

He who Gives, with Liberality

Romans, Part LVI

Romans 12:8; Isaiah 60

Stuart W. Bryan

I. Offer Your Bodies

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your _____ a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable worship.”

Paul calls us to consecrate our entire selves to the Lord – and this includes the work of our hands and the produce thereof. Our labor during the week and the produce thereof is an essential part of the Lord’s service.

II. The Wealth of the Gentiles Shall Come to You (Isaiah 60)

Paul commands in 12:9, *“Let love be without hypocrisy.”* Nowhere does *hypocrisy* more noticeably rear its head than in the way professing Christians deal with our wealth. So Paul warns us that *“the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil”* (1 Tim 6:10). But as with sex, as with wine, the fundamental problem is not in the object itself but in our hearts. So consider what Isaiah’s prophecy of the future glory of Mt. Zion, the Church, teaches us about wealth:

1. *Wealth is a form of _____.* When Zion is exalted, the nations will bring their *wealth* into her (5, 11). Hence, wealth itself is a good thing. The wealth of these nations is described as their *“glory”* (13) which God uses to *“glorify”* His sanctuary (7d).
2. *Wealth comes in different shapes and sizes.* Wealth includes gold and silver (6,9), flocks and herds (6-7), and lumber (13), depending on the glory of each nation.
3. *Wealth can be consecrated to _____ Service.* The flocks and rams ascend *on the Lord’s altar* (7); the silver and gold are brought *to the name of the Lord your God* (9); the glory of Lebanon *beautifies the sanctuary of God* (13). And so the gifts, talents, tithes, and offerings that we bring into the Church are used to bring exiles home (4,9), to build up Zion (10), and to make her more glorious (13).
4. *This consecrated wealth is a sign of _____ to Zion’s God.* The nations of the world bring their wealth into Zion because they see that *God’s glory rests upon her* (1-3); she belongs to God (14) and God is in her midst and is her glory (19ff).
5. *Wealth is consecrated to the Lord’s Service by being brought to _____.* The way the nations manifest their loyalty to the Lord is by bringing their gifts to the place of His presence (10-11, 15-16). They don’t keep them in their own houses.
6. *The Lord will bless those who pay tribute and _____ those who refuse.* God will *accept the offerings* of the *nations* (7c) and bless them with His people (17-18). However, those who refuse to pay tribute will be *utterly ruined* (12).

An Outline of Romans

- I. Introduction (1:1-17)
- II. Credenda: “The Righteous by Faith” Shall Live (1:18-11:36)
- III. Agenda: The Righteous “Shall Live by Faith” (12-15:13)
 - A. A Living Sacrifice, Transformed not Conformed (12:1-2)
 - B. Transformed Communities (12:3-15:13)
 1. Think soberly about yourselves (12:3-8)
 2. Love without hypocrisy (12:9-13:10)
 3. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ (13:11-14)
 4. Bear with one another in love (14:1-15:13)
- IV. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

III. Paying Tribute to the Lord (Malachi 3:8-12)

⁸"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. ⁹You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. ¹⁰Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. ¹¹"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts; ¹²And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land," Says the LORD of hosts.

A. A Brief History of the Tithe (cf. Gen 4:3-5; 14:18-20; 28:10-22)

Many Christians object to the practice of tithing. While they acknowledge that tithing was part of the Mosaic law, they insist that the tithe ended with the termination of the Mosaic covenant. The problem with such a notion lies in its assumption that the tithe as tribute originated in the Mosaic law. In fact, the tithe predated the Mosaic law.

B. Tithe as Tribute (Mal 3:8-12; cf. Lev 27:30-33 with 6:1ff; Ex 22:4)

Malachi teaches us several things about the tithe:

1. *God lays claim to the tithe.* It belongs to Him. Hence, to fail to pay the tithe is to _____ God (8-9 cf. Lev 27:30ff). While some claim this is no longer true, remember that Abraham paid tribute to God by giving a tithe to Melchizedek. And who is the greater Melchizedek? Jesus (cf. Heb 7:1-10). So how do we pay tribute to God in the new covenant? By giving a tenth of our increase to Jesus.
2. *We are to bring the tithe to the storehouse* – to God's *house* (10). In the new covenant, the _____ is God's *house*, the place of God's presence, and is to be the recipient of our tithe.
3. *God does not take kindly when we _____ from Him.* God had *cursed Israel with a curse* because of their robbery (9a). Blight and mildew were compromising *the fruit of the ground and the field* (11).
4. *God lavishly blesses those who pay tribute to Him with the tithe.* If Israel will be faithful to God, then He will open the windows of heaven and pour out such a blessing that they will not be able to store it all (10). God is the Sovereign Lord. He controls all things and can make the very earth respond in fruitfulness to our labor. Hence, He promises that the _____ which will come from paying tribute will far outweigh any difficulties attached to paying it.

IV. Conclusion (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

⁶But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. ⁹As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." ¹⁰Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, ¹¹while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.