Levites were in turn to give a tithe, “a tithe of the tithe” (v. 26).

The tithes, burnt offerings, sacrifices, contributions, votive and freewill offerings, and the first-born of animals mentioned in Deuteronomy 14 were a second 10 percent, to be used to

support the national feasts and holidays.

Each third year another 10 percent was to be given for use in supporting “the Levite, ... the alien, the orphan and the widow” (Deut. 14:28–29).

As you study those and related texts carefully it becomes evident that the amount paid annually to the theocracy of Israel was approximately 23 percent, and that it essentially was a tax, used for the operation of Israel’s government.

It never involved freewill, spontaneous giving to the Lord.

The condemnation of Malachi 3:8–10 is for failure to pay the required taxes to support the priests who ran the nation.

Required giving was taxation; freewill giving was to be from the heart, with the amount left up to the worshiper.

David had the key idea when he said that he would not give God that which cost him nothing (2 Sam. 24:24).

MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

What does the word "prosper" mean? It means to be proportionate to one's economic status

The NIV translates it as "in keeping with his income."

That's means it will be different for each one and it's based on one's ability with what one's has

There's nothing here suggesting a specific amount or percentage

Why did Paul want them to "store" this up?

V. THE REASON (v.2d)

"so that no collections be made when I come"

Storing it up at one's home would make no sense with what Paul has written here

Having it stored with the church does and it's ready at a moments notice

The collections are not to proceed after Paul arrives. Then it will be necessary that each individual simply bring in his accumulation. (Lenski, R. C. H. [The](#)

Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963. Print.)

VI. THE CARRIERS (vv.3-4)

"(3) When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; (4) and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me."

This is protection for the church, the gift itself, and Paul

Those who give to the Lord's work have a right to expect that their gifts are used legitimately and wisely

That's why Paul instructed them to appoint several men

1. "Whomever you may approve"

1. These would be sent by Paul
2. Letters of approval and explanation would accompany them

"God's funds should only be put in the hands of a church's most godly men, who will prayerfully and in the energy of the Holy Spirit supervise its use, as priests who present the offerings of the people of God"
(MacArthur).

2. "And if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me"

Some commentators believe Paul is saying "if it is fitting" referring to the gift itself then I'll go.

John Gills says, "If so large a collection should be made, that it will be worthy of an apostle to go along

with it, hereby artfully pressing them to a good collection: *they shall go with me*; that is, those brethren whom the church shall approve and send; for he would not go alone, nor propose it, to remove all suspicion of converting any money to his own use. (Gill, John. [*An Exposition of the New Testament*](#). Vol. 2. London: Mathews and Leigh, 1809. Print. The Baptist Commentary Series.)

CONCLUSION

1. Our giving is to be generous
2. God has made all of His creation to give
3. But fallen man is the most reluctant giver in all of God's creation
4. One of the surest signs of salvation, is a saved person is willing to give

5. The Athenian statesman Aristides wrote the following of Christians living in the 2nd century:

They walk in humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them and they love one another. They despise not the widow and they grieve not the orphan. He that hath, distributeth liberally to him that hath not. If they see a stranger, they bring him under their roof and they rejoice over him as if he were their brother. For they call themselves brethren, not after the flesh but after the Spirit and in God. But when one of their poor passes away from the world and any of them see him, then he provides for his burial according to his ability. And if they hear that any of their number is in prison or oppressed for the name of

their Messiah, all of them provide for his needs. And if it is possible that he may be delivered, they deliver him. And if there is among them a man that is poor and needy and they have not an abundance of necessity, they will fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with his necessary food.

*MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1](#)
[Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.*

Gospel

Let's pray!