

Tis the Season to Give...

...but to whom?

Each year, at this time in particular, there are so many organizations that we get mail from making appeals for our hard earned income. So, if out of compassion for others we do give, which group or persons should we, either personally or congregationally, give to that will do the most good for the needy?

We need to use wisdom...

Mat 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore **wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.**

Col 4:5 Be wise in the way you act **toward those who are outside the Christian faith.** Make the most of your opportunities. **6** Everything you say should be kind and well thought out so that you know how to answer everyone. *(GW)*

Jas 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. **6** But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. **7** For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

...and discernment.

Mat 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

- How many times have you heard of those who scammed the elderly and misinformed. And there are many organizations, religious and otherwise, that appear to do good but have been found to be “only in it for the money”.

2Co 11:13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. **14** And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. **15** Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Eph 5:15 So be careful how you live. Don't live like ignorant people, but like wise *(informed?)* people. **16** Make good use of every opportunity you have, because these are evil days. **17** Don't be fools, then, but try to find out **what the Lord wants** you to do. *(GNB)*

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**

- Will my/our financial support to this individual/organization lead anyone to **Christ**? If it doesn't it would be like casting pearls into a pig sty. Does this organization support or degrade the will of **God** or is it neutral without any biases? Every effort is to be made to make sure we are not aiding **Satan** in his work to deceive.

Priority.

Luk 12:23 The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment.

Luk 12:29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. 31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Luk 12:34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

- By these words spoken by Jesus it needs to be understood that feeding physical hunger should be secondary to feeding spiritual hunger.

Gal 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 **As we have therefore opportunity**, let us do good unto all *men*, **especially** unto them who are of the household of faith.

Mar 9:41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink **in My name, because ye belong to Christ**, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

Mar 14:7 For ye have the poor with you always, and **whenever ye will** ye may do them good: but Me ye have not always.

- Speaking to His disciples before He was crucified Jesus noted the plight of the poor having also noted His short time on the earth with them. His comment was to be understood that as long as the world lasts, poverty will always exist and opportunities to aid the poor will always be numerous. But since “life is a vapor”, according to James (4:14), there is little time to obey Christ in order to be prepared for what really matters, the hereafter. With such little time in mind, then, our focus, as the body of Christ, should ever be on preparing others for Heaven. It would not do any good to take care of the physical, which is temporal, without also providing for the spiritual, which is eternal.

Joh 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent.

Physical vs. Spiritual

Mar 9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off (“If you have the tendency to do things that are sinful...”): it is **better** for thee to enter into life maimed, **than** having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee (“If you have the tendency to go places that are a Christian shouldn’t...”), cut it off: it is **better** for thee to enter halt into life, **than** having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee (“If you have the tendency to view pornography or ogle at the opposite sex...”), pluck it out: it is **better** for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, **than** having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

- Jesus is here speaking metaphorically but if it meant losing one’s soul because of a body part then so be it. If one starves to death who is outside the protection of Christ (*other than children who are in His care*) **would they be better treated in eternity?** That’s why it is even more important to feed the spiritual hunger **along** with feeding the

physical, with the exception of children and those like-minded that we **should** be taking care of anyway, because in the end it will be as simple as in or out, up or down, over or under, **Heaven** or **Hell!**

2Th 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire **taking vengeance on them that know** (*Gk.1492- to see; to know: -be aware, [have] known [-ledge], perceive*) **not God** (*children cannot perceive anything in their innocence*), and **that obey not the gospel** of our Lord Jesus Christ (*children aren't expected to be obedient to the gospel because they haven't lost their innocence to sin*): 9 Who shall be **punished with everlasting destruction** from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; 10 When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Mat 19:13 Then were there brought unto Him little children, that He should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, **Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven***. 15 And He laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

“by these I may instruct and point out to you, what converted persons should be, who have a place in my church below, and expect to enter into my kingdom and glory above; that they are, or ought to be, like such children, harmless and inoffensive; free from rancor and malice, meek, modest, and humble; without pride, self-conceit, and ambitious views, and desires of grandeur and superiority. Christ's entire silence about the baptism of infants at this time, when he had such an opportunity of speaking of it to his disciples, had it been his will, has no favorable aspect on such a practice.” John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

Mat 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for **the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

The Judgment and the Wedding Feast

Mat 22:2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, 3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

Mat 22:10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. 11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which **had not on a wedding garment**: 12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (*our wedding garment!*).

- The poor are more accepting of the message of the gospel because they don't have the worldly things that would tempt them to think they don't need **God**.

Mat 11:4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and **the poor have the gospel preached to them.** 6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me. (Notice Jesus didn't say "the poor are fed".)

*Joh 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27 Labour not for the **meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed.***

Luk 4:14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about. 15 And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. 16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, 18 **The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor;** He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

- Do we see the focus of Jesus' earthly ministry? Notice who it was that the man in this next parable called first to the feast and those who finally did go.

Luk 14:15 And when one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things, he said unto Him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16 Then said He unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: 17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden (*the Jews first*), Come; for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one consent **began to make excuse***. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. 19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. 20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly **into the streets** and lanes of the city, and **bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind** (*publicans and sinners**). 22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. 23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges (*Gentiles*), and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew **first, and **also** to the Greek.*

Mar 2:17 When Jesus heard it, He saith unto them, **They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

2Th 2:14 Whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mat 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

Rev 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath **made herself ready**. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the **righteousness of saints**. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they **which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb**. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Jer 23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6 In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**.

- Only those who will be called to “the marriage supper of the Lamb” are those who have obeyed that first call of the message of the gospel by clothing themselves in righteousness (*i.e., Christ*), who have labored in the work of the Lord and those who are found innocent on that day when the saints will finally have shed this life’s burdens to be told “enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (*Mat 25:21*). Amen!

Giving Individually.

- This is where we each need to make a decision on how to give as individual Christians after we have “rightly divided the word of truth” (*2 Tim 2:15*). Is it okay for me as an individual to support secular or “religious” groups that aid the poor? Groups like The Salvation Army, The United Way, the Red Cross or different scouting programs? We need to first look into the background of each organization to see if any of their views are contrary with what scripture teaches. Do they adhere to and/or promote sound doctrine? Do they promote a moral lifestyle? How much of my donation actually goes to the service they claim to provide and how much of it goes to “administrative costs” and other “overhead”? Again, are they neutral?

2Ti 3:14 But you should continue following the teaching you learned. You know it is true, because you know you can trust those who taught you. 15 You have known the Holy Scriptures since you were a child. These Scriptures are able to make you wise. And that wisdom leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by God. And all Scripture is useful for teaching and for showing people what is wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching the right way to live. 17 Using the Scriptures, **those who serve God will be prepared and will have everything they need to do every good work.** (*Easy-To-Read Version*)

Giving Congregationally.

Jas 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit (*Gk.1980- Thayer: to look upon or after, to inspect, examine with the eyes... in order to see how he [she] is.*) the fatherless (*Gk.3737- bereaved [“orphan”], that is, parentless*) and widows in their affliction (*Gk.2347- pressure: -trouble*), and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

1Ti 5:3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children or nephews (*Gk.1549- descendant, that is, [specifically] grandchild*), let them learn first to shew piety (*Gk.2151- respect [support]*) at home, and to requite (*Gk.591- to give back: -[re-] pay*) their

parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. **5** Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

- Taking a parent in or putting them in a nursing home is still understood as supporting their needs. It would be considered paying them back for the expenses they paid while raising us as their children. In doing so it gives them the opportunity to continue trusting in **God** for **His** graciousness, but now, through the blessing of the children.

1Ti 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. **9** Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore (**60**) years old, having been the wife of one man, **10** Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet (*a courtesy then and not to be mistaken as a practice in the church today*), if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

*“Children and grandchildren who did not care for their widowed mothers or other close relatives who might even have lived in their own houses denied the faith. In fact, they were worse than unbelievers because they did not show honor for God by properly honoring their parents. **Any Christian [emp. mine]** can and should be cared for if they are truly in need. However, Paul had in mind a list of widows who should be cared for by the church on a regular basis until their death. To be on this list, a widow had to be at least 60 years old and have been faithful to God's marriage law.” (Gary Hampton)*

1Ti 5:16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed (*v. 5*).

- It is the duty of every saint to take care of his/her own family if there is the ability to do so when the need arises, and **not put it on the church** so that the church can take care of those **who have no such relief**.

2Th 3:10 While we were with you, we gave you the order: "Whoever **doesn't want to work** (*notice it doesn't say "can't work"*) shouldn't be allowed to eat." **11** We hear that some of you are not living disciplined lives. You're not working, so you (*have the time to [input mine]*) go around interfering in other people's lives. **12** We order and encourage such people by the Lord Jesus Christ to pay attention to their own work so they can support themselves. (*GW*)

- Congregations are not to take from the treasury and **blindly** give to a **Christian** who is able to work and take care of his/her own needs. If only our government would go by this idea. All too often our taxes go toward such things as food stamps, welfare and unemployment reimbursements when there's no accountability. These, in and of themselves not wrong, are good reasons why we **do** pay taxes. But when they are taken advantage of, by those who refuse to work, these entitlements are being abused. For us to do so with the **Lord's** money would be considered sinful but, we **are** to take care of those within who **do** work but get in a bind from time to time **from no fault of their own**, and those who can't work, who lost their jobs or are in need of some other relief.

2Co 8:8 I am not laying down any rules. But by showing how eager others are to help, I am trying to find out how real your own love is. **9** You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; rich as He was, He made himself poor for your sake, in order to make you rich by means of His poverty. (*GNB*)

- We can see how we have to use wisdom and discernment and set priorities to our giving. Our first and foremost focus should ever be on the souls of mankind. If all our benevolence went to take care of the **physical** needs of the poor we will just turn out to be another faux religious group and those are numerous. We need to remember what Jesus said concerning **“the poor you have always with you”** (*Mk 14:7*). Whether people realize it or not, most are spiritually athirst and in need of the **“living water”**, spiritually hungry and in need of **“the bread of life”**.

Joh 4:5 Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. **6** Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *His* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour. **7** There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, **Give Me to drink.** **8** (For His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) **9** Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. **10** Jesus answered and said unto her, **If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.** **11** The woman saith unto Him, Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water? **12** Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? **13** Jesus answered and said unto her, **Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.**

Joh 6:48 I am that bread of life. **49** Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, **and are dead.** **50** This is the **bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die** (*spiritually*). **51** I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

- When a faithful Christian dies because of physical hunger they will be answering the invitation to that great wedding feast in the kingdom of Heaven! So the question should no longer be “to whom” should we give, but “what” we should be giving. That “what” should be the bread and water of life in the form of the gospel message of salvation and everything else will take care of itself.

Hear: **Romans 10:17** ..."faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Believe: **Heb 11:6** ..."for he that commeth to God must believe that He is"...

Repent: **Lk 13:3** ..."except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Confess: **Mat 10:32** "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in Heaven."

Be baptized: **1 Pet 3:21** "...baptism doth also now save us..."

Remain faithful: **Rom 6:4** ..."even so we also should walk in newness of life."

So if any is thirsty or if any are hungry, the feast is prepared!

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