

Sunday, November 13, 2011

The Sacrifice of Giving

Have you ever heard about currency exchange?

When you travel to a foreign country, whether on business or leisure, you usually exchange some money to the currency of the country you will visit, where you will live, lodge, and eat. One usually cannot use local currency in a foreign country where his currency may not be valued.

If someone, for instance, is emigrating from Egypt to the US, they would exchange Egyptian Pounds to Dollars. A wise person would collect a large amount of dollars to benefit him when he travels and settle down in his new country.

With the same token, our Lord Jesus taught us to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, and to exchange our currency, through giving, from earthly currency to heavenly currency where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where it benefits us when we go to settle down. A wise person is he who understands and carries out the commandment of Christ, and always exchanges his positions to a treasure to live by it forever.

Hence the importance of the sacrifices of giving, which we should offer on the altar of the heart.

Why do we give?

1- First we should know that all we possess is from God, He grants us everything. When He asks us, we gave Him what he granted us. We give Him from the bounty that he granted us, as the Bible says: *"For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You."* (1 Chronicles 14:29).

2 - God has given us in order to give, not to possess and treasure things on earth. When he grants us from his abundance, He gives us the opportunity to do an act of mercy and give to the poor. Thus the love of God becomes manifested in us before everyone. On addition, giving also strengthen brotherly love among people.

3 - Giving cleanses our lives, as the Lord Jesus said: *"But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you."* (Luke 11:41).

4 - God rejoices in the Sacrifice of giving, as the Bible says: *"But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."* (Hebrews 13:16).

5- We love God; hence we express our love to Him through giving.

How do we give?

Let's read together this true story:

"She tiptoed quietly into the temple; her head is bowed down towards the ground and, in great embarrassment, she took every penny she had out of her pocket, only two mites! She stretched out her hand and put them in large bronze box, she secluded herself to the corner in her shabby clothing, then lifted her heart to God, 'Lord, I do not have more than this...Here is all my life, I offer it to you. Please accept it and forgive my sins.'"

In the midst of crowd of the temple, this poor widow didn't know that there was someone looking at her, and watching in silence the wonderful work she was doing. It was the Lord Jesus, standing and watching the offerings of the people in the temple as he stands today in the church and in various places in the world watching every one of us and how we give.

The Lord Jesus stood in the temple and said to His disciples:

"Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood." (Mk 12:43-44)

My beloved ones, after reading this marvelous story, let's learn together how to give.

1 - We don't give to Christ only from our surplus, but also from our essentials, and the best we have.

2 - The Lord Jesus wants us to give in secret, so we can receive the heavenly reward (Review Matt 6).

3 - We should give generously (Review Rom 12:8).

4 - God cares the needy and the poor, and calls them his brothers, has repeated these words several times: *"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me... Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me."* (Review Matthew 25). These are various acts of love that give us many opportunities to give. The Lord put these acts of love as a precondition to entering the Kingdom of Heaven. It used to sadden the heart of God when He sees the people of Israel oppress the stranger, the fatherless, the widow, the poor, and the needy with a hardened heart and no pity.

5 - Finally, We should give cheerfully because *"God loves a cheerful giver"* that is to say, to be filled with the love of God, and his heart overflows with joy and true happiness, because *"It is more blessed to give than to receive"* (Acts 20:35).

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