

A Pattern for Stewardship

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[0 : 00] I would like you to turn your Bibles this morning to 1 Corinthians chapter 16, and I will! I will tell you that it will take a while for us to get to the text and there's a reason for that.

First of all, one of the things that I think has characterized my ministry among you is that I have probably been a fairly repetitious individual on certain things. One of the things that I have brought to the fore over and over again is my appeal that you would pray while I preach and that you would pray when anyone preaches. I don't make that request just because it happened to have come to me on one dark night, but I make that request on the basis of Scripture because over in 2 Thessalonians chapter 3, the apostle did there in that passage something that you actually will find as you work your way through the Scriptures, you'll find Paul wrote and asked people to pray for him over and over again. It was one of those hot-button issues for him. And I can tell you that if there is a time when you need to pray for a pastor, it is particularly when he is preaching, but it's also when he's preaching about something that you all, at least for the most part, have heard more than once.

And we are in the second of a two-part series on stewardship. And when you're going over something that you've heard before, there is a tendency to say, oh yeah, I've heard that, and your mind kind of clicks off.

I want to encourage you not to do that. I want you to recognize that there are always new things that God can teach his children when our heart is humble and inclined to hear what he has to say.

And so as I am preaching, you can pray with your eyes open, you can pray with your eyes closed, and I will not suspicion that you've dozed off. I'm going to assume that you are focused and you're inclined and you want to learn. You want to see what the Word has to say.

[2 : 07] And so we are going to look this morning at the second part of the matter of giving. You'll remember last week I talked about the importance of our heart attitude. God cares a great, great deal for how we give, the spirit with which we give. In fact, in the scriptures, interestingly enough, contrary to what you find with many fundraisers and particularly with our government, the scriptures encourage us to give only when we want to. It says, whosoever is of a willing heart.

Now, by the way, if you're sitting out there thinking, well, that gives me an exemption, you're right. But the problem in taking that exemption is that it's acknowledgement of a heart that's just pretty nasty. Now, by the way, I want to tell you that giving in and of itself won't change your heart. Don't think that. But when you recognize that your heart has no affection for being part of what God is doing and participating in the blessing of being an individual who's a channel of grace, you need to go back and say, Lord, you need to do something to my heart to rekindle my affections for the Lord Jesus Christ or do something that changed the way I think.

Last week, we talked about the heart attitude. This week, we're going to talk about methodology. And I want to give you a little bit of background to why I think methodology and giving is important. Interestingly enough, this last week, I was coming back from a hospital visit and walked into our lobby. And lo and behold, there was an individual that was working in our lobby that I have known for something like 20 some years. And I actually didn't recognize him because the way he was dressed and I just didn't spot him right off. And he said, hey, Pastor Knoyer, how are you doing? I looked over. Whoa. Yeah. How are you doing? And anyway, we had a little short conversation. And it brought back memories because about 20 years ago, this was early in my ministry here. And I was still in the process of learning some important things about pastoral ministry. And that is that sometimes it's appropriate to say no. In our office, we deflect many of the appeals for help. We send them off to

Pastor Saul because I don't have no in my vocabulary. You know, it's a hard one for me. And anyway, this guy, about 20 years ago, he showed up here at the church. And I'm a guppy. Do you

know what a guppy is?

I just fall for every line. And this guy told me the story. And I was just about, you know how I get emotional. And I was caught up. And we didn't have any cash at that time here. You know, oh, everybody say we've got cash around the church. No. He told me he was an electrician. This is how it went. And he didn't have any work and he didn't have any tools. And he just wanted help. He wanted me to give him some money so he could buy electrical tools. Now, I was born, but I wasn't born yesterday.

[5 : 09] So I took him down to Sutherland's. And we went and bought some basic tools. I paid for it with my own money. And I thought, you know, this is going to help this young man get right on the work. And by the way, in the scriptures, it says if a man doesn't work, he doesn't what? So the solution for not having something to buy your food with is generally get out there and do something about it. Don't sit on your hands and expect something to come to you. So I thought, hey, I'm taking a step for this young man. I'm going to buy him tools. And I bought him tools. And I thought that that was pretty good. I thought we've made progress. He called me up, short memory span. He called me up about a month later. And he started giving me a song about needing money for tools. And I said, hold it. Do you remember me? I said, you know what? This was in the old days of the Yellow Pages. You know, guys would just grab the phone book and kind of work through. And they'd lose track of who they were calling. So he was calling me and he was giving me the same solicitation. I said, hold it. Do you remember talking to me about a month ago? What was that? I said, I bought you tools at Sutherland's. I said, where are they? There was this long pause on the phone, okay? And then there was this click. I wish that's the only story I had to tell you about my inattention to the Scriptures earlier in my life regarding the matter of benevolence. I had to come to this process the hard way of actually going to the Scriptures and researching and saying, what does the Bible have to say about the charity and the way in which believers go about the matter of giving? And I remember early in my ministry when Judith and I were working in northeastern Ohio, another situation where an individual showed up at the house and really had a very sad story. And I, remember, I'm a guppy. I fell for it completely. Judith was there in the home. And that evening, we didn't have a lot of cash. But what I did was I grabbed about three or four grocery bags and I went through loading them up. And about four days into that, I remember we'd had macaroni and cheese for about the third time in a row. Now, anybody that knows my wife knows that she's more inventive than macaroni and cheese three times in a row. And for the most part, I love my wife's cooking and I like to tell her that she's a pretty good cook. In fact, I like to verbalize at the table.

Like, what about Bob? Remember that? Mmm. Yes. I'm really into most everything. But macaroni and cheese, and we're not talking about high-end macaroni and cheese. We're talking about the, you know, dollar store. You get nine boxes for a dollar, that kind of thing. And I remember saying to my wife, I said, honey, what's the deal? I mean, mac and cheese is okay, but three days, four days in a row, we're kind of pushing it. She says, honey, you gave away all the groceries. My wife had not said a word to admonish or correct me. I was brokenhearted when I thought of what I'd done. I remember beginning to pray about that, and that's where I began to think, you know what? If a person shows up and needs help, then we're going to offer them an opportunity to work. Did you know that's what happens here in the church?

Individuals call pretty regularly and ask for help. It goes on all the time. And we say, we're so glad you called. We would like to provide you an opportunity to work. Now, I've had some of them tell me, well, my doctor says I can't do anything heavy. I said, that's all right. We'll have you sit, and we'll have you dust, you know, the pews or whatever. Well, my other doctor said that I have an anxiety disorder, and I can't put myself under any stress. My response to that one was, you need another consultation, you know, because the Bible says work's a good thing. I remember beginning to search the Scriptures and discover that the Word of God has a lot to say, not only about the attitude of the believer in giving, but the methodology of the believer in giving. And so, this morning, I want you, as you're praying, also to turn in your Bibles over to 1 Corinthians chapter 16. And I want you to recognize that this is the apostle writing to the church at Corinth, and he has some very specific, direct statements to the congregation there in Corinth regarding the matter of giving. Let me read the two verses that we're going to focus, actually three, and we'll work our way through them. And I want to explain something. By the way, biblical preaching is the exposition of Scripture. And so, what I say should be directly rooted back to the Word of God. You should be able to track it yourself, see it for yourself, and that's the reason that having a Bible is a good thing. I

don't care if you have it electronically or you have it in print, but I encourage you to track what we are studying so that you know yourself whether or not what I'm saying is scriptural. Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches in Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper, so that there will be no collection when I'm going to come. And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to

Jerusalem. I want you to recognize as we look at this passage that the first point that stands out is that giving is a part of a congregation's life and worship. It's something that God has ordained to be part of what a body of believers do together. I enjoy listening to our singing together when we really get our hearts into it, and we're rejoicing in the truth of Scripture that's been put to music.

[11 : 30] And we participate together because we delight in God and we like to sing together. But that's not the only aspect in which God has called us as a body of believers to be involved in worship. Another way that we are involved in worship is in the matter of our giving. And it's evident from this passage here in 1 Corinthians 16, as it is from many others that we would find if we kind of work our way through the book of Acts, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 Timothy, others that talk about the fact that giving is a part of what believers do on a regular basis. Now, I want you to understand that giving in the New Testament was not something that was on the back burner of the church life. And it was not something that was kind of shoved over to the side and dealt with on the side kind of as a manipulative issue.

Apostolic teaching on the matter of charitable giving was something that was right up front, and it was something that a new believer had engaged in. Giving is not seen in the Bible as the means of salvation. Now, I want to make that clear. No one buys their way into heaven.

And you never hear any connection in gospel presentations that talk about how Christ died for sin, and whosoever believes in Him might have everlasting life. You don't have a little parenthetical statement after that saying, and by the way, there is a payment that is expected if you really want to be saved. Salvation is free. Christ paid the price. We receive it by grace.

Furthermore, I want you to understand that giving is always seen as something that flowed through the local church. Offerings were collected within the framework of corporate worship and for the congregation's vision rather than off to the side. I have no doubt that in the New Testament time, as well as in this day, many individual believers are and were charitable. But I want you to recognize that we see something happening in our contemporary culture that I do find alarming. The idea is growing that the congregation, the body of Christ, can be bypassed as a primary conduit and channel for giving. A very interesting article I read this last week as I was doing some research on the matter of giving, and this actually was an article that was written after the research had been done in 2011. And it said that giving to the church is going down giving to charitable organizations such as health, education, arts, human services, environmental issues, and animal organizations actually going up. And even believers more engaged in giving to these other organizations that have no gospel footprint and giving less to the body of Christ.

Even mission agencies are pursuing what I believe is a pattern of solicitation or appeal that doesn't track clearly with scriptures. It's not uncommon for agencies, and particularly for missionaries, to completely bypass the local church in making an appeal for raising funds for whatever their particular mission interest or vision is. It's not unusual for missionaries to solicit the majority of their funds from individuals and never, ever have any contact with the local church. Mission trips send children, people, adults on trips all over the world and never have any footprint, any connection, any confirmation of the individual that they're going to be sending as to their spiritual passion or godliness. Never check with the body of believers and say, hey, is this person what they say they are?

[15 : 18] And by the way, we all know missions is something that allows people to do somewhere else what they're already doing fairly well here. Does that make sense? And I'm stunned when I find out after the fact that someone is going to go on a missions trip, and I as the shepherd have not even been questioned as to whether or not this person has any kind of testimony of godliness. I want to tell you this is contrary to Acts chapter 13, Acts chapter 15, and other passages of scripture that make it very, very clear that God has ordained the local church to be the preeminent or primary instrument of ministry. And if you have any question about that, stay with us as we work our way through the book of Ephesians, because I think the argument in Ephesians is just classic, as to the primacy of the local church. Now, the Bible does not see the local church out of the loop like this,

and I got to tell you that while it is easier to raise funds from individuals in the short run, in the long run, it is counterproductive to the mission and ministry of Christ. Many of you were here this last Wednesday when we had Steve Overholt, okay, missionary that travels around the world with Gap with ABWE, did a good job, good presentation, and as I was listening to him, I was sitting here thinking, because I was actually studying earlier in the week for this morning's sermon, and I was thinking about what happens when missionaries bypass the local church. Well, one of the things that happens is that the congregation of God's people really do not catch a vision for what God is doing around the world. Most of their individual contacts are for solicitation for individual funding, not for the vision that God has placed on their heart. And what happens as a result of that is that as this private means of contribution goes on, guess what happens? You end up with a graded system of contact.

If you're a heavier giver, guess what you get? You get more personal attention from the individual who is your contributor. Does it make sense? How many of you have ever received something through the mail that said, we would like you to give a donation, and if you give \$25, you get a plastic keychain?

If you give \$100, you get a metal keychain. If you give \$1,000, we'll inscribe a leather Bible, and it'll say, dear Tim, so thankful that you're part of the partnership, blah, blah, blah.

Have you ever had anything like that? That's classic. And it bypasses the body of Christ, and I would appeal to you, beloved, pay attention to what the Scriptures teach on this matter.

[18:15] I find a passage in Scripture very instructive on this matter. Turn over in your Bible, if you will, just for a moment, to first, and I know I'm stepping on toes, but here we go. So, 1 John, actually, 3 John, and by the way, I want you to understand it. In 3 John, the apostle, John, was dealing with a problem that had taken place in the church, okay? Look at what it says in verse 5. Beloved, it is a faithful thing that you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. What is it talking about? It is talking about the fact that in the New Testament church, one of the things that would happen is missionaries and evangelists would come into the local church, and when they were in the local church, a love offering would be taken up for them, and that would help them to make, to move forward on their journey.

They would stop in Columbus, and the believers in Columbus would respond to their gospel ministry and say, here, take this with you, and then they'd move on to Chillicothe, and the churches supported the missionaries through that free will giving. Now, here's what happened. You look here in verse 9.

I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. Now, what was going on? Diotrephes, who evidently was in a position of leadership in that congregation, did not like seeing the local church supporting missionaries. And so what he was doing is saying, hey, we want to put some kind of hindrance or hesitation on this, and he was kind of dampening down the free will giving of the congregation.

because he wanted it for himself. Interestingly, the apostle doesn't say, well, hey, missionaries, just bypass Diotrephes. It's easy. Get around him. And I will tell you, I see more and more missionaries that are beginning to follow an alternative pattern. Instead of coming through the body of Christ, they do their own work on the side. Here is John the apostle who says, hey, the problem is this man. The problem is not the method. And the congregation is the primary place in which the ministry of the gospel is to be encouraged and solicitations made. I believe another passage that has kind of a secondary application to it would be over in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 7. And just bear testimony to it for a moment here. In 2 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 7, it says that spiritual gifts are not for the benefit of the individual. Now, we all understand that, don't we? I mean, hey, gifts are not given just so you can sit about going, wow, am I special?

I've got a gift. No, your gift is for the sake of someone else. I think about the women who are going to be involved in the spring tea. They have the gift of administration and organization.

[21:30] I couldn't organize my way out of a wet paper bag. And I am so very thankful for there are a lot of people that have adequate skill to help me with that. And it says that those gifts are for the sake of others. If spiritual gifts are for the sake of the body and for the sake of others in that construct, then I have to believe that also the charitable giving of the believer in general terms also fits within that frame. I want you to see another point coming from 1 Corinthians chapter 16. Not only is giving to flow predominantly, and I didn't say exclusively, predominantly through the local

church.

Secondly, giving should be regular. Look at what it says there. It says, on the first day of every week, giving is to be regular. And there's a benefit to giving that is patterned and structured in a consistent fashion. We all find that it is easier sometimes to give when you are moved by emotion. Would you agree with that? And the interesting pattern in Scripture is that giving was to be something that was established on a pattern that was consistent, and it was not something that was to be relegated over to emotional appeal. There are illustrations in the New Testament, particularly in the book of Acts, where special offerings were taken up for famines in Judea and circumstances that kind of happened atypically. But other than that, there was a regular pattern of giving that met the needs not only of the congregation, but also the vision that that congregation had. And that's the reason why here at Maranatha we establish a budget the way we do. One of the things that characterizes our fellowship is that on an annual basis, we vote on a plan, a spending plan that says, here's what, Lord willing, and God's people give, here's how the money that God gives to us is going to be handled. And you can go out there in the lobby right now and see what happened in the last month. It's all out there, and it's open for everybody's scrutiny. Every single dime that is spent is tracked, and you can identify how it's tracked, except for the funds that come through the deacon's fund, and those for the sake of confidentiality are not spoken of in a public fashion. Now, that makes sense, doesn't it? But I want you to understand that as you look at the Scriptures, the point that we find there is that giving should be something that is regular and patterned. Now, I understand that not every one of us gets paid every week, and so I'm not suggesting that you break your check down. You know, some get paid a month. Some get paid, you know, every two weeks.

[24 : 11] I'm not suggesting that you... Follow the pay pattern you have. In this culture, it evidently happened every week, and that's the way the thing was instructed, the instructions were given for that.

Third thing that I want you to see is that giving should involve all believers. Look at the passage, if you will. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper. Now, one of Satan's lies is that giving is something only for those who have surplus. How many of you remember when you graduated from high school and moved into adulthood and suddenly had a regular job? How many of you remember thinking, when I finally get a job making \$8 an hour, I'm going to be reasonably rich? Or you graduated from college. Remember when you were eating ramen noodles three times a day? Okay. And you graduated from college and somebody began to pay you for a real job, and you began thinking, wow, I am just incredibly well off. What happened to incredibly well off? Does anybody remember? There's a little saying, if I can get it right here, expectations, no, how is it? Expectations rise to meet the income. You got it? In other words, as our income rises, guess what happens to our expenses? There was a time when none of us had a cell phone, and the only cell phones we had or anybody that had was in their Cadillac kind of nailed to the dash in the middle. Remember that thing? And you had to have a spare battery pack to run the thing because it was so big, you know? You'd turn on the cell phone, and the lights would dim in the car, you know? It was really big time. Hyperbole there, so bear with me. Hyperbole means kind of joke.

Sorry. Trying to work on my vocabulary here. Now we can't get by without a cell phone. I remember going out to India back in August. I mean, we're talking about people who are barefoot.

They didn't have shoes, but they had a cell phone. I mean, I'm telling the truth. Now, it says giving should involve all believers. Look at it again. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside. The Bible sees giving as something that all believers are to participate in. If you're here today and you don't know Christ, this sermon is not for you.

[26 : 47] The one thing I want to take place in the life of someone who is sitting here who doesn't know the Lord Jesus Christ is that they come to know Christ as their personal Savior. That's the most important thing. For the believer, we're talking about one of the ways in which we show our love for the Lord Jesus Christ. And our giving is really a reflection of our affection and delight in the Lord who saved us.

God blesses us with salvation and every good thing, and a portion of what He blesses us with flows back to Him. Now, it's very interesting to find that there are specific commands given to those who are rich.

And turn over, if you will, just for a moment to 1 Timothy 6, verse 17. 1 Timothy 6, verse 17.

As for the rich in this present age, everybody, how many of you think you're rich? How many of you sitting here think you're rich? Okay? Hey, look up, everybody. Many of us here pay more for our water bill than some people in the world pay for their monthly fees in everything, clothing, food, shelter.

About 50% of the world get by on less than \$3 a day. Okay? So, would we be rich in global thinking? What's the answer?

[28 : 35] You could be sitting here this morning on SSI, food stamps, whatever, and you would be incredibly wealthy in comparison to the rest of the world. So, think of this passage as having application to you.

Here's what it says. As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on uncertainty of riches, but on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.

Now, we have that as instruction to those who are incredibly well off, but then I want you to look at another passage that gives us a completely different picture. Turn back, if you would, to Mark chapter 12. In Mark chapter 12, Jesus is doing a little bit of people watching. How many of you like doing that? Yeah, people watching is fun, isn't it? You want, what were they thinking when they dressed like that? Have you ever been in a restaurant and listening to the conversation and thought, you know, you guys need to take this outside? Okay? Well, here's Jesus watching some people giving and turn, if you will, to 41, Luke chapter 12, verse 41. And He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums.

Now, how could Jesus tell that it was large sums? Huh? Come on, help me out. What do you think? You know, they'd come up to the offering box and they'd stretch, you know, lift up a bag and go, you know, whoo! Yeah! Okay? Hey, if you kind of follow scripturally, you'll remember earlier in Matthew, He says, don't be like some people who, when they give, they, you know, they hoot and holler, they let people know. And up comes this little widow, you know, and she drops in, I think it's a couple pennies. Look what Jesus says. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which made a penny. And He called His disciples. Now, they're kind of scattered around. They weren't paying attention.

He was on the task. You know, He was, I'm watching giving. I know what's going to happen. This is going to be good. The disciples are over there. They're kind of blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And Jesus says, hey, guys, come here, come here. Watch. And here, He says, truly, I say to you, the poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. Now, we're talking about what kind of people have been giving. Heavy lifters. I mean, the big time guys. The ones whom without the temple couldn't survive, right? And Jesus says, this woman has outgiven all of them. Why? For they all contributed out of their abundance. They had leftovers. But she, out of her poverty, has put in everything she had, all that she had to live on. It's a very interesting fact. Research has shown, sadly, even among general believing people, as income rises, the proportion of giving declines.

[32 : 10] And there was a woman who gave generously. I want you to go to one other passage, if you would. Turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 8. 2 Corinthians chapter 8. And let's look at verse 2 through 5.

He's talking about the churches in Macedonia and the giving that they were engaged in. He says, 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. Now, track the next one. 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, the blessing, the benefit, the privilege 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.

What made their giving exceptional? It wasn't the amount. It was, first of all, the attitude of their heart. And then that their giving probably exceeded what Paul expected. And they thought, well, maybe they can give. No, they went beyond that. I want you to recognize another thing if you'll go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and just track what it says here. Giving should be proportionate, proportionate. And mark what I mean by that. In the Old Testament, let's go back and think a little bit in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, there was a tithe. Tithe boils out to mean a tenth. And God taught the Old Testament saints that they were to tithe on the increase.

Now, let me explain this if you have any familiarity with farming. Let's say you had 10 bushels of corn, and in the spring you planted it. It didn't get rained on too bad. And it not only that, but got adequate moisture, and the field did pretty well. And you had 110 bushels at harvest time. Now, trick question for mathematicians, what was the increase? It was 100 bushels. Why is that? Because you had 10 bushels that you used to plant. How many of you pay anything called tax capital gain? Don't raise your hand and wave at me. But you understand, what do you get taxed on in capital gains? Try me out. It's called you get taxed on the increase. Kind of follows an Old Testament Bible pattern, though they don't know it in Washington. I want you to understand that it's what you got in addition that you were called to tithe on.

And the increase had to do with what you received beyond where you had been. The same principle of giving flows over into the New Testament. The believer's regular giving should flow out of what the Lord has provided. What the Lord has provided. As a result, our giving should grow as the Lord allows us to prosper. Even more importantly, our giving should grow as we grow spiritually. In fact, let me go a little further than that. If you are not growing in the area of giving, then you probably need to check and see whether or not you really are growing spiritually.

[35 : 22] Because to say that you are growing spiritually or to think that you're growing spiritually when there isn't a growth in other areas of your life is to be compartmentalizing your religion and thinking, well, it's okay for me to do this but not to do that. No, listen. As you grow in grace, your giving should grow. Let me mark one other thing here in the passage. Our giving should be planned.

It says, so that there is no gathering. Looking at the passage, it says, so that there is no gathering or no collecting when I come. Paul's saying this, I don't want to arrive in Corinth and have to have special meetings in which the predominant theme is, hey, guys, we have CDs out in the lobby and I've got sweatshirts that say, go for Paul, and it's all about funding my next missionary journey. Now, you know, he says, do it ahead of time. Do it ahead of time so that there's no pressure on this issue. How many of you prefer it that way? It's scriptural. And that's one of the reasons why actually our budgeting process here in this congregation begins in, I think it's October, or November. When does it begin? October? And we say it publicly. If there's any part of our fellowship that thinks there's a need for a change in the budget, let us know. Let us know. And it slowly works its way through so that we can plan how the giving of this fellowship is directed.

I want you to come to one other thing that I think is important to recognize. Look there, if you will, in verse 3. It says, Very interesting little comment. And what it reflects is that giving should be managed in a manner that is above question. The Bible gives instruction as to the integrity with which funds are to be managed. Isn't that interesting, the Bible's so practical? Huh?

Huh? Here's Paul saying, now listen, you're going to collect, you're going to gather, and then you're going to send it to some other people that you have never seen and probably will never see. How long did it take to travel from Corinth to Jerusalem? Try me out. A long time.

[37 : 53] And the probability was is that you weren't going to find out quickly whether or not those funds had gotten there. And so there was a matter of integrity that those who took the money were responsible individuals. And look what it says here. He says, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. There's a reason why after the morning service.

I don't know what room it is. What room is it, Tom? Or Todd? Where's Todd? He's... Tom, what room is it over on the side that... Whatever. There's a number on the door. I don't know what room it is. 201. Yeah, we got to know which room it is. Okay. Important. But after the morning service, there's going to be two guys in there counting the money.

The treasurer and the financial secretary are two different people. And the one who writes the checks and the one who takes care of balancing everything out, they're separate. Do you know why that is in place? Does anybody have an answer? It says in Scripture, let everything be done decently in order. There's a reason why you get a monthly report that explains exactly how every amount of money that has been given has been used. There's a reason why, and it's not just a matter of tax, there's a reason why you're getting reports that say, here's what your annual contributions are.

And occasionally someone will come to us and say, wow, I thought this had gone to such and such, and I see that it was put into something else. When you designate, it has to be designated according to that which has been already designed by the body rather than just arbitrarily. I'd like to designate this to the SPCA, you know. Someone's wondering, what is that? Don't worry about it.

Here's the deal. There's a reason why things are done that way, and it flows out of the Scriptures. Let me circle back around and have you think with me of this fundamental principle.

[39 : 53] God's Word tells us all that we need to know for life and godliness. Does that make sense? He hadn't missed a detail. And we are looking this morning at just a small slice of information regarding how believers are to be charitable in their giving, and we found out that God cares about the attitude we have, and God cares about the methodology that we have. Let me take a step beyond that. The starting place for every single person here is, first of all, their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Does that make sense? Giving is something that is pertinent to believers.

It is not pertinent to unbelievers. And if you are here today and you do not know Christ as your personal Savior, I would appeal to you to know this. The most important truth to take home today is this, is Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins. And that black and dark and ugly burden that you carry in your soul may be cared for by coming to Christ and repenting of your sins and saying, I need Christ as my Savior. I stand here broken and humbled. My pride is destroyed because I know I'm a sinner, and I stand condemned before a holy God. And God says this, whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord, do you know what it says?

Shall be saved. Salvation is of the Lord. Let's close in prayer. Our precious God, this morning as we gather to worship you, we worship you with our hearts.

We worship you with our voice. We worship you with our wallet. We worship you with our obedience. And I would pray, Lord, that this morning as believers consider the practical counsel of the Scriptures, that their heart would rejoice in the fact that you who are the creating God of this universe have put the details together with wisdom and skill for the good of your people and the glory of the cross. And I pray for those who are here today that do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, that your Spirit would burden them with the affliction of their soul, and that they would cry out that Jesus Christ would be their Savior today. I ask this in your precious name. Amen.
Amen.