

## THE BLESSEDNESS OF GIVING

### AC.20:35

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. To set the stage for our study of Ac.20:35 and our topic The Blessedness Of Giving, we shall examine its context of vv.28-35.
2. We first offer a brief analysis vv.28-32 where the apostle Paul is addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus, whom he has called to Miletus (20:17), reminding them not only of the **DANGERS** they face in their oversight of the church, but of the **DUTIES** that are theirs and the **SERVICE** they must render as elders in the local church, as well as the **REASON** why he is reminding and warning them; such as:
  - a. Take heed unto yourselves.
  - b. Take heed to all the flock which you oversee.
  - c. Feed, shepherd or tend the church of the Lord, which he has purchased with his own blood.
  - d. The danger of grievous wolves entering in among you from without, not sparing the flock.
  - e. Also, the danger of men from among your own selves arising, speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them, thus causing division in the local church.
  - f. For this cause he warns them to watch, to be on guard, to feed and tend the flock, guarding them against such evils, and commends them to God and the word of his grace, or his worded grace, as the means to this end.
3. Then Paul adds still another admonition pertaining to the service to be rendered by elders in the local church, which he enforces by both his own example and some treasured words of the Lord Jesus, vv.33-35.
  - a. His own example cited and what they knew about it, vv.33,34.
  - b. The purpose for which he reminds them of his own example, v.35.
    - (1) “How that so laboring ye ought to support the weak” (Thayer,80: “Contextually, ‘to be weak in means, needy, poor.’”)
    - (2) Further enforced by the treasured words of the Lord Jesus how he said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” (It means blessed or happy, Mt.5:3-11; 1Pet.3:14; 4:14; Psa.1:1)
    - (3) It’s from these words we take our topic.

4. From this entire text (i.e., vv.28-35) we learn something about serving as elders in the Lord's church that is too often overlooked or ignored, which is:
  - a. Elders are men who must possess the qualifications necessary to do this assigned work. Cf. 1Tim.3:2, "apt to teach"; Tit.1:9-11.
    - (1) Not just men who have been around for a longtime.
    - (2) Not just men of age and with family qualifications.
    - (3) But spiritual men with sufficient Bible knowledge and the ability to use it in defending the truth and convicting and refuting false teachers and false doctrine.
  - b. Elders are not men appointed to be served or to be bosses or to be lords over the flock, but to be servants of God's people. Cf. 1Pet.5:1-4.
5. Paul's citing his own example of giving or service rendered to others and reminding these elders of the words of the Lord Jesus, thus teaching them as elders of their duty to serve, and that "It is more blessed to give than to receive," brings us to our study of the topic "The Blessedness Of Giving" based on Ac.20:35.
6. As we study this topic think of things these words of Jesus involve and or include as we try to understand and appreciate why "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

## II. DISCUSSION

1. These words put into language the very spirit of Jesus Christ. They sum up the life of Jesus in one simple, but sublime, sentence.
2. These words represent the very character of Jesus. Cf. Ac.10:38; Lk.19:10; Mt.20:20-28; 2Cor.8:9; 1Jno.3:16; 1Pet.221; 3:17,18.
  - a. These words reveal the unworldly character of his teaching and the unselfish character of his life; the life we are supposed to imitate!
  - b. Such is just the opposite of the philosophy of the worldly minded.
3. The spirit of these words is essentially Divine.
  - a. God lives to bless his universe and its inhabitants.
  - b. He is love; it is his disposition to bless; his Divine habit to give. Cf. Jas.1:17; 1Jno.4:9,10.

- c. When we give forth of ourselves to others as Jesus taught in Ac.20:35, we are manifesting the fact that we are “partakers of the divine nature.” See Mt.5:43-48; 2Pet.1-4.
4. These words declare to us wherein the peculiar blessedness of the servant of Jesus consists, which is best promoted by giving and by doing. Jas.1:21-27; Heb.5:8,9; 1Jno.3:17-19
5. These words suggest that the right discharge of both these functions (that is, both receiving and giving) is blessedness.
  - a. This is implied in the word “more”: “it is **more** blessed to give than to receive.”
  - b. To receive in the right spirit, and for the right purpose, is a truly blessed thing; thus, nothing wrong with receiving per se. For instance, to receive:
    - (1) As the reward of proper effort or labor is blessed, 1Tim. 5:17,18; 1Cor.9:1-11; 2Cor.11:8; Jas.5:4; Eph.4:28.
    - (2) As the supply of material needs, if one is a legitimate object of charity, is blessed, 1Cor.16:1-3; 2Cor.8:1-5; Eph.4:28.
  - c. However, the blessedness of giving under proper condition is **greater** – “**more blessed**.” Cf. Heb.6:10; 2Th.3:10.
6. Therefore, these words do not mean that is unblessed to receive.
  - a. God has made all of us dependent upon his own giving, and, also, mutually dependent upon one another.
  - b. We must receive before we can give; and whenever and wherever we begin to give, some one must receive.
  - c. The relation is blessed on both its sides.
  - d. Service, therefore, like mercy, is twice blessed: it blesses him that gives and him that receives.
  - e. But of the two blessednesses, Jesus said, the higher or greater is that of giving.
7. It is more blessed to give than to receive:
  - a. Because the practice of this blessed giving is being Christ-like.
    - (1) He “went about doing good,” Ac.10:38.
    - (2) He both lived and died thus giving himself to enlighten, to comfort, to bestow, to redeem.
    - (3) It was little that he received while here on earth; it was simply everything that he gave to mankind that mattered.

- b. Because in a sense it is also angelic, for “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” Heb.1:14.
- c. Because the sincere practice of this blessed giving is also elevating spiritually.
  - (1) To be constantly receiving is to be in danger of becoming selfish, of making our own poor self the central object of regard, of even depending on continuous fresh supplies for satisfaction (the more we receive, the more we want to receive); in a word, of moral and spiritual degeneracy.
    - (a) The Dead Sea is dead because it receive but does not give or release any water!
  - (2) But to be ever giving is to be sowing in the soil of our souls the seeds of all that is sweetest and noblest; it is to be building up in ourselves a character which our Lord delights to look upon and to bless.
  - (3) To ever receive is to be superficially and momentarily *happy*, but ever wanting more; but to ever be giving is to be inwardly, abidingly and divinely blessed.
  - (4) It is far more blessed to give than to receive.
- d. Because scriptural, acceptable giving:
  - (1) Delivers us from ourselves, from the bonds of selfishness
  - (2) Unites us with and brings us nearer to both God and man, making us imitators of God, Mt.5:43-48.
  - (3) Brings personal joy to the sincere giver.
    - (a) There is more happiness in being able to give than in having to be the receiver.
    - (b) We had much rather have the funds to give to the needy than to have to receive the funds as the one in need.
  - (4) Helps in the formation of good character acceptable to God.
  - (5) Broadens our influence for good with our fellowman.
  - (6) It proof of our own recognition of the grace of God being bestowed upon us by our having first given ourselves to the Lord and then to others by his will. Cf. 2Cor.8:1-5.
- e. Because there is no grace which has the encouragement of more and greater promises than the blessedness of giving. For instance, there is the promise:
  - (1) Of happiness in general, Prov.14:21; Mt.5:7; Lk.6:38.

- (2) Of happiness in this life, Psa.37:3; 41:1-3; Prov.28:27.
  - (3) Of happiness in death, Prov.14:31,32.
  - (4) Of happiness in the world to come, Lk.14:12-14; 1Tim.6:17-19.
8. Of course, we must remember, there are certain conditions on which the giving of which Jesus speaks brings this blessedness. It must be:
- a. "Of a willing mind," 2Cor.8:12.
  - b. Motivated by charity or love in proving "the sincerity of your love," 2Cor.8:8; 1Cor.13:1-3.
  - c. "As a matter of bounty or blessing, and not as of covetousness," 2Cor.9:5.
  - d. As one "purposeth in his heart...not grudgingly (of sorrow) or of necessity ( under compulsion, with pain or constraint): for God loveth a cheerful giver," 2Cor.9:7.

### III. CONCLUSION

- 1. Finally, because its ultimate recompense is eternal life in the eternal future, Mt.25:31-46; Heb.6:10.
- 2. Let us bear in mind that this blessedness of giving, all of us can win.
- 3. It can be ours to enjoy now and forever, because all of us can give; because there is not one of us whom God has not prospered!
- 4. Even the poor widow who had only two mites could give.
- 5. The Lord himself, though he had nothing of this world's goods, could give.
- 6. While the subject of our text is primarily about giving to support the needs of the poor among the saints, there are other areas in which we are obligated to give in supporting the work of the local church, and were the lesson of this text is also applicable: The Blessedness Of Giving.
- 7. Then, of course, there is the actual performance of the work of the local church which requires that each member give of self in service rendered.
  - a. For the Lord is dependent upon the members of the local church to perform the work of the church.
  - b. It is for one and all; not just for "the faithful few."
  - c. We must first give of ourselves then our means. Cf. 2Cor.8:1-5.
- 8. Remember the words of our Lord, how he said: ---