

Are We a Giving Church?

Theme: A Biblical distinction between “church” and “individual.”

Introduction:

- A. **Many churches proclaiming Christ and the *Christian way* use monies given to the Lord for various kinds of *church* endeavors**
 - 1. Food pantries.
 - 2. United Way in Williamson County.
 - 3. BRIDGES Domestic Violence Center.
- B. **So, why is our congregation *not* involved in any of these caring activities?**
 - 1. Is it because we have no money?
 - 2. Is it because we have no love?
 - 3. Are we too lazy to be involved in these endeavors?
- C. **The answers to these questions serve a two-fold purpose:**
 - 1. To provide a biblical stand for why – collectively as a church – we’re not involved in these otherwise very helpful and loving activities.
 - 2. While at the same time strongly exhorting Christians to either start, increase, or maintain such helpful and loving activities.

Discussion:

- I. Biblical Consistency
 - A. **Note the principles of hermeneutics used to determine consistency among various doctrines taught today.**
 - 1. We teach a *repentant, Christ believing/confessing, for the remission of sins...* water baptism because *that is what is revealed* in God’s word. **Lk. 24:46-47 (Mk. 16:16; Matt. 28:19); Acts 2:38; 8:35-39**
 - 2. We teach *acappella* as worshipful singing because God’s word explicitly reveals “speaking one to another” and never revealed any use of instruments in N.T. worship. **Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16**
 - 3. Congregations may not be perfect in applying every single nuance of this hermeneutic (example: authority for flowers as decoration in the building?) but we strive with all faithfulness to be consistently sound in practicing what the N.T. reveals.
- II. Biblical Consistency on Financial Affairs

We teach what the Scriptures expressly reveal as it pertains to congregations and individual Christians.

 - A. **Consistency: Churches**
 - 1. Ministers of the word. **1 Cor. 9:14 (cp. 2 Cor. 11:7-9; Phil. 4:15); 1 Tim. 5:17-18**
 - 2. Brethren (other Christians) in physical need. **1 Cor. 16:1-3**
 - 3. Interesting enough was the warning not to burden the church so it (the church) could focus financially supporting “widows indeed”. **1 Tim. 5:16**
 - B. **Consistency: Individuals**
 - 1. The Scriptures explicitly tell individual believers who our neighbors are. **Lk. 10:25-37**
 - 2. If I am to love my neighbor I will help him. **Matt. 25:31ff; 1 Jn. 3:17-18; Gal. 6:10**
 - C. **Exhortation To Christians**
 - 1. Be generous to your God as He has been to you, that the work of the Lord may flourish to His glory. **2 Cor. 9:6-7**
 - 2. Sacrifice your time, energy, and means to help others in need. Cp. **Jas. 1:27**
 - a. Find local places where you can serve in your community.
 - b. Remember that serving can/should ultimately start at the household of faith. **Gal. 6:10**
 - 3. If our individual lives are so filled with service to God and man (**Matt. 22:37-39**), the church cannot help but stand on a hill as a city radiating the glory of God. **Matt. 5:14**

Conclusion:

- A. Because the Scriptures delineate between the financial burden placed upon individuals in contrast to the (local) church we try to live by faith according to its revelation.
- B. May this distinction serve not only as a doctrinal stand, but an exhortation for all believers to practice pure and undefiled religion as we love our God and neighbor.