First Fruits First Giving and Receiving September 1, 2022

“*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*” [Acts 20:35]

Speaking of giving and receiving, Apostle Paul reminds us of Jesus’ saying: “*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*” This statement is made in remembrance of those in need. On the surface this doesn’t sound like much of anything we haven’t heard before. Let’s drill down deeper.

Although this comment appears to coax more giving from parishioners, the context of Paul’s quote, which he made on the occasion of his departure to Rome, actually instructs and directs leaders, not their congregations, to be more generous. That’s an eye-opener.

Paul encourages those in the spotlight to model the best behavior to follow for people in the Kingdom of God: Be Givers.

It appears Paul didn’t want Kingdom leaders to be seen as greedy or opportunists with the offering. Leaders are called to be givers, not takers. After all, they are the ones receiving and stewarding the funds. This position of receiving can lead us to question our leader’s motives. On the contrary, by modeling giving, everyone else will dig deeper and be encouraged to offer more of themselves. Giving reflects a lifestyle, not a quest to collect more money.

When we see someone modeling generosity, we naturally want to support them. But there are limits. In today’s American Post Christian culture this giving model has been hijacked by a government that has usurped the church’s responsibility to take care of those in need. This position has been supplanted in virtually every realm in our society.

Nowadays, Healthcare is overseen by governmental entities. Media manufactures stories without biblically consistent underpinnings. Business forgoes morality to boost the bottom line. Education twists priorities in order to place schools ahead of families and churches in making moral decisions. In the name of self-righteousness, social programs place decisions regarding color, ethnicity, and identity in man’s hands, leaving biblical standards of behavior in the trash heap of forgotten eras.

Ultimately, we fall into the trap of looking for (moreover expecting) what we can receive, instead of the best ways to give. Reinforcing negative self-image and diminishing our pasts lead us to redefine our historical morality by overlaying an assumed agenda of depravity, selfishness and greed allowing those in authority to convince an unsuspecting and naïve public of their presumably lofty intentions. The irony is, that in passing legislation, the public thinks someone else is paying the bills. In fact, we are being forced to give, not asked to be generous. There is a world of difference.

The Firstfruit of God is proof positive of our Lord’s promise of provision. Because of what He did, we need never fear about our motivation if we honor Him.