

When Churches Ask for Money

(1/4/26)

Turn to *1 Timothy 6:6-10 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-15*.

SHOW MEME AND ASK WHAT PEOPLE THINK OF IT.

I'm going to present this from both an earthly “rubber hits the road” way, then a more spiritual way. Let's start with reality.

How are you power bills recently? I just read a statistic that the average price per kilowatt hour in America is 20 cents, but in NY is almost 30. My oldest son has his own place and his NYSEG bill was so high, he called and asked us if there was a mistake. We sighed and told him no, no mistake. How about your heating bill? Here we are in January in upstate NY and its cold. How is your rent or mortgage payment?

Let me ask you: have you ever tried calling your landlord, bank, or utility company and trying to **convince them to let you have it free?** Have you ever tried saying something like “hey, I'm a Christian. Jesus is my Lord and Savior. I try to do as much good as I can—will you please forgo the rent/electric bill/heat?”

Does anyone believe that, if you asked this, your landlord or bank would respond **“why didn't you tell us that Christ is your Savior?! You can HAVE the house!”** Do you think NYSEG might reply “you do GOOD for others in Jesus' name? Free electric for life!”

The same thing applies to churches.

We were in the Community Center for our first 18 years. We approached the Village of Addison and asked if we could use the facility every Sunday and they said “yes” and then they told us the monthly rent price. They added to the agreement that we would completely clean up after ourselves every Sunday: sweep and mop. What they DIDN'T say was “oh, you're a church who wants to have worship services...no charge!”

Now that we have our own place, **we had to set up our own utilities**—we told all of them that **we're a church** and none of them gave us anything for free or even at a discounted rate. We don't have to pay property tax, praise God.

Then we **started this ambitious building project** and we HAVE been blessed by some discounts and a glorious day of free labor that got our sides and rafters up—Hallelujah! Yet other labor and all the materials still need to be paid for and we've already written several 4 and 5 figure checks to cover the same.

Let's bottom line the "rubber hits the road" portion of today's message: **churches incur expenses just like any renter, homeowner, or business, and said expenses are paid with money.**

- Where does the money come from?
- How do we keep the lights on, heat to warm us, and how have we paid for this building project thus far?

All money comes from donations—which we call tithes and offerings—that we collect every Sunday from those who attend and even a few who don't.

But...isn't money "the root of all evil"? Now we get to today's Bible reading. In 1 Timothy 6, Paul is talking about false teachers who are going around the budding 1st century church. Not only are these men teaching false doctrine, but they're doing it solely for monetary gain. They don't care about the people they're preaching to and they don't care about Jesus. What they're doing is taking advantage of a young, eager, yet naïve groups of Christians who haven't yet been established in solid truth.

Paul has assigned Timothy as a teacher/pastor and is telling him *not to fall into the same temptation* (to only fill his position b/c he wants the money):

[1Ti 6:6-10 ESV] 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. 9 But **those who desire to be rich** fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 **For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.** It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

QUESTIONS:

- Do guns kill people, or is the person wielding the gun who pulls the trigger?
- Is the gun evil, or is the evil found in the intent of the person using it?

The same applies to money and the meme I posted at the start of this sermon is a common one...and MISquoted. *Money isn't the root of evil, it's when you love it.* When a person loves money, as Paul says here, it leads to temptation, it's a trap, and inspires one into harmful desires, ruin, and destruction. Solomon says the same:

[Ecc 5:10 ESV] 10 He who **loves** money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.

Did you know that even Jesus took up a collection? He even assigned a treasurer for his ministry.

[Mar 12:41-42 ESV] 41 And he [JESUS] sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people **putting money into the offering box**. Many **rich** people put in large sums. 42 And a **poor widow** came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny.

What offering box? **Whose** offering box? It was Jesus'. He's taking an offering and please notice: He's receiving money from both the rich and the poor. You know who He assigned as His treasurer? Judas...I know, right?

[Jhn 13:29 ESV] 29 Some thought that, because **Judas had the moneybag**, Jesus was telling him, "**Buy** what we need for the feast," or that he should **give** something to the poor.

Jesus was God in the flesh...why did He take an offering? The Gospels give us 2 reasons: 1) supplies (food, drink, etc.) for Him and the disciples to consume and 2) to give money to the poor.

Jesus was God in the flesh...why didn't He just miraculously multiply a little food every time they needed to eat? IDK why, but that's not what He chose to do. **Instead: He took up a collection.**

Money is necessary and has been in use since Genesis 13 when said book records that Abraham became "wealthy with silver and gold." *The first transaction recoded in the Bible was in Genesis 17.* I quoted earlier from King Solomon who said that he who loves money will never be satisfied...yet he writes this is the same book (Ecclesiastes):

[Ecc 10:19 ESV] 19 Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life, and **money answers everything.**

The church has a **negative stigma from “prosperity preachers”** who have massive ministries, drive limos, fly in private jets, and wear Rolex watches. They constantly ask for money, promising a supernatural blessing/return from God to the people who give.

That’s not us and it’s not me. We’re just trying to keep the lights on, the heat flowing, and for this building project to be finished and paid for with no debt. After that, the roof on this part of the building needs to be replaced. After that’s done we could remodel the other sections of the building like making the kitchen bigger. I envision having a playground outside for the kids.

All of these things will take money and the money comes from us.

Yes, I tithe too. If I’m not putting something in the offering plate, I can’t ask anyone else to.

- So how much should we contribute?
- Is there a specific amount or percentage?
- And how often?

In Old Testament times, **God required a 10% tithe** from his people and the offering went to the Priests. The Hebrew word “tithe” literally translates to “one-tenth” and the Lord required this from all believers.

Under Christ in the New Covenant, however, **there is no particular amount or percentage.** The Apostle Paul, who also took up an offering for himself and his ministry team, spoke with the Corinthian church about the same. In 2 Corinthians chapter 9, he’s urging them to give him an offering and encouraging them to do so by bringing up the fact that the church in Macedonia has already taken a generous collection for him that they’re eager to give. Then he says this:

[2Co 9:6-15 ESV] 6 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one **must give as he has decided in his heart**, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for **God loves a cheerful giver.** 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 9 As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." 10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. 12 For the ministry of this service is **not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also**

overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. 13 By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, 14 while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. 15 Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Verse 7: we get to decide how much. It's not supposed to be from guilt or by force. The Lord appreciates those who give generously.

Verse 12: giving is a form or offering thanksgiving to God Himself and glorifies Him (verse 13).

Let's address the other verses that ***SEEM to be saying "if you give more, you'll be blessed with more by God."*** These are verses commonly used by "prosperity preachers" to compel others to give more.

Verse 6 shows that monetary offerings are like a seed that we plant: the less we plant, the less we harvest. The more we plant, the more we harvest.

Verse 8 goes along with this, saying that if we make offerings God will reply by giving us "sufficiency in all things."

Verses 10-11 seem to say that if we give generously, we'll "increase our harvest" and "be enriched in every way."

So...**is this some sort of "divine investment" like the stock market?** No...and yes.

Now we're back to what Solomon and Paul said about **LOVING money and the results in our hearts and lives about it.**

- If we give offerings because we're looking for a financial return, we're wanting God to respond by multiplying our own wallet.
- If so, we've fallen into the trap Paul warned Timothy about.
- I fell into this as a younger Christian, giving money to Gateway and other ministries hoping for some big check to show up in the mail.
- I was motivated by greed and not righteousness or generosity...and no check ever came.

Prosperity preachers are enticing greed from others, which is why they have such a bad reputation and why said reputation has stained the rest of us who are just trying to pay the church's bills and/or build a building.

That being said, what the Lord says all throughout the Bible is that *generosity of all kinds has a way of supernaturally multiplying in this world and the next.*

Generosity is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, meaning it's produced by Him. When His fruit is flowing through us to give, there is a supernatural multiplication that tends to produce another HS fruit called humility.

When I stopped being greedy and **made offerings from a place of cheerful generosity**, I was stunned how it reproduced. All of this is to God's glory! Why is that? Because it's completely unearned and undeserved.

How often do we give? That's up to us, but Gateway takes up an offering every Sunday.

NOTE: **this is private.** Neither myself nor the leadership keeps track of what you give. Only the treasurer, who is my wife, and she's NOT a Judas!

Here's what I recommend: **that if you choose to give, please consider making a 50-50 contribution: half to the general fund, and half to the building fund.**

We started off with around 170K in the building fund and are now **down to a little less than 50K.** We're going to need significantly more than that to finish the project.

Not only do we take up an offering here in person, it can also be done through our *church app electronically.*

TAKE AN OFFERING

