

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2019

When Is It Good To Give?

(Acts 20:31-33)

Sundays, October 6,13, 2019

Paul was on his trip back to Jerusalem following his third missionary journey. He was eager to get to Jerusalem by Passover because he wanted to deliver the gift from the Gentile Christians. In route, the ship pulled in at the port of Miletus. Under the pressure of time, Paul did not visit Ephesus. Instead, he sent for the leaders of the Ephesian church to meet him at Miletus. There he delivered his farewell address to them. In this address, Paul gave an account of his stewardship as an Apostle. He also warned them of both their duty and their danger. William Barclay, in his book on Acts, summarized Paul's address by saying that he made certain claims; he claimed that he had spoken fearlessly, lived independently, and faced the future gallantly.

In this address, Paul also quoted an unrecorded saying of Jesus. We know that Jesus said a lot of things that were not recorded in the Gospels, and this is one of them. It tells us when it is good to give.

- I. **It is good to give when you know where the money goes!**
 - A. **A Principle** – They knew the money they had given to Paul went towards Ministry.
 - B. **A Practice** – It is important when you give money that you know where the money goes. You must know that it is used responsibly and with accountability.

That is why a church has a budget. The people in the church need to know where the money goes by adopting a church budget they agree upon as to how the money is to be spent. In the regular reports to the church, they find out that it was spent as agreed, so there is a public accounting of where the money has gone. Usually the best accounted gift that you can give is your gift to the church. It is used responsibly and accounted for regularly and accurately.

Sunday, October 20, 2019

II. It is good to give when you know what the gift shows!

- A. **Involvement** – A man once wrote his Pastor during a Stewardship Campaign complaining about the church and its ministry. He said that all he ever heard around there was giving, giving, giving. The Pastor thanked him for the best definition of Christianity he had ever heard: Christianity is giving, giving, giving.

Paul indicated that these people had known of his personal involvement with them. He had not shirked his duty. Your gift of love to the church shows your involvement in the church and its ministry. When you give, you become involved.

- B. **Interest** – You give to those things in which you have an interest! Giving to the church and its ministry shows interest.
- C. **Initiative** – Giving also shows that initiative to respond to God's love. God has showered his love on us. So, by giving, we take the initiative to respond to that love. Real Christian giving should not be from compulsion, duty, threat, or guilt. It should be a person's response to God's love.

Sunday, October 27, 2019

III. It is good to give when you know that the Church grows!

- A. **Concern** – Paul's concern was with the future of the Ephesian Church. He has laid the foundation well. But he warned the leaders that problems could arise, questions could emerge, and leadership could be challenged. The very future of the gospel at Ephesus was at stake. It would depend on their faithfulness to God's principles. Isn't it interesting and instructive that the concluding word in Paul's farewell address was the reference to Jesus' statement that it is more blessed to give than to receive? The continuation and growth of the church would depend on how they acted on that statement. And it is still true today. Every church must give and increase its giving for the church to grow. With inflation and a need for expanded programs, a church cannot continue to give the same dollar amount year after year and have church growth.

B. **Concept** – But how can a church grow? Paul gave some pointers for church growth to the Ephesian church leaders that will also help us to grow churches for God’s Glory today.

1. **Be eager to work** – There is no church growth without work. Growth never comes automatically. Someone has to work for it to be realized.
2. **Be Consistent in giving** – The best way to give to the church is regularly and consistently. This is a key to strong churches and to their growth.
3. **Be faithful to the gospel.**

Jesus was right, of course, it is more blessed to give than to receive. He demonstrated that truth by giving his life for us in sacrifice for our sins. And Paul demonstrated that truth by giving his life in service to the Savior. How have you demonstrated that principle? Maybe you should begin today by giving your heart to Christ or by pledging to support his cause through the Church.