

September 2-4, 2016

GENERAL SUBJECT: THE PRACTICE OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD IN THE CHURCH LIFE

Message Five

The Offering of God's People
for the Need of the Lord's Move Today

Scripture Reading: Exo. 35:4-9, 20-29; 36:3-7; 1 Chron. 29:1-9; Ezra 2:68-69; Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35

Day 1

- I. In Exodus 35 and 36 the children of Israel were faithful and offered everything to God for the building of the tabernacle—Exo. 35:4-9, 20-29; 36:3-7:ⁱ
- A. “And the children of Israel...asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. And Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians”—12:35-36:
1. The children of Israel plundered the Egyptians; therefore, when it was time to build the tabernacle, they had the necessary materials; the materials given to the Israelites by the Egyptians were used in building the tabernacle.ⁱⁱ
 2. In the eyes of the Egyptians, such a use of their gold and silver would have been a waste; in the eyes of God, however, this was not a waste; the wealth of Egypt had been plundered for God's purpose.
 3. All that is plundered from the world should be brought to the Lord Jesus and wasted upon Him; this is a sign of our deep love for the Lord, a sign that we have been thoroughly saved; eventually, what we plunder from the world is brought together to be used for God's dwelling place—cf. Matt. 26:6-13.

Day 2

- B. “And they came, *everyone whose heart lifted him up and everyone whose spirit made him willing*, and brought the heave offering of Jehovah for the work of the Tent of Meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments”—Exo. 35:21.
- C. “All the wise men who did all the work of the sanctuary came...and spoke to Moses, saying, *The people are bringing much more than enough for the service of the work* which Jehovah commanded us to do...And a proclamation was passed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman produce any more material for the heave offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. *For the material they had was sufficient and more than enough for all the work*, to do it”—36:4-7.
- II. David's preparation of the materials and his gifts for the building up of the temple of God stirred up the leaders of Israel to offer willingly their gifts to God for the building of His temple, so that both the people of Israel and David the king rejoiced with great joy—1 Chron. 29:1-9:ⁱⁱⁱ
- A. “Furthermore, because I set my affection on the house of my God, and since I have a private treasure of gold and silver, I give it for the house of my God over and above all that I have prepared for this holy house...And *who will offer willingly*, consecrating himself today to Jehovah?”—vv. 3, 5.
- B. “*And the leaders of the fathers' houses and the leaders of the tribes of Israel and the captains of thousands and of hundreds with the overseers of the king's work offered willingly*; and they gave for the service of the house of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, and ten thousand talents of silver, and eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and one hundred thousand talents of iron”—vv. 6-7.
- C. “Then the people rejoiced because *they offered willingly*; for with their whole heart they offered willingly to Jehovah. And David the king also rejoiced with great joy”—v. 9.
- III. Ezra 2:68-69 speaks of the willing offering of some of the heads of the fathers' houses, after their arrival at the house of Jehovah in Jerusalem, for the house of Jehovah to restore it on its foundation; the heads of the fathers' houses willingly offered their precious things to God for the rebuilding of the temple.^{iv}
- IV. At Pentecost there was the fact of consecration without any preaching of a message on consecration; the apostles only preached Jesus Christ as Lord; yet, as a result, the believers shared everything in common—Acts 2:44-45.^v

Day 3

- V. In Matthew 6:19-34 the Lord told us not to love or serve mammon but to love and serve God:^{vi}

- A. *Mammon* is an Aramaic word signifying wealth, riches; mammon stands in opposition to God, indicating that wealth, or riches, is the opponent of God, robbing God's people of their service to Him; as people who live in the reality of the kingdom of the heavens, we should not let mammon replace God in our living—v. 24; Heb. 13:5a; 1 Tim. 6:10; cf. Prov. 23:4.
- B. Money in its essential character is evil; the man who knows God knows the character of money; he knows that money in itself is evil—Luke 16:9.^{vii}
- C. The widow who dropped her mite into the temple treasury took something out of the kingdom of Satan and contributed it to the kingdom of God—Mark 12:41-44:
 - 1. God has a limited supply of money, whereas Satan's supply is unlimited; the amount of money in God's treasury today is limited by the number of people who are devoted to Him.
 - 2. Money needs converting as truly as men need converting; it takes great spiritual power to convert our shekels, which in their character are evil, into shekels of the sanctuary.

Day 4

VI. We must not set our hope on deceitful and uncertain riches, but on the very God who gives us all things for our enjoyment—1 Tim. 6:17; Prov. 23:5; Matt. 13:22.^{viii}

- A. All the material things and enjoyment in our living apparently come from the uncertain riches, but they actually come from God's giving—6:26-33; cf. James 1:17.
- B. The Bible 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; 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—Heb. 13:5-6; 1 Sam. 2:7; cf. Hag. 1:3-11; *Hymns* #732.

VII. By the grace of God the Macedonian believers overcame the usurpation of temporal and uncertain riches and became generous in ministering to the needy saints—2 Cor. 8:1-2: ix

- A. We need grace to overcome the usurpation of material possessions; if we would give continually, not just once for all, we need divine grace to motivate us from within.^x
- B. If we give by such a grace, what we give will become grace to others; when we supply needy saints with material things in the proper way, in spirit and with life, life and spirit go with the supply.^{xi}

Day 5

VIII. The saints in Philippi had fellowship unto the gospel, participating in the furtherance of the gospel through the apostle Paul's ministry; this participation included their financial contributions to the apostle, which issued in the furtherance of the gospel—Phil. 1:5; 4:10, 15-16:^{xii}

- A. The Philippians' fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel, which kept them from being individualistic and diversely minded, implies their oneness with the apostle Paul and with one another; this gave them the ground for their experience and enjoyment of Christ.
- B. As the Philippian believers were sharing in the furtherance of the gospel, in the furtherance of God's move on earth according to His economy, they were partakers with Paul of grace—v. 7.

Day 6

IX. The more we give, the more God will give to us—Luke 6:38; Deut. 15:10; Prov. 3:9-10; 11:24-25; 22:9; 28:27; Mal. 3:10; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Phil. 4:18-19.^{xiii}

X. If we do good with material things, we accomplish something for the real life, laying away a treasure for our enjoyment in the eternal life in the next age—1 Tim. 6:17-19; Matt. 6:19-20; cf. Luke 16:9.^{xiv}

ⁱ *Life-study of Exodus*, msg. 183, p. 1933.

ⁱⁱ *Life-study of Exodus*, Message 20, pp. 228-230.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Life-study of 1 & 2 Chronicles*, msg. 5, p. 35.

^{iv} *Life-study of Ezra*, msg. 3, p. 15.

^v *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 3*, vol. 61, "Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (1)," ch. 6, p. 59.

^{vi} *Truth Lessons, Level 3*, vol. 4, lsn. 2, pp. 28-29.

^{vii} *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 2*, vol. 39, "Sit, Walk, Stand & Love Not the World," ch. 11, pp. 139-140, 142-143.

^{viii} *Life Lessons*, vol. 2, lsn. 24, p. 100.

^{ix} *Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, msg. 46, p. 400.

^x *Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, msg. 46, p. 403.

^{xi} *Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, msg. 46, p. 406.

^{xii} *Life-Study of Philippians*, msg. 2, p. 13.

^{xiii} *Messages for Building Up New Believers*, vol. 2, ch. 28, p. 421.

^{xiv} *Recovery Version of the Bible*, 1 Tim. 6:19, footnote 2.

Morning Nourishment

John 12:3 Then Mary took a pound of ointment, of very valuable pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

Matt. 26:13 Truly I say to you, Wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman has done shall also be told as a memorial of her.

Exodus 12:35 and 36 say, “And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they gave to them what they asked. And they plundered the Egyptians” (Heb.). God made the Egyptians willing to give to Israel these jewels and raiment. In this way, the children of Israel plundered the Egyptians. Therefore, when it was time to build the tabernacle, they had the necessary materials. (*Life-study of Exodus*, msg. 20, p. 229)

Today’s Reading

Some may think that God was not just in allowing Israel to plunder the Egyptians in this way. Remember, Pharaoh had forced the Israelites to build treasure cities for him. For this labor he did not pay them anything. Hence, the plundering of the Egyptians was actually a clearing of the account. In His justice and righteousness, God had a way to clear the account. How marvelous that the last plague not only forced Pharaoh and the Egyptians to drive out the children of Israel, but also made them willing to give the Israelites whatever they requested!

Even the matter of plundering the Egyptians has an application today. I know of many who first bargained with the Lord and then were truly saved by Him. Having been saved, they thoroughly plundered the world and brought a good number of things with them out of the world for the Lord. Many can testify that after they were called and saved, they left nothing in the world. Instead, everything they had they took out of the world for God’s purpose.

We have pointed out that the materials given to the Israelites by the Egyptians were used in building the tabernacle. The silver was used to make sockets, and the gold was used to overlay the boards and other furnishings in the tabernacle. In the eyes of the Egyptians, such a use of their gold and silver would have been a waste. In the eyes of God, however, this was not a waste. The wealth of Egypt had been plundered for God’s purpose.

Throughout the centuries, many who have been called by the Lord and rescued by Him from the world have brought a great many things to Him to become a waste for His sake and for the sake of His purpose. For example, when Mary anointed the Lord Jesus with costly ointment of spikenard, Judas regarded this as a waste. He said that it could have been sold and the money given to the poor (John 12:3-5). He wondered why so much had been wasted on the Lord Jesus. But all that is plundered from the world should be brought to the Lord Jesus and wasted upon Him. To do this is to be saved to the uttermost. This is a sign of our deep love for the Lord, a sign that we have been thoroughly saved. Eventually, what we plunder from the world is brought together to be used for God’s dwelling place.

This is our experience today. Not only have we ourselves left Egypt, but we will not allow anything related to us to remain in the world. Instead, we plunder the wealth of the world and waste it upon the Lord as a token of our love for Him. This plundered wealth then is used in God’s dwelling place on earth. (*Life-study of Exodus*, msg. 20, pp. 229-230)

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 35:21 And they came, everyone whose heart lifted him up and everyone whose spirit made him willing, and brought the heave offering of Jehovah for the work of the Tent of Meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments.

Exo. 36:5 And they spoke to Moses, saying, The people are bringing much more than enough for the service of the work which Jehovah commanded us to do.

In 35:4-9, 20-29 and 36:3-7 we have the offering of the materials. Exodus 35:4 and 5 say, “And Moses said to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, This is the word which Jehovah has commanded, saying, Take from among you a heave offering to Jehovah; everyone whose heart is willing shall bring it, Jehovah’s heave offering.” Then various materials are mentioned: gold, silver, bronze, blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goats’ hair, rams’ skins dyed red, porpoise skins, acacia wood, oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the incense of fragrant spices, and onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod and for the breastplate.

In the matter of offering these materials, the people who had been idolatrous now became faithful to God. Formerly they used their gold to make an idol. But now they were faithful and offered everything to God for the building of the tabernacle, His dwelling place. This thought is conveyed in the record in chapter thirty-five regarding the offering of the materials. (*Life-study of Exodus*, msg. 183, p. 1933)

Today’s Reading

According to Exodus 35, the two leading workmen were Bezalel and Oholiab (vv. 30, 34). Bezalel was of the tribe of Judah, a kingly tribe, and Oholiab was of the tribe of Dan, a lowly tribe. This indicates that God does not care about our human estate, whether we are high or low. For the work of building His dwelling place, He can raise up one from a kingly tribe and also one from a lowly tribe.

Exodus 35:21 says, “And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him up, and everyone whose spirit made him willing.” Literally, the Hebrew word rendered “stirred” here means lifted. I prefer to use the word “lifted” in this verse. We need to have a heart that always lifts us up. We need an upward heart, not a downward heart. Many times I have been told that a certain brother or sister is discouraged, disappointed, or disheartened. Whenever we are disheartened, we are through with the work of God’s building. We constantly need an uplifted heart, even an uplifting heart, a heart that lifts us up. Every one of us needs such an uplifted heart. If we do not have this kind of heart, who then would be able to help us?

Concerning Bezalel, verse 31 says, “And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all workmanship.” This indicates that even if we are a Bezalel or an Oholiab, we still need the Spirit of God. For the building up of the tabernacle, a material dwelling place for God, there was the need for the Spirit of God. How much more is this true concerning the church today!

God filled with the Spirit those whose hearts lifted them up. By filling them with the Spirit, God gave them wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and skill. This is a picture of what we need today. For the building up of the church we need brothers and sisters whose hearts lift them up and who are filled with the Spirit of God to have wisdom and knowledge. In order to be an elder, a co-worker, or one who shares in the building up of the church, we need wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and skill.

After we have some experience of Christ as the materials to be offered to God for His building, there is still the need for us to carry out the work of building. For this, there is the need of many workers. All these workers should have an uplifted heart so that God may come in to fill them with the Spirit. According to the record here, we must first have a heart that lifts us up. Then God will come in to fill us with the Spirit as our wisdom, understanding, knowledge, skill, and craftsmanship. (*Life-study of Exodus*, msg. 183, p. 1936-1937)

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

Luke 16:13 No household servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.
Luke 16:9 And I say to you, Make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.

The Bible assigns mammon a very important position. Mammon stands in opposition to God. Today, more people are gained by mammon than those gained by God. Perhaps of a hundred people, eighty are gained by mammon. Of the remaining twenty, eighteen to nineteen serve both God and mammon. It is difficult to find one in a hundred who truly serves God. Mammon gains more souls than God does.

Originally, we had no intention during this time to speak about mammon. We were going to look at the matter of the Body life. Later, the fellowship about the Body life led to a second problem. The first problem is individualism, and the second problem is mammon. Individualism frustrates man from serving God. Mammon also frustrates man from serving God. If a man serves mammon, not only will there be no service to God corporately, but individually that person will not be able to serve God either. We can say that deliverance from mammon is the first and the foremost condition for one to serve God. If a man is not delivered from mammon, he cannot serve God. (*Messages Given during the Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry*, vol. 2, ch. 65, p. 499)

Today's Reading

All things are created by God. God is the unique source of all things; He is above all things. When men see all things, they should be moved to worship God. Today, the human mind invented atheism, and it is obviously wrong. The heavens move men to know God. "All things" are diverse and complicated. Satan wants to unify all things. There is no way to add up all things. For example, a chair and a table cannot be added together to make one unit. What is an adult plus a child plus a piece of luggage plus a bar of gold plus a piece of land? They do not add up to one unit. However, if you convert all these things into money, you can add them up. If all things cannot be unified, how can the businessmen do their accounting? With so many different units, how can one reckon their values? Money is the only means by which we can reckon all things. With money, a piece of land becomes no more a piece of land; it becomes money. Rice becomes no more rice; it becomes money. When we add together all things, we end up with a certain amount of money. In the end, Revelation 18 tells us that even the human soul can be reckoned with money. When a man sells his time to work for others, he is selling his soul. For example, when I hire a laborer, I agree with him ahead of time how much I will pay him for working eight hours. This is to buy the human soul with money. Money can buy us the human soul, and money can buy us all things. God created the earth, yet man divided it up into pieces and reckoned the value of every piece with money. If man can occupy the land on the moon, he will sell it for money also. Even for airplanes to fly over the earth, man charges people for access of the air space. Perhaps some people think that this is nothing unusual. But to us, and to the Bible, this is very strange. In six days, God created all things. Can you find out how much money "all things" are worth? Here are all sorts of things, in all fashions and colors. Yet Satan has simplified these things and unified them under money. This is why money is called in Chinese "the common goods."

At the same time, money is taking hold of all things. On the one end, God produced all things through creation. On the other end, Satan converted all things into money, thus unifying all things. If a man has money, he can buy anything. He can buy gold. He can even buy the whole of Shanghai, or the whole of China. There is not one thing that money cannot buy. Mammon is opposed to God. This is the reason that the Bible not only tells us that the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10), but that covetousness and idolatry are together (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5). Covetousness is the only idol. When one worships money, he is not worshipping money itself, but the created things behind the money. Because man wants goods, he spends the "common goods," that is, the money, to buy the particular goods. This means that man wants God's things and does not want God Himself. This is the reason why man either serves God or mammon. Those who have a heart for mammon can never love God.

God's things come from God; this is grace. These things that come from God are not for sale. The sunlight is not metered, and there is no charge for it. But the electric light has a charge for it. To get anything from Satan, man has to buy it. Even the carob pods of the prodigal son had to be bought. If a person truly wants to serve the Lord, he must be delivered from money. Once a person's thoughts are turned to money, he cannot serve God. It is wrong for a man to view all things from the side of money; he should view all things from the side of God. (*Messages Given during the Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry*, vol. 2, ch. 65, p. 501)

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

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.

According to the teaching of the Bible concerning material offerings, every person who belongs to the Lord should regularly give one-tenth of his income as an offering. From church history and the biographies of the saints, as well as from my own experience, I can testify that whoever practices giving one-tenth of his income, according to the Lord's word, will never suffer loss. We should not be greedy, however, and think that if we would give the Lord a little more, He will give us more in return. If that is our thought, we are truly and genuinely "Jacobs." We are all descendants of Jacob who have bargained with God. In spite of that, the Lord still remembers what we offer. (*Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 5: Concerning Various Aspects of the Church Service*, ch. 11, p. 154)

Today's Reading

Throughout the centuries, every saint who gave one-tenth of their income, according to God's word, was blessed by God. Eventually, some will even give two-tenths or three-tenths. The more we give, the more we want to give. Even if our earnings are barely enough to meet our needs, we still must give one-tenth to the Lord. Our income may be short a little, but we will see the Lord's blessing.

In addition to the regular giving of one-tenth, in the Old Testament there is also the giving for special occasions. After giving one-tenth, some brothers and sisters who have a higher income will have more than enough left over. These saints should not consider what they give for the construction of a large meeting hall as part of their regular giving. Some saints may think that our God extorts high taxes, because there is the first kind of tithe, a second kind of tithe, and other tithes. A person could give a tithe during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of the Blowing of Trumpets. Malachi says, "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" (3:10). What we give to the Lord is merely one-tenth of our income, but the Lord opens the windows of heaven and pours out manifold blessings on us.

Some saints are not willing to give the Lord the one-tenth that He wants. As a result, the Lord shuts up heaven and makes heaven like bronze and the earth like iron; there is no rain from heaven and no produce on the earth. In 1958 I visited Palestine. When I saw the land there, a reverence for God welled up in my heart. This was the land that God promised would be flowing with milk and honey. A cluster of grapes produced from that land had to be carried by two people on a pole (Num. 13:23). However, what I saw outside of Jerusalem was nothing but small pebbles. The wind had blown away all the soil. The land was so arid that nothing could grow in it. The grapes produced were so small that not only was there no need for two people to carry a cluster, but one person could carry twenty clusters. Therefore, we need to fear God. Everything that the Bible says will be completely fulfilled in time. We should not bargain with God; otherwise, He will shut the windows of heaven. (*Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 5: Concerning Various Aspects of the Church Service*, ch. 11, pp. 154-155)

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

Phil. 1:3-5 I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, Always in my every petition on behalf of you all, making my petition with joy, For your fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now.

The church in Philippi also had fellowship with Paul in the furtherance of the gospel. In 1:5 Paul speaks of “your fellowship unto the gospel from the first day until now.” Fellowship here means “participation, communication.” The same Greek word is translated “contribution” in Romans 15:26 and “sharing” in Hebrews 13:16. The saints in Philippi had fellowship unto the gospel, participating in the furtherance of the gospel through the apostle Paul’s ministry. This participation included their financial contributions to the apostle (4:10, 15-16), which issued in the furtherance of the gospel. This kind of fellowship, which kept them from being individualistic and diversely minded, implies their oneness with the apostle Paul and with one another. This gave them the ground for their experience and enjoyment of Christ, which is the main point of this book. The Christ-experiencing-and-enjoying life is a life in the furtherance of the gospel, a gospel-preaching life, not individualistic but corporate. Hence, there is “the fellowship unto the gospel.” The more fellowship we have in the furtherance of the gospel, the more Christ we experience and enjoy. This kills our self, ambition, preference, and choice. (*Life-study of Philippians*, msg. 2, p. 13)

Today’s Reading

As the Philippian believers were sharing in the furtherance of the gospel, in the furtherance of God’s move on earth according to His economy, they were partakers with Paul of grace. Those who partake of grace are those who share and enjoy the processed Triune God as grace. The apostle was such a one in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, and the saints at Philippi were joint-partakers with him in this grace. Grace is the Triune God processed to be our enjoyment. By having fellowship unto the gospel with Paul, the Philippians enjoyed this grace. According to the expression in Greek, they became partakers of Paul’s grace, of the very grace he enjoyed.

The church in Philippi also prayed for Paul (1:19), made his joy full and caused him to rejoice (2:1-2), and supplied his material need. There is no doubt that this church was very good. (*Life-study of Philippians*, msg. 2, pp. 13-14)

In the Bible we have a revelation of the heavenly banking system. In Matthew 6 the Lord Jesus speaks of making a deposit in our spiritual bank account. According to His word, we need to make deposits into our account in the heavens. In Matthew 6, of course, the word account is not used. In this matter also, the revelation in the Bible is progressive. Hence, in the Epistle to the Philippians Paul deliberately uses the word account in referring to the heavenly banking system.

In 4:15 Paul says, “And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I went out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the account of giving and receiving but you only.” This verse indicates that the church in Philippi was unique in opening an account with Paul. With this account there is the side of giving, and the other side of receiving. Here we have a double entry account, an account of both giving and receiving. To be sure, in the account opened with Paul, the Philippian believers gave a great deal. The church in Philippi had opened an account to care for the needs of the apostle. This account, reflected in verse 15, was kept in the heavenly bank. They sent gifts to Paul, and in return they received God’s repayment.

Paul speaks of this in verse 19: “And my God shall fill every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” In the apostle’s experience, he had the conviction and assurance that God was his God through his being one with Him. Since he considered the Philippians’ material gift to him a sacrifice to God, he assuredly believed that God, who was one with him and who was his God, would richly repay the Philippians. On behalf of God, the believers sent something to God’s servant. For this, God would be sure to pay them back. He would not owe the believers anything. The heavenly account would enter both a credit and a debit for the Philippian believers.

Which side of the ledger do you think would be bigger— the debit side or the credit side, the giving side or the receiving side? It is always the receiving side which is greater. For example, on behalf of God you may give ten dollars, but God may repay you a thousand dollars, that is, a hundredfold. Thus, in your account you have a balance of nine-hundred ninety dollars. This indicates that you are not actually the giver; God is the One who gives. Would you not like to have such an account? No earthly bank account can compare with it. However, if you open such an account with the intention of enriching yourself, God’s repayment may not be given to you in this age. Rather, He may wait until your greediness has been dealt with before He repays you. (*Life-study of Philippians*, msg. 30, pp. 258-259)

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you; a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, they will give into your bosom. For with what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you in return.

Acts 20:35 In all things I have shown you by example that toiling in this way we ought to support the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

I have seen a few brothers and sisters who fell into dire need because they were unfaithful in the matter of giving. They were not actually lacking in income. The Bible shows us a fundamental principle—one must give to become rich and one becomes poor by accumulating riches. Whoever cares only for himself is destined to be in poverty. Whoever learns to give is destined to have riches. God’s Word says it, and it is true. If we want to escape poverty, we have to give again and again. The more we give, the more God will give to us. Since we are willing to share our surplus with others, others will also be happy to share their surplus with us in the future. If we give one-twentieth to others, others will also give one-twentieth to us. If we give one-thousandth to others, others will also give one-thousandth to us. (*Messages for Building Up New Believers*, vol. 2, ch. 28, p. 421)

Today’s Reading

With what measure we measure to others, with the same measure others will measure to us. In what capacity we treat our brothers and sisters, with the same capacity God will treat us. If we are willing to sacrifice our livelihood, others will also sacrifice their livelihood for us. If we only give others that which is totally useless, things which we never use, others will certainly give us totally useless and unusable things. Many people have problems with their income because they have problems with their giving. If a person has no problem with his giving, it is hard to imagine that he will have problems with his income. God’s Word is quite clear. If we give to others, the Lord will give to us. If we do not give to others, the Lord will not give to us. Most people only exercise faith when they ask God for money; they do not exercise faith in giving money. It is no wonder that they have no faith to receive anything from God.

Brothers, as soon as we become Christians, we have to learn the basic lesson of financial stewardship. Christians have a unique way of managing their wealth: What we receive depends on what we give. In other words, the Christian way of financial stewardship is to receive according to what we give. Worldly people give according to what they have received, but we receive according to what we give. Our inflow depends on our outflow. Those who crave money and cling to it can never receive God’s money; they will never receive any supply from God.

We should all look to the Lord for our needs, but God will supply the needs of only one type of people—those who give. The words good measure, which the Lord uses in Luke 6:38, are wonderful words. When God gives to man, He is never stingy. He is ever generous and overflowing. Our God is always generous. Our God’s cup is always running over. God is never petty. When He gives, He says that it will be a good measure, pressed down, and shaken together. Consider the way in which we buy rice. Most rice merchants will not let us shake the measure. They do not allow the rice to settle before pouring it out. But the Lord said, “Pressed down, shaken together.” Not only so, it is “running over.” Our God is such a generous God. He gives by pressing down, shaking together, heaping up, and running over. However, He also says that with what measure we measure to others, it will be measured to us in return. If we are shrewd and exact in giving to others, God will only touch others to give to us in a shrewd and exact way.

We must give first to others, before others will give to us. Most people never learn to give. They always want God to answer their prayers. We have to give first before we can receive. If we have not received anything recently, it means that we have a problem in giving. I have been a Christian for more than twenty years, and I can surely bear witness to this principle. Whenever a person has a problem with his giving, he will experience a lack. (*Messages for Building Up New Believers*, vol. 2, ch. 28, pp. 421-422)

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

