

20260614 1 Corinthians 16 – Giving and Standing Fast

****All scripture taken from NKJV unless stated otherwise.*

Back in November, I did a four-part series on inheritances that we each receive as believers. One of the topics was “love.” You might remember that the Hebrew word for love is *ahavah*. Right there in the middle of that word, is the world for “give.” The word is “*hav*.” So right away we see that the act of giving is the way in which we express our love for God and for our neighbor. You might be wondering, “what kind of giving is this talking about?” My answer would be, “yes.” It is all kinds of giving. Let’s get into the text and listen as Paul tells us what some of the giving looked like in the early church.

16 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: ² On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. ³ And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me. (1 Corinthians 16:1-4).

These few verses are loaded with information. Giving was a practice done in the early church. A congregation in one place would help congregations in other areas. We happen to know that there was famine in the land at this time as well. In many of Paul’s letters, he speaks to different congregations about taking a gift up for the famine in Jerusalem. This was all prophesied. Listen to Dr. Luke’s reference to this in the Book of Acts.

²⁷ And in these days, prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. ²⁹ Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. ³⁰ This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. (Acts 11:27-30).

Remember that Barnabas and Saul were up in Antioch where believers were first called “Christians.” Paul began telling churches to come up with their own dispatchers. This showed that Paul delegated responsibilities, and he also let the congregations select trustworthy people. There is quite a lot of information here about the giving of money. For those new to the Grove, I might add that unlike many churches, I never bring up giving unless we come to it in scripture.

- i. First note that on the first day of the week they gathered. **Sunday was the “Lord’s Day”** because Sunday was the day that Jesus rose from the dead. I bring this up because there are certain groups, Sabbatarians, that make a big deal out of the assertion that we should be meeting on the Sabbath, or Saturday. I’ve had well-meaning Christians tell me that only true Christians meet on Saturday, and all others are apostate. I know this sounds bizarre, but I want you to see here that Christians were regularly meeting on the first day of the week. I really don’t think

this is something worth debating. Christians have been gathering to worship on Sunday since the earliest days of the faith. So, when did the Sabbath change from Saturday to Sunday? Sorry, this is a trick question. Well, it hasn't. We don't keep the Sabbath because we're not under the law. In fact, some of the Gentile churches started doing things like that, and Paul wrote them telling them not to give importance to "new moon celebrations or a Sabbath" (Colossians 2:16 paraphrased) because they were a shadow of what was to come. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Sabbath. We keep the Sabbath by faith daily. If you're ever asked if you keep the Sabbath, you can tell the person asking, "YES, I DO IT EVERY SINGLE DAY BY RESTING IN WHAT JESUS DID FOR ME ON CALVARY". It doesn't matter what day we meet. So, let's just put that thought to rest.

- ii. Second, Paul introduces the idea of a **purposeful gift being planned**. It is premeditated. It's not an "oh the plate is coming by so I better dig a dollar out of pocket." It suggests that our giving should be something that we meditate on, and pray upon. I want to add that giving isn't just talking about money. Each of us is given a certain amount of time, talents, and treasure that all come from God. It is He who blesses the work of our hands where we might even have something to give. If you don't have treasure, pray and give of your time and talents. You'll know in your heart what to give. The idea here is that giving is something we should think about. We don't put something in the plate to keep from feeling guilty. As a matter of public disclosure, I want to say that I have never seen one single gift that anyone has given here at the Grove. I do that so I won't be tempted to show any partiality to anyone for any monetary reason. You know what you give. If you don't give a dime, it is a matter between you and God. Paul will talk more about this in 2 Corinthians. There is a biblical principle that you reap what you sow. God loves a heart of generosity.
- iii. Third, we see from these few verses that **giving should be proportional**. Jesus was clear that "to whom much has been given, much is expected." If God has blessed you materially in your job or career, Jesus says that much is required of you. Proportionality means that your giving should be in line with your financial wealth. Or, if you have more talents in some area than others, and it is required to do God's work, then you must do those things. You're only expected to give as you can do. The more you make the more you should be giving. Don't give by putting money on a credit card. God doesn't want you to give beyond your means. However, He might have to teach you first to live within your means before you're able to give. These televangelists are not telling you what the Bible says. They are motivated by greed and ambition.
- iv. Finally, and as mentioned before, giving involves way more than money. It is being generous with your **time, talents, and treasure**. Giving is giving of our lives. In the Gospel accounts we see and hear over and over that the heart of the Father is that

we would be generous people. We should be involved in acts of compassion. Society has been radically changed by the ascent of Christianity. The ancient world was a dog eat dog kind of world. Infanticide was practiced in the days of Rome to control population. Babies were killed as they were seen as a costly nuisance. It went on in Egypt when Pharaoh ordered all the young male Hebrew boys to be killed. The advent of Christianity stood against the killing of innocent children, and we continue to make a stand against such unmerciful and horrible acts.

CHRISTIANS HAVE A LEGACY OF MERCY AND GIVING

As the gospel spread, infanticide was rampant. Male supremacy was the rule, and women were discounted. The rise of Christianity elevated women and ended gladiatorial fights. Christians started hospitals to extend mercy and healing. You've all heard of the Red Cross. It was started by a Christian. The Salvation Army and the YMCA were started by people who believed in God. I might hear the Baptist Memorial Hospital or Cedar Sinai Hospital, but I've never heard of Atheist General Hospital. Have you? Food pantries are pretty much founded and funded by Christians and not by unbelievers. That is the case here in Grimes County. Some in our congregation work as volunteers at the food pantry. Where are the atheists? Where are the agnostics? Habitat for Humanity was started by believers. Christians like William Wilberforce were those who brought about the abolition of slavery. He became a believer in 1786, and he was changed forever. He pressed forward and led the abolition of slavery in England. CHRISTIANITY HAS CHANGED THE WORLD AND CONTINUES TO DO SO. This compassion finds its base in a people who have felt and appreciated the love of God and felt a conviction to give back of that mercy and grace.

Some of us remember Charles Colson who worked for President Nixon. He went to prison and started Prison Fellowship. That work continues until today. Again and again, Christianity has changed the landscape of the world.

I want to mention that doing all of these things will not get you to heaven. We engage in these things because we ARE GOING TO HEAVEN, and we want to please the Father while we're here on the earth. Our little church has been extremely active in meeting needs. We don't have a "benevolence fund" because we believe that as a church of primarily volunteers, God shows each of us needs and we individually have the wherewithal to meet those needs. We often use the church as a vehicle to funnel that money so that some anonymity remains. We are each given the opportunity to give from what God has given us. Every one in here or reading this sermon has something to give. Give and it will be given to you.

Let's continue with our text today.

⁵ Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia). ⁶ And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you

may send me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷ For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits. (1 Corinthians 16:5-7).

He says I'm just going to pass through. I might stay or I might move on. I'm going to do whatever God permits me to do.

⁸ But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. ⁹ For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. (1 Corinthians 16:8-9).

Wow... Paul is intent on staying where he has adversaries. Paul wasn't in a hurry to avoid conflict. He was brave and he was bold. I think if I knew I had many adversaries somewhere I might just choose to pass on through as fast as I can to get through the place. Paul is right in the place where he is supposed to be. Be careful to never believe that the will of God is shown by things that are going well. I often hear people say something like, "This all went so well, God must be in it." That is a lie and isn't supported by Scripture. Paul considered it proof that he was right where God wanted him to be by the number of enemies that had risen up against him. Don't ever see obstacles and challenge as anything except part of our calling as believers. That is what it means to live for Him. We're running contrary to the beliefs and flow of the world, and we will encounter resistance.

¹⁰ And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do. ¹¹ Therefore let no one despise him. But send him on his journey in peace, that he may come to me; for I am waiting for him with the brethren. (1 Corinthians 16:10-11).

He gives some quick instructions about Timothy whom Paul considers to be his "son." Timothy was Paul's son in the Lord. Timothy was special to Paul. From the letters that Paul wrote to him, it seems he was a guy prone to worry a bit. How do we know that? Because Paul wrote to him that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

¹² Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time. (1 Corinthians 16:12).

It's interesting to see that they didn't always agree on everything. We as church members will have areas of disagreement. That's okay. We just need to be civil and not get involved in knock down drag outs with one another. Paul doesn't make every disagreement a big deal. I often tell some of you, "Don't make everything a big deal." This is important to remember in our friendships and in our marriages. Be careful what you say. When you disagree with others do so with respect and honor. We can agree to disagree agreeably.

Final Exhortations

¹³ Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. ¹⁴ Let all that you do be done with love. (1 Corinthians 16:13-14).

Stand firm and be brave. Don't be chicken-hearted. Be brave about the battles you engage in. We are all going to be attacked, but don't always feel you need to make a big deal out of the attack. My heart grieves when I see different camps arguing with one another on Facebook. I'm speaking primarily of vitriolic battles on Facebook between the Calvinistic Camp and the Arminian Camp. These make me want to vomit as folks speak dismissively of others about disputable matters. They do this in public with unbelievers looking on and cheering on our areas of division. I am sure these grieve the heart of God and cause Jesus to weep. Don't get wrapped up in this nonsense. It will distract you from doing things that make a difference. DO ALL IN LOVE.

Oh how quickly we forget the big lessons of 1 Corinthians Chapter 13: that all that we do for Christ should be done in love. Paul made it very clear in Chapter 13 that if we have all of those incredible gifts and blessings, but don't have love, then everything we're doing is not worth a hill of beans. The good effect of our faith goes right out the window.

¹⁵ I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints— ¹⁶ that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us. ¹⁷ I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. ¹⁸ For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, acknowledge such men. (1 Corinthians 16:15-18).

Paul is citing those who came from Corinth and had given him those questions that he has addressed in this letter that we call 1 Corinthians. He tells the church to honor these men and give them recognition.

Greetings and a Solemn Farewell

¹⁹ The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. ²⁰ All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. ²¹ The salutation with my own hand—Paul's. ²² If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come! ²³ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. ²⁴ My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen. (1 Corinthians 16:19-23).

We don't need to be kissing each other here at the Grove. This was just a greeting as it is today in the Middle East. We probably do more of a holy handshake or a man hug. Maybe what we need to concentrate on here is that we should be affectionate and caring to one another.

Paul wrote this letter out with his own hand and not by his amanuensis. He signs at the end so no one else can claim having written it. Paul was dealing with letters that were fakes that were being sent to the various churches. His handwriting became so distinctive because Paul had some kind of illness. It was probably his eyes by what he tells the Galatian church. He told them that he knew they would gouge out their own eyes and give them to him if they could (Galatians 4:15).

v.22 Paul says we should all cry “O Lord come.” That is one word in Greek. It is the word “Maranatha.” Paul isn’t saying you must love the Lord to be saved. Neither is he saying unless your love of God is perfect, you’re going to hell. I think he’s just expressing some frustration at

trouble makers and saying if you’re in love with the world, you really don’t know Him. God does indeed convict and move us, but it always comes with hope. Yes, there are areas of our lives that need to be surrendered to Him, but hopelessness doesn’t come from God. It comes from the enemy of your soul. Paul ends by capping this off, and emphasizes it by saying, “The grace of the Lord be with you.”

GRACE
IS GETTING SOMETHING YOU
DON'T DESERVE, AND
MERCY
IS NOT GETTING WHAT
YOU DO DESERVE.

God desires to draw you into His heart. He does that with grace and mercy. Grace is getting what you don’t deserve. Mercy is when you don’t get what you do deserve. For by grace are ye saved through faith and not of yourself, it is the gift of God not of works lets any man should boast.

1 Peter 1:8-9 (ESV)

**Though you have not seen him, you love him.
Though you do not now see him, you believe in him
and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled
with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the
salvation of your souls.**

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.