

Series Conclusion: 1 Corinthians 16:1-24

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[0 : 0 0] It is good to see you this morning. It is great to worship the Lord Jesus with you. The first week of January this year, we began a sermon series that will conclude today walking through the book of 1 Corinthians. It is a corrective letter that Paul writes to the church and so the tone can be very hard to read sometimes. In the first just a quick review, in the first six chapters, Paul lays out his concerns by the things that he has heard that have been happening at the church at Corinth. Then he takes beginning in chapter 7 through the rest of the letter to address concerns that the church had with regard to some various things and so then Paul writes to address the concerns that he has heard from the church at Corinth. Today we conclude with the last chapter, chapter 16, and Paul will address the two last and final concerns that they have that they have written to Paul about. And so let's read together this last chapter of 1st

Corinthians. This is the word of the Lord, chapter 16. Now concerning the collection for the saints as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of the week each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper so that there will be no collecting when I come.

And when I arrive I will send those whom you accredited by letter to carry the gift to Jerusalem. It seems advisable that I should go also if they will accompany me. They will accompany me. I will visit you after passing through Macedonia and I intend to pass through Macedonia as perhaps I will stay with you and spend the winter so that you may help me on my journey wherever I go. For I do not want to see you now just in passing, I hope to spend some time with you if the Lord permits. But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost for a wide door of effective work has opened to me and there are many adversaries. When Timothy comes see that you put him at ease among you for he is doing the work of the Lord as I am. So let no one despise him, help him on his way in peace that he may return to me for I am expecting him with the brothers. Now concerning our brother Apollos I strongly urged him to visit you and the other brothers but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he is opportunity. Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all of you do be done in love. Now I urge you brothers you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts of Achaia and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. Be subject such as these and every fellow worker in the labor. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus because they have made up for your absence for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such people. The churches of Asia send you greetings Aquila and Prisca together with the church in their household send you heart of greetings in the Lord. All the brothers send you greetings greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand if anyone has no love for the Lord let him be accursed. Our Lord come. The grace of the

Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you and all the Christ Jesus. Amen. Father thank you for the opportunity this morning to look at your word to see what it is that you have for us today. Lord as your word is living and active and sharp to the division of soul and spirit and joints and marrow and as a discernor of the thoughts and intents of our hearts so Lord we pray that as your word is proclaimed we would seek to apply that's what we hear. May our estimation of you increase and may our love for others increase as well. In your name. Amen. I would argue one of the first things that Paul writes to the church of Corinth is this. He would plead with them to hold money loosely. Look how he spends the first four verses. Now concerning so let's imagine Paul is responding to the concern that the Corinthian church had and so he addresses them because oh now concerning the matter of what? The collection for the saints.

We know in verse 3 that this collection was for the church at Jerusalem and so there is a special offering if you will that is going to be taken that Paul is instructing this church at Corinth please take up the special offering for the saints in Jerusalem. So he says now concerning the collection for the saints I directed the church as in Galatia so he's solicited not only Corinth but the church in Galatia which is just north if you will of where they are at.

[5 : 47] So you also are to do on the first day of the week each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper. So as you are so there will be no collection when I come so they what are they to do? He's instructing them hey on the first day of the week let's say before you go to church put a collection aside and keep it and so that when I come this collection will be made you can bring that offering at that time so that the collection can be made and so put something aside each of you store it up and so they are to individually be keeping this offering set it aside the first day of the week. Some argue that the church was going to be collected at the church some but by the wording because it is so personal each of you is to put something aside and store it up it seems individual so each individual in their own household was to be setting aside this collection. And when Paul is writing this it is an invitation to participate in the Lord's work we see in verse 3 that when I arrive send I will send those whom you credit by letter to carry the gift Jerusalem that there is a work that the Lord is doing in Jerusalem that this gift is for and this is an invitation for you to participate in the Lord's work. And I don't know about you what's interesting is that the motivation for this gift this offering this collection that is taken is written this it seems to be a preoccupation of Paul this gift that is to be taken and collection this offering for the church in Jerusalem we find it in the book of Galatians he noted the book of he said the churches in Galatia are also taking up this collection so we find this offering being taken in the book of Galatians or the letter to Galatia we find this in first and second Corinthians we find this in Romans and so and we find this in the book of Acts the situation and so by putting all this together you can find what the motivation is of this situation in Jerusalem because in some ways this should be puzzling to us why is the church in

Jerusalem in need and so I think it's helpful for us to read other passages we find this in second we find the first motivation found in the book of Romans Romans chapter 15 you don't have to turn there the the verses on the screen we read this we find the first motivation is to alleviate human suffering at present this is what we read in the book of Romans chapter 15 at present however I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among you among the saints at Jerusalem so there seems to be this human suffering some aid for the saints for the poor that are among the saints in Jerusalem so there is this alleviating of human suffering that is part of the motivation for this and notice this we find in the book of Romans this is referring to this gift that is to be taken right so why do I mention that if we were to look at this slide and

I know not everyone can read this or see this well but what's interesting is Paul will find is on his way to Jerusalem he's writing the letter to Rome and he's bragging about Achaia and Macedonia the two regions that have taken up this collection so he's bragging the Macedonian Church the Achaia churches they are there they have brought this money they've taken up a collection for the church in Jerusalem and he's writing to Roman believers about this gift we find the second motivation found in the very next verse in Romans we read this and I would say it's to strengthen the racial tension in the church and when I say church I mean the church the universal church we look what Paul has to say they were pleased to do it the churches in Macedonia the churches in Achaia they were pleased to take up this offering and indeed they owe it to them for if the

Gentiles have come to share in the spiritual blessing they ought to be able to have they ought to also be of service to them and material blessings so since they share in the spiritual blessing they ought to be able to give in this material way and notice why I say there is this racial tension that Paul is hoping that this offering will help reconcile in this verse we see this that the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessing what is the spiritual blessing that the Gentiles now share with the Jews how do the Gentiles benefit from the Jews I'm gonna say a few things first the human authors of God's word are Jews second the Messiah by which we are saved is Jewish though he is the lion of the tribe of Judah he is not Norwegian I happen to be Norwegian

Jesus was not Norwegian he was a lion of the tribe of Jews he was a Jew the gospel but that's not necessarily what Paul is saying here but it's important for us to understand all the richness that the Gentiles have come from the Jewish people the gospel was foreshadowed and proclaimed in the Old Testament how do you say well how was that done well through the the tabernacle and then the temple through the feasts and the festivals that the Feast of Tabernacle so pass over propentecost through Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac on Mount Moriah all who express their faith believe that by looking at the serpent that Moses had held up in the wilderness would be spared from death so today we who look to Christ by faith who has been lifted up who has died for our sins can be spared of eternal death and receive eternal life we could go on and on and on how the how we share in the spiritual blessings of the Jews and so Paul's appeal to the Gentile church in Greece modern-day Greece and Asia Minor is in part to reconcile that relationship with between the Jews and the Gentile so they should be encouraging the Macedonian

[12 : 57] Church in the Achaia Church that this community cumulative effect that they're offering would be to participate in the Lord's work with the saints in Jerusalem there was some deep need and you say well what was the need that was in Jerusalem why is there poor and why was there some hurting saints in Jerusalem because it should be quite shocking to us because we read in Acts how did the church in Jerusalem begin let's remind ourselves it says this in the book of Acts chapter 2 all who believed were together and had all things in common and they were selling their possessions and belongings distributing to all as they received their food with glad and generous hearts people were selling properties people were selling things to and giving and there was no one in need in Jerusalem and now 25 years later or so we find now the church is in deep need they're hurting 20 years later what happened we know from history a couple of things first that there was a severe famine in the region of Judea and that had diminished resources greatly so there was a famine secondly there was persecution we see this with Stephen and we see this with Paul persecution had been more intently heating up around Jerusalem and so now there was this need in Jerusalem and Paul is soliciting the help in the churches of Galatia and

Achaia saying would you please take up an offering would you be free with your money I say this this this first principle to hold money loosely and to participate in the Lord's work because I want you to look down in verse 6 there's actually three offerings that are being taken or encouraged to be taken in this chapter the first one is one through four the second one we we find in verse 6 Paul is saying his he's articulating his travel journeys and perhaps I will stay with you and even through the winter so that you may help me on my journey wherever I go that you could participate in the Lord's work so I'm gonna stay with you for a little while please would you please then help me with your resources that to carry the gospel wherever I may go second or the third time in this chapter we find him speaking of Timothy now in verse 11 so let no one despise him speaking of Timothy help him Timothy on his way in peace help him that implies a financial resourcing way whether it be with food whether it be with lodging whether it be finances somehow help him on his way in peace that he may return to me for I am expecting him with the brothers so there are three instances of three offerings that are encouraged in this one chapter we are to hold loose our resources and please know from time to time we here at fourth may take an offering for those who have need regardless we were to hold money loosely we find some principles here in this these first three verses one we should be systematic we think well what are some principles in order to be generous we we have to be have a plan and be systematic on the notice how specific Paul is on the first day of the week after you've worked for one full week you have earned some money you get paid on that first day set some money aside so have a plan and be systematic

I am grateful for the many families who regularly and consistently give and set aside monies each month and give to the Lord and are generous through him either through the local church or through various ministries I'm grateful whether you are saving to purchase a vehicle or a home a fence a roof a cell phone whatever it is it takes intentional planning to set side of money and prepare for that purchase so too it works the same and preparation to be generous it's hard to be generous without some planning and having a systematic plan for 20 years I had the privilege of working with young adults college students and singles and I would warn them upon finishing college what the temptation would be is they they finish college and then they have their first job and they have real money coming in then and the temptation is to buy a house or rent an apartment that they can't afford and buy a car or or lease a car that they cannot afford and because bigger and shinier things are now available to them and then they go for it and so their intention of being generous is they're unable to at that point and what's difficult as college students are no different than adults so I would encourage them please and please know that the tithe I don't believe to be taught in the New Testament but I would share with them please begin with a 10 a 10 percent amount whatever let's say you want to be generous set aside 10 percent then whatever your budget is whatever rent you can afford and car you can afford after that with regard to the amount of money that you have set aside this 10 percent and it's untouchable monies the problem is we we buy we don't set aside 10 percent we we buy a house or rent a house we buy a car lease a car and then it's not possible any longer and that happens all the time and so what what happens is then that student grows and it becomes harder and harder to ever be generous throughout the course of their life and then they fall into the American statistic that Christians in America give 2.5 percent of their income to two to churches 2.5 of their percent of their income during the Great Depression the average was 3.3 and 37 percent of regularly attending evangelical churches in America 37 percent almost 40 percent of individuals attending American churches in America evangelical churches in

America don't give a thing how did that happen does people's grow up thinking I just want to be stingy and selfish with everything that I have including my money no one ever thinks that no whatever does that but we all can fall into this habit and so Paul knows that we all know that and he encourages on the first day of the week set some aside so my counsel the students is the same as you the rule of thumb instead of buying a house and purchasing vehicles that determine what you can afford to give to the Lord let's determine what we desire to give to the Lord and be generous and then set your budget accordingly and that will determine what rent and house you can afford and what car or whatever you can afford I'm picking on cars and houses because those are typically too big budget busters next in order to be generous make it personal and individual look with me in verse 3 or I'm sorry verse 2 each of you each of you it says

Paul expected each individual to make this a habit nobody was exempt from setting money aside for this special offering to be taken up the amount isn't important the regularity of it is and that the fact that everyone participated was important what else do we learn in this passage ensure that it is proportionate also in verse 2 on the first day of the week each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper some interpret this to say hey as somebody prospers let him set aside that proportion of the the amount that they're going to set aside others would say no it's proportionate that as he prospers that if God blesses individual much set much aside if God does does not bless with an individual much don't set that much aside the amount is not important it is important to be proportionate this is what I love about the Lord the amount is not important this is why Jesus after observing the wealthy people give large sums of money as he was sitting in the temple court and he saw people who had large sums of money giving an offering to the Lord you would think that that would catch his attention and he would be well pleased with that but no he says to the of the poor widow who contributed to copper coins that was just pennies and he said of her she has given more than all they who have given it was not the amount it was the portion to which he had it was her heart's expression of total trust devotion and gratitude to the Lord when I was in college I was giving 10% so you think okay Scott did you even model this yes when I was in college I strove to give 10% and and I calculated it up this week because I was curious about this message and thinking and and it probably I was working about 20 hours a week full-time student and I calculated it up with the wages that where the were at and what I was making at the time and it probably gave to the local church maybe \$800 don't tell me don't tell me what you give that's not important but here the point of the story is this that amount of money probably didn't move the needle of the church budget that I was attending much at all but that is not the point that is not the point I was glad to participate in the work of the Lord in that local church that's the point there's another principle found here that money is to be handled money is to be handled honestly if we read in verse 4 verse 3 and 4 when I arrive I will send those whom you are credited by a letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem so church at Corinth we're gonna take up that collection everyone is gonna give and you can you can pick who you want to receive that and I'm gonna send with them a letter to Jerusalem whom you appoint and you trust with that offering and keep in mind there was no money wire transfer wire transfers or anything like this they had to physically carry that cash on hand as they traveled that could have been very dangerous and then

[24 : 14] Paul says and if it seems advisable that I should go also I will come they will accompany me so I may even offer myself to go but you choose but it was to be handled honestly and on this point I want to be sure to say I am grateful for Dale Canner she is our bookkeeper here at 4th for being one of impeccable character her desire for integrity and transparency is high who manages the church fine and says extremely carefully and who is not bothered by and welcomes checks and balance systems because it is unfortunate when Christian ministries and churches lose their testimony because of mismanaged funds so thank you Dale also I want to say that money matters are matters of the heart when Paul writes of this collection in the next letter that he will write to the church at Corinth 2 Corinthians 8-9 he writes this and here he roots this gift and this giving issue into a theological motivation the theological basis for the generosity he says this for I know the grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich and chapters 8 and 9 Paul writes concerning this offering and giving and generosity and specifically he roots he finds the theological basis for this and you say Scott it says that Christ though he was rich think of it this way what does the Lord not own what does he not own he owns everything for he created all that we can see including ourselves it belongs to him he has rights over them he has immeasurable glory think of this even if we were to take and remove all that was created so now we're back when it was just the Father Son and the Holy Spirit the weight of immeasurable glory that was his what is there that he does not own and so it says Christ became poor so here's our motivation here's the here's the motivation that Paul writes concerning this offering concerning this gift in the next letter because he had not come yet to them think of the pre-incarnate Christ so before he came to earth he renunciated that is he gave up his heavenly glory he said I am not going to remain here with the Father Son Holy Spirit in unity in community with himself and then he acted and he condescended to earth he came to earth voluntarily surrendering his glory the Creator taking on that's what he created human flesh being born of a woman God became man to die an unjust death a the sinless one dying for the sinner the innocent one dying for the guilty that he would become sin that we might be declared righteous that he might be judged that we go free that Christ gave himself that others may be rich and this is the theological basis for generosity that Paul writes concerning this gift that he's wanting to take up to go to Jerusalem here at fourth we we have our mission statement that says this that we want to make disciples who are transformed by the gospel and sometimes people are asking me who's got what do you mean by those who are transformed by the gospel look at this verse you say well how does the gospel pertain to our giving yes for I know the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for our sakes became poor so that you by his poverty might be rich there is the theological basis for being generous it is the very nature of who God is Christ became poor that we might become rich and that is how the gospel transforms our hearts with regard to generosity I read an article years ago on two indicators of a nation's wealth so I just it had nothing to do with Christianity I was just reading an article and I was fascinated by two of the things indicators that a nation is wealthy and one of them was storage units they pop up everywhere my wife and I just drove one by one by our house and they they even enlarged it they bought a property next to theirs and enlarged it and Wendy and I were like surely people are running out of stuff but no we drove by and and and it's full it's full I was I was amazed and I'm I am one of these but here's another one that we just take as our natural landscape of America storage units the second one was pet ownership and I'm a pet owner of 20 something years so I'm not condemning anyone who has a storage unit or pet ownership per se and think think why that's such an indicator of wealth that we would spend time and money feeding an animal that we would not eat because nowhere on earth would you ever do that if you're in need you would never do that it's a statement of wealth and we take it just so for granted we live Pastor Jay likes to say it this way we live like kings and queens we have potable water in our home think about how many in history or around the world who can say that we have potable water in our home we have indoor hot plumbing and hot water we have personal restrooms not a shared latrine or bath house we have a personal computer or tablet we may even have access to internet in our home this is a friend of mine whose name is Shumbo teased to you to Yishimi and his wife Olivia I had the privilege of ministering in Rwanda and visiting him and would and just to give you an indication I went out to Mutata which is near the Burundi border very rural if you go into a banana grove there in the middle of that little banana grove of a few acres was his house and he farmed and he worked for bananas and he had goats and things that he would eat and it was a mud brick home maybe 12 feet by 16 feet in length and he had five children he and his wife and he provided lodging for me as I ministered out here on the village and he gave me the best place on the dirt floor that he could provide he had a little mat of banana leaves that he laid out and I laid there and that's where I spent the week he had an outdoor outhouse type thing where you would use restroom and no indoor plumbing and this is where Shumbo teased lived and he ministers and he pastors several villages out there and it goes from one to the other and he he works hard Shumbo teased though came to America

and I returned the favor and he stayed in my home when he pulled up to the house he asked me several questions he peppered me with questions and inside I just kept dying and dying and dying he asked me the first thing he asked is do you have goats and I knew what he was thinking he observed my grass was just pristine and if you don't have animals like goats how is it that you keep your yard like that so when I informed him oh I'm sorry I have no goats he was like well next option sheep I was like well no I don't have any sheep either so I had to show him a lawnmower and why and how that works so think of this how wasteful that you would have a lot of ground and you would waste the the amount of food that it could produce for an animal that you could eat how wasteful having a yard is that you mow then at the time he asked so it's just you and your wife Scott right yep just just my wife and I why do you have three cars well because

I had a family heirloom truck in 1961 forward that we had just kind of a pleasure little vehicle that we kept garage and just we took it out on occasion since we've given it back to the family but those are hard questions asked why do you have three cars aren't there just two drivers how do you heat your house so then I told him about the furnace but then he was like well if you have a furnace why do you have this and it was a gas fireplace that doesn't take logs you just push a button in flame he was amazed that we had hot water and we could drink the water from the tap and we had laundry machines that we could do our laundry and not have to do them by hand and then he asked us a question that I had no answer and I've had the same question my whole life is why do you have so many pillows on your bed yeah you say Scott why are you saying all of this we live like kings and queens and when it comes to generosity and comes to money sometimes we find excuses and Paul is pleading I'm coming to take an offering and take it to those in need in Jerusalem and I expect you to be setting it aside so that when I come we could do this and I'm inviting you to participate in the Lord's work are we holding on to money too loose or loosely or too tightly are we modeling generosity that our Lord had modeled who was rich yet for our sakes became poor do you have a systematic proportionate deliberate habit of giving next we should hold money and plans loosely look with me in verse 5 I mentioned money again because now I'm into sections verses 5 through 9 because of the next two offerings that we've already talked about but look how look how loosely

[36 : 10] Paul holds his plans I will visit you after passing through Macedonia and I intend to pass through Macedonia and perhaps I will stay with you and spend the winter there so that you may help me on my journey wherever I go for I do not want to see you now just passing I hope to spend some time with you if the Lord permits I want you to see how carefully Paul wants to use money and time Paul in Ephesians says be careful then how you live not as unwise but as wise making the most of every opportunity for the days or evil someone has said that killing time is the chief occupation of modern society but no Christian can afford to kill time or waste opportunity two extremes need to be avoided concerning consulting the Lord hearing from him and making plans and and some struggle knowing what the Lord's will is so but here's two extremes that need to be avoided some are too frightened to make a mistake so they make no plans at all and the other is to make impulsive decisions and rush ahead without waiting for the Lord it is interesting the word choice that Paul has in verse 5 I intend to pass through Macedonia perhaps I will stay with you wherever I go I hope to if the Lord permits he's very non-committal at the same time he's communicating his intention and his plan what's interesting is if you will Paul lays out his plan a what we're reading here of how he intends to go pass through Macedonia on his way stay the winter go to Ephesus this is plan a but when you read the book of Acts you read his plan B he plan B ends up being that he revised his plans at least twice plan B was that he visited Corinth then he would travel through Macedonia passing through

Corinth the second time on his way to Judea that's in chapter 1 of 2nd Corinthians instead of a long visit he he he planned two shorter visits but even planned that plan did not materialize plan C turned out to be that a quick trip that was a painful trip to Corinth in which he returned to Ephesus and then he went on to Troas and he waited for Titus there and that's in 2nd Corinthians chapter 2 and Corinthians chapter 7 he visited Macedonia and then went on to Judea he did not spend much time at Corinth as he intended and so how do we make plans we need to seize the opportunity make the most of time and yet I think the the key phrase is if the Lord permits what is this phrase indicate there in verse 7 that Paul recognizes that God is sovereign he is ultimately in control and he is working circumstances he is moving people for his purposes and for the benefit of others Paul is finite God is infinite so Paul prayed he meditated on God's word sought counsel used his mind that God had given and proceeded to make plans but Paul recognizes God is sovereign so make plans for the sake of the gospel but hold them loosely just this last year in 2020 the COVID season a lot of us had to change plans we had plans for for the gospel sake but a lot of things changed those plans even here at church I was had a plan a trip planned for Spain that that was cancelled there was a let's talk biblical biblically series through the summer that we were going to preach through chapter our 2020 summer of 2020 that was changed make plans for the gospel sake and hold them loosely all too often I think that we don't have a plan to engage the lost to share the gospel to mature saints so how are you intending to share Christ with others who don't know him and mature the saints who do what is your personal plan make that plan and hold it loosely what are your plans to engage colleagues and families and neighbors with the gospel take time to write them down what is in your intention make a phone call write an email see him the text what is your plan for disciple making what is what is your plan and hold it loosely my wife and I when and I'm sure all of us could do this we wanted to serve the Lord with our entire life and so when we were younger and married when I first met Wendy she wanted to go to seminary and then she met me and that plan got cancelled I wanted to be an ommissionary overseas that was what my heart's desire was to be is to serve the

Lord overseas and then I was married and we had some health diagnoses that prevented that from becoming a reality we all should make plans we're probably on plan why we may only have one plan left to Z it's okay but I know the governor to which we make plans to glorify the Lord to make his name known but I'm gonna hold those plans loosely he is sovereign he can direct our paths however he wants and so too it is with you so let us hold money loosely let us hold our plans loosely and live for his glory would you pray with me father I thank you for this day I thank you for how you have knitted each of us together Lord I thank you for how we you have given each of us a mind and we have given us your word and to engage those around us and you've given us influence to proclaim your name may we be faithful and burdened by those around us who don't know the Lord and make plans and hold them loosely

Lord and may we learn to be generous we live like kings and queens may we honor you with the wealth that you've given us we love you Lord may our hearts be conformed to yours and it's in your name Jesus amen