

THE OFFERING OF MATERIAL RICHES

Scripture Reading:

- 1 Tim. 6:17 Charge those who are rich in the present age not to be high-minded, nor to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches but on God, who affords us all things richly for our enjoyment.
- 2 Cor. 9:6 But take note of this: He who sows sparingly shall also sparingly reap; and he who sows with blessings shall also with blessings reap.
- 2 Cor. 9:7 Each one as he has purposed in his heart, not out of sorrow or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver.
- Mal. 3:10 Bring the whole tithe to the storehouse that there may be food in My house; and prove Me, if you will, by this, says Jehovah of hosts, whether I will open to you the windows of heaven and pour out blessing for you until there is no room for it.

I. God's giving:

- A. Not hope on the uncertainty of riches but on God, who offered us all things richly for our enjoyment-1Tim. 6:17.
- B. As those who are saved and belong to God, our prosperity in material riches is all from God—3 John 2.
- C. Offering to God what He has given to us-2 Cor.9:10.

II. The Lord's Charge:

- A. Not to lay up for yourselves treasures on the earth but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven-Matt. 6:19-20.
- B. Not to be high-minded, nor set our hope on the uncertainty of riches-2 Tim. 6:17-19.

III. The Lord's Promise:

- A. Give and it will be given to you; a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, they will give into your bosom-Luke 6:38.
- B. It is more blessed to give than to receive-Acts 20:35.

- C. He who sows sparingly shall also sparingly reap, and he who sows with blessings shall also with blessings reap-2Cor. 9:6.
- D. Bring ye all tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my house; and prove Me now herewith, whether I will open to you the windows of heaven and pour out blessing for you until there is no room for it-Mal.3:10.

IV. The Use:

- A. For the need of the church-Exo. 30:11-16; Eph. 2:22; 1 Cor. 3:16-17.
- B. For the propagation of the gospel-Phil 1:5.
- C. Supplying the Lord's servants-Phil. 4:15-16.
- D. Supplying the needy saints-Rom. 12:13; Gal. 2:10.

V. The amount:

- A. Giving according to the prosperity each one received-Acts 11:29, 1 Cor. 16:2.
- B. He who sows sparingly shall also sparingly reap; and he who sows with blessings shall also with blessings reap; each one as he has purposed in His heart, not out of sorrow or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver-2 Cor.9:6-7.

VI. The Way:

- A. Give ourselves first to the Lord, and to the apostles and beseech of them the grace and the fellowship of the ministry to the saints—2 Cor. 8:4-5.
- B. Let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret and your Father who sees in secret shall repay you-Matt. 6:1-4.

Reference: *Life Lessons, Vol.2, Issue 24; The Holy Word for Morning Revival: Material Offerings and the Lord's More Today.*

Excerpts from the Ministry:**PREFACE**

From the time that man developed a problem with God because of the fall and left the position where he took God as everything, material riches have become a critical matter in the life of fallen man. In his fallen condition, man fell into the darkness of acknowledging only material riches and not God, of trusting only in material riches and not in God, and even of serving material riches, taking material riches as God, and allowing material riches to replace God. God's enemy, Satan the Devil, exploited the fallen condition of men to come in and deceive men to worship idols, such as the god of wealth, for riches and gain. By being behind these idols, he supplants men's worship and service that are due God. For this reason, the Lord Jesus told us that one "cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). Literally, the service spoken of by the Lord here refers to the service of a slave, as we have seen in the previous lesson. This tells us that Satan utilizes material riches to seduce people to material riches, as misers, on the other hand. However, we have received God's mercy and the Lord's salvation, which delivered us from the authority of Satan and turned us to God (Acts 26:18). After we have received God's salvation in this way, we are confronted with an issue in our practical living, that is, what we should do with material riches that Satan used in time past to delude us and all the world. What should our intention and attitude be toward material riches? How, in particular, should we treat these material riches? Should we be the same as we were in the old manner of living before we were saved? Or should we have a change regarding our material riches according to the salvation which delivered us from the authority of Satan and turned us to God? There are clear instructions concerning this matter in God's word in the Bible. (*Life Lessons, Vol.2, pp.179-180*)

GOD'S GIVING

"Nor to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God who affords us all things richly for our enjoyment" (1 Tim. 6:17). This word expresses Satan's plot to delude men, showing us that all the material things and enjoyment in our living apparently come from the uncertain riches, but they actually come from God's giving. They are supplied to us from God's rich giving. Hence, we must not set our hope on

deceitful and uncertain material riches, but on the very God who gives us all things for our enjoyment.

The prosperity here refers to material abundance and prosperity, pointing out that the material enjoyment of those who are saved and belong to God comes from God as a result of His prospering our material things. We ought to endeavor in our businesses. The Bible also requires that we learn to maintain good works for necessary needs (Titus 3:14, 8). Yet without God's blessing, all our labors, endeavorings, and painstaking enterprises will yield little. Therefore, in this matter of material supply, unlike the worldly people who trust only in their own abilities, we have to learn to set our hope in God.

The Bible regards the offering of material riches as sowing. The seed is supplied by God and comes from God. This reveals that the material riches which the believers offer to God come originally from God and are given by God. We are thus offering to God what He has given to us.

THE LORD'S CHARGE

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on the earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matt. 6:19-20). We need to look at this word of the Lord from the viewpoint of laying up material riches. To lay up material riches is to save what is left of a man's gain after the needs of his living have been met. Here, the Lord charges us not to lay up these surplus riches on the earth, but to lay them up in heaven, that is, to spend them on the heavenly Father, doing such things as helping those in need, thus making friends with them and advancing His gospel.

“Charge those who are rich in the present age not to be high-minded, nor to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God who affords us all things richly for our enjoyment; to do good, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying away for themselves as a treasure a good foundation for the future, that they may lay hold on that which is really life” (1 Tim. 6:17-19). This is the apostle's charge, which is simply the Lord's charge to us. The rich refers to those who have excess from their gain after the needs of their living have been met. To do good and to be rich in good works refer to distributing the surplus from one's living to the needy ones. To be rich in doing good and good works is to be ready to distribute and willing to communicate. This is also to lay up treasure in heaven, to lay up as a treasure a good foundation for the future. Doing this will enable one to lay hold on,

that is, to possess, to use, and to enjoy, that which is really life, the eternal life of God. To save up the surplus riches from our living on the earth is to lay hold on and make use of our natural life; while to save up the same in heaven, spending it on God, is to lay hold on and employ the eternal life of God.

THE LORD'S PROMISE

“Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will give into your bosom” (Luke 6:38). This is a promise spoken from the Lord's own mouth. If we are willing to distribute our material wealth to the needy for God's sake, He will surely give into our bosom that which is rich and plenteous, a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over. He will not give into our hands that which is scanty and limited. What a profitable deal this is!

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus which He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Concerning material riches, human beings, who deceived by Satan, will only receive and not give. To want to receive and not give is Satan's ploy, which causes man to lose God's blessing. This best way to be blessed by God in material riches is to give, not to receive, just as the Lord Himself did for us. Thus, the Lord Himself promised us that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Myriads of believers throughout the ages who have loved the Lord and believed in His word, and who have practiced accordingly, confirm the trustworthiness of this promise from their experience.

“He who sows sparingly, sparingly also shall reap; and he who sows with blessing, with blessings also shall reap” (2 Cor. 9:6). This is a natural law established by the Lord in the biological realm. This law contains His promise. Offering material riches is like sowing. Since sowing eventually brings in reaping, he who sows sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully shall reap bountifully. In man's eyes, the offering of material riches is to give away their riches. However, in God's eyes, such offering is a kind of sowing which will result in reaping. He who offers little shall reap little, and he who offers much shall reap much. We ought to believe in the Lord's promise in this law.

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. 3:10). The “tithes” are the legal amount of offering which God

required from the harvest of the Israelites in the Old Testament. The “storehouse” refers to the place in the Old Testament temple where all the offerings to God from His people were stored. My “house” refers to God’s temple in the Old Testament. This word superabundantly displays the infinitely rich promise of God. Although it was spoken to the Israelites in the Old Testament, in principle it applies also to the New Testament believers. If we will fully offer to God what belongs to Him that the church may be richly supplied, God will open the windows of heaven for us and pour out a blessing to us, which there will not be enough room to contain. This is a solemn promise of the Lord of hosts. We can offer to Him according to His promise to prove Him. (*Life Lessons*, pp. 180-183)

According to 9:6, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly, and he who sows with blessings shall also reap with blessings. In verse 6 we have the thought of sowing for the benefit of others. But what farmer, when he sows seed in his field, has the thought of sowing for others? Surely, most farmers have the concept of sowing for themselves. This kind of sowing, however, is not with blessings. To sow with blessing is to give to others.... When we give to our money, we are sowing, and this sowing is not for ourselves, but is for others. If we sow with blessings to others, we shall reap with blessings from God.

When we sow with blessings to others, we shall reap with blessings from God. Furthermore, the harvest will always far surpass the amount of seed sown. It may be multiplied thirty or even one hundred times. This does not happen miraculously; it takes place according to natural law. God controls the life supply among His children by miracles. Because of this, no Christian family can maintain its wealth for generations. But sowing is according to natural law, not give. The more we give, the more we shall reap. However, we should not do this in a superstitious way for the purpose of gaining riches for ourselves.

The two illustrations of gathering and sowing are related to Paul’s profound thoughts in these chapters. In chapter nine the deep thought is that as Christians we give in the sense of sowing. If we do not give, we are not farming, not sowing. Moreover, we should not sow sparingly. If we sow sparingly, then according to natural law we shall reap sparingly. We need to sow with blessings to others. If we sow with blessings to others, then, also according to natural law, we shall reap with blessings from God to us. This blessing will be many times more than what we have

sown. I can testify that, in my Christian life, I have never seen a believer who has given to God who has honor the natural law He has ordained.

We should sow more and in turn reap more. The goal is not to make ourselves rich. The result is the abounding of thanksgivings to God. I hope that in the time to come many of the saints will become a factor of thanksgiving to God. This means that your giving will abound in much thanksgiving to God. I have the full confidence that if the saints in the Lord's recovery are willing to give, the recovery will never be lacking in material supply. Instead of lack, there will be abounding in thanksgiving to the Lord through many saints. Therefore, let us all practice our giving, a giving which is carried out by gathering and by sowing. (*Life Study of Second Corinthians*, pp.422, 425-426; *The Holy Word for morning Revival: Material Offerings and the Lord's More Today*, pp.62-63)

THE USE

1. 1. For the need of the church-In the Old Testament, God wanted each of His people, the Israelites, to offer to Him a ransom for his soul. This offering was for the use of God's dwelling place, that is, the tabernacle and the temple (Exo. 30:11-16).
2. 2. For the advancement of the gospel-For your fellowship unto the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil. 1:5).
3. 3. Supplying the Lord's servants-"Philippians...you sent both once and again to my [the Apostle Paul's] need" (Phil. 4:15-16).
4. 4. Supplying the need of the saints:
 - i.....i. "...Communicating to the needs of the saints" (Rom. 12:13).
 - ii.....ii. "Only that we should remember the poor" (Gal. 2:10).

THE AMOUNT

1. 1. "...According as any one of them was prospered, determined each one of them to send things for dispensing" (Acts 11:19); "Let each one of you lay aside by himself, storing up a she may be prospered..."(1 Cor. 16:2).
2. 2. "He who sows sparingly, sparingly also shall reap; and he who sows with blessings, with blessings also shall reap; each one as he has purposed in his

heart, not out of sorrow or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:6-7).

THE WAY

1. 1. “With much entreaty beseeching of us the grace and the fellowship of the ministry to the saints; and ...they gave themselves first to the Lord, and to us through the will of God” (2 Cor. 8:4-5).

2. 2. “But take heed not to do your righteousness [giving alms]before men to be gazed at by them; otherwise, you surely have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens. When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward. But you, when you give alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret shall repay you” (Matt. 6:1-4).

Questions:

1. 1. Describe briefly what should be the proper attitude toward material offering.
2. 2. What are the uses of the material riches offered by the believers?
3. 3. What are the practical points that we should pay attention to concerning material offerings?