

New Covenant Theology



New Covenant Giving

- When we looked at the question of tithing, we saw that the standard for New Covenant giving is that we are to give ***generously*** and ***cheerfully*** (without compulsion) (2 Cor. 9:7, 1Tim 6:17-19)
- So last week we began looking at the question: Who all should New Covenant believers be generously and cheerfully giving ***to***?
- Several categories of giving are mentioned in the NT:
 - Pastors/Elders
 - Ministers of the Gospel
 - The Poor
 - Other Possibilities?

Giving to Your Pastors/Elders - Review

- We have an obligation to share “all good [material] things” with our pastors in exchange for the spiritual benefit that we have received from them. (Gal. 6:6, 1Tim. 5:17-18)
- Pastors/elders should be compensated in proportion to their abilities and the amount of work they do.(1Tim. 5:17-18)
- Pastors can (at *their* discretion) waive their right to financial support if they believe it is in the best interests of the advance of the gospel to do so. (1Cor. 9:15)

Giving to Ministers of the Gospel - Review

- The scriptures teach that those who preach the gospel have a right to receive financial support from those who have benefited from their preaching. (1Cor. 9:11, 13-14)
- As in the case of pastors, a minister of the gospel can (at *his* discretion) waive his right to financial support if he believes it is in the best interests of the advance of the gospel to do so. (1Cor. 9:15)

Giving to Ministers of the Gospel

- The scriptures also commend those who support gospel ministers, even though they themselves have not been the direct beneficiaries of that gospel ministry:
 - *For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth... Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are...*
*⁶ You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. ⁷ For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. ⁸ Therefore **we ought to support people like these**, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.* (3 John 1:3, 5-8)

Giving to Ministers of the Gospel

- The scriptures also commend those who support gospel ministers, even though they themselves have not been the direct beneficiaries of that gospel ministry:
 - *And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only.* ¹⁶ *Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.* ¹⁷ *Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.* (Philippians 4:15-17)

Giving to Ministers of the Gospel

- The scriptures also commend those who support gospel ministers, even though they themselves have not been the direct beneficiaries of that gospel ministry:
 - *I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you.⁹ And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way.* (2Cor. 11:8-9)

Giving to the Poor

- Much is said in both the Old and New Testament about giving to the poor and helping those in financial need.
- Since we are looking at giving for New Covenant believers, we will focus on what the **New** Testament has to say about giving to the poor.
 - There are a number of passages that directly **command** us to give to the poor.
 - There are a number examples in the New Testament of individuals who are:
 - **Commended** for being generous
 - **Condemned** for ignoring the needs of the poor and helpless.
 - The **strongest** warnings in the NT are given to those who will not help a **brother** who is in **desperate** financial need.

Giving to the Poor

- There are a number of passages that directly **command** us to give to the poor:
 - **Luke 14:13-14** – *But when you give a feast, **invite the poor**, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.*
 - **Luke 3:7-11** – *[John the Baptist] said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits in keeping with repentance..." And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to **share with him who has none**, and whoever has food is to do likewise."*
 - **Eph. 4:28** – *Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to **share with anyone in need**.*
 - **Rom 12:20** – *If your enemy is hungry, **feed him**; if he is thirsty, **give him something to drink**.*
 - **1Tim 6:17-19** – *As for the rich in this present age... They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and **ready to share**...*

Giving to the Poor

- There are a number examples in the New Testament of individuals who are **commended** for their generosity:
 - **Luke 19:8-9** – *And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the **half of my goods I give to the poor**. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham".*
 - **Act 4:34-35** – **The early church at Jerusalem** – ***There was not a needy person among them**, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.*
 - **Act 10:1-4**– *[Cornelius] and all his family were devout and God-fearing; **he gave generously to those in need** and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and **gifts to the poor** have come up as a memorial offering before God. (NIV)*

Giving to the Poor

- There are a number examples in the New Testament of individuals who are **commended** for their generosity:
 - **2 Cor. 8:1-5** – The Macedonian church in their giving to Paul's collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem – *We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For **they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means,** of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints-- and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us*
 - **Luke 10:33-37** – The “Good Samaritan”

Giving to the Poor

- There are a number examples in the New Testament of individuals who are **condemned** for ignoring the needs of the poor and helpless:
 - **Luke 10:30-32** – The priest and the Levite in the story of the “Good Samaritan”
 - **Luke 16:19-25** – The rich man and Lazarus: *There was a **rich man** who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.” But Abraham said, “Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.”*
 - **Mat. 19:21** – Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

Giving to the Poor

- The strongest warnings in the NT are given to those who will not help a **brother** who is in **desperate** financial need:
 - **Mat 25:31-46** – *When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For **I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.**' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these **my brothers**, you did it to me.'*

Giving to the Poor

- The strongest warnings in the NT are given to those who will not help a **brother** who is in desperate financial need:
 - **Mat 25:31-46** – *Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'*

Giving to the Poor

- The strongest warnings in the NT are given to those who will not help a **brother** who is in desperate financial need:
 - **James 2:14-17** – *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a **brother or sister** is **poorly clothed and lacking in daily food**, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*
 - **1 John 3:16-17** – *By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees **his brother** in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?*

Giving to the Poor

- For next week meditate on the following questions:
 - Is it ever **wrong** (or at least a bad idea) to give to someone in financial need?
 - Are there **limits** to how much we should give to the poor? If so, what are they?
 - Even if we gave away **all** of our money to the poor, we can't help everyone. So how do we go about prioritizing who we **do** help?

Questions?

