

Series: Acts
Title: Why Am I Doing?
Scripture: Acts 20: 33-35
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In all that the apostle Paul says in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders, he is saying to them, FOLLOW ME! But listen to what he warned them that false prophets would do?

Acts 20: 29: For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30: Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

So what is the difference? Paul is saying:

I Corinthians 11: 1: Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that

He received this ministry from the Gospel himself, the Lord Jesus. He received it for one purpose: to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And Paul reminded them that it was through the word of this grace that the Holy Spirit rebirthed these Ephesian elders to believe on Christ Jesus and made them overseers of his church. Paul says therefore, as I have preached the truth of Christ to you, so you do to others.

I Corinthians 4: 15: For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16: Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

Paul reminded them of the example he set before them in his preaching

Paul preached the same gospel of God's grace to all men--Jew or Gentile; in every place--public or private; in humility trusting the Power and Wisdom of God through his word.

He preached repentance toward God: from self to God, from the works of dead religion to God. And Paul preached faith in Jesus Christ: faith in the Author and Finisher of faith, faith in the Captain of our Salvation, faith in the one to whom God the Father entrusted the government, the Head of the church his body, who shall save his people from their sins.

Paul says, now take heed to yourselves and feed the church which he purchased with his own blood. The food of the sheep is this gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus—The Bread from heaven.

Acts 20: 32: And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Next, Paul reminds them of another example he set before them.

Acts 20: 33: I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34: Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35: I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Nothing Paul preached or did was for personal profit. Paul was given gifts from churches where he had preached. But whatever Paul lacked he got by working to support himself and those men with him.

First, Paul got this light from Christ the same as he got his gospel. **Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, who said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.**

Secondly, the effectual grace of God made Paul to walk in this light of Christ.

Thirdly, Paul did it for the glory of Christ the Light. (Turn to)

I Corinthians 9: 11: If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? 12: If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

Here is the point to get: 1. Every exhortation throughout the volume of the book is only understood in the Light of Christ. 2. We will only truly walk in the light as God effectually works in us to do that which is well-pleasing in his sight. 3. Every exhortation in the volume of the book concerning our walk, has the end and chief purpose of making his children “invisible” as we hold forth this light “lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.”

The carnal man will never grasp this, but the light which regenerated sinners will behold in you, believer, is your aim for them not to look to you but to Christ—“subjection to the gospel of Christ.”

I Corinthians 10: 31: Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32: Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: 33: Even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved. 11: 1: Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

THIS IS GODLY GIVING

1. GIVING NEEDY SINNERS THE GOSPEL

2. GIVING NO OFFENSE IN ANYTHING

3. GIVING THE WEAK FREEDOM FROM TEMPORAL BURDENS BY PROVIDING FOR THEM

ALL FOR THIS ONE PURPOSE: THAT THE GOSPEL BE NOT HINDERED, AS YOU WAIT ON GOD TO BRING HIS REDEEMED TO REJOICE IN CHRIST JESUS THE LIGHT THROUGH THE WORD OF HIS GRACE...THIS IS GODLY GIVING.

God’s grace make us cease teaching for *our own profit*. Grace in the heart makes us profoundly single-minded, steadfastly minded, for Christ Jesus.

Illustration: A job to support the work

IN EVERY WORD in His Word AND in all his dealings with us in our daily lives, always seek to behold first, the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness. Everything that exists in heaven, earth, in the world, in the church, visible or invisible, exists for one reason:

Colossians 1: 22: that in all [CHRIST JESUS] might have the preeminence. 19: For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell;

The only word that makes faithful husbands and wives is Christ the Husband for his Bride If we want to have true faithful sons and daughters it will only be through the faithfulness of the only begotten Son of God toward his Father and by his word working effectually in them. Do you want to see brethren be faithful workers and bosses at our jobs? Then we must preach the faithfulness of the servant of God, “I must be about my Father’s business.” “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” If we want to be faithful church members is not by preaching the church it is by preaching the faithfulness of the Head of the church, the one

on whose shoulders the government of God rests, and he effectually works in edifying each and every member. Paul is not merely trying to make these men preachers but men who preach Christ crucified. Paul is not merely trying to make these men givers but men who are willing to give up all that the gospel of THE GIVER be not hindered.

On this subject of giving, let show you that by proclaiming this in the light of Christ.

Paul held nothing back from them in his gospel. How do you think he preached on this subject of giving? We know from his letters to the churches.

I. THE TRIUNE GOD AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS THE GIVER.

God the Father gave his only begotten Son. Hear ye him. Christ said, “I give my life for the sheep.” “No man can come to the Father but by me.” The Holy Spirit gives sinners a true understanding directly from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

John 16: 13: Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself;...14: He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you. 15: All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

You and I were too poor, too needy, too bankrupt, to even know we don't have anything to offer God.

Psalm 50: 12: If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof.

Haggai 2: 8: The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 40: 16: And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

Salvation is the “free gift” of God to those he chose in Christ. Paul was constantly speaking of God's gift.

Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 5:15: But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

Ephesians 2: 8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Romans 8:32: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

II. BY CHRIST THE LIGHT, GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS IN THE BELIEVER THAT WHICH IS WELL-PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT.

Effectual grace, irresistible grace, sovereign grace is working of God in dead sinners whereby he creates new creatures and brings them to the obedience of trusting Christ the Obedient One. It is a free gift just as all grace is free.

Ephesians 3:7: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

Ephesians 4:7: But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Illustration: Effectual grace means our Lord makes every believer a giver from the heart.

Paul was not set on making men see any light in him. But because that was his heart we see in Paul the light of God and his glory in giving his Son for those he everlastingly loved.

I Corinthians 4: 15: For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel....17: For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is **my** beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

III. THE END PURPOSE FOR WHICH GOD GIVES ETERNAL LIFE IS THE GLORY OF HIS SON.

The end purpose for which Paul supported himself and those others with him, like all other exhortation, was for the glory of Christ the Light. The Lord said, “freely ye have received, freely give.” That is exactly what Peter says and pay attention to how to do so. Here is giving the gospel of God's grace because of the light of Christ, declaring the effectual work of Christ in the heart because of the effectual work of Christ in your own heart, and all for the glory of Christ.

1 Peter 4:10: As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11: If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

That is exactly what Paul is teaching these Ephesian elders as he leaves them to feed the church of God. Now that he is leaving, Paul says as I taught you Christ the Giver, I am now reminding you that I showed you that I trust him by providing for myself, and those with me, that the gospel be not hindered. Do you see? Paul did not set this example to merely make them preachers, but that they might preach Christ crucified. He was not trying to make them givers, but to set forth THE GIVER, God our Savior, Christ Jesus the Lord.

Any so-called light that turns men from Christ to men is nothing but sparks a man has kindled. Christ the Key of the gospel is removed. It is nothing to get men to do. But only grace can make men stop doing and trust Christ's doing.

Illustration: This entire nation has gone green. But if the Creator is not the reason and the end purpose then it is all just creature worship.

Note: Paul still does not compel or constrain them by his authority to do this but says, “**I have showed you all things, how that so laboring you OUGHT to support the weak**”—It is because Paul trusted God from the beginning, throughout his ministry among them, and even now. He commended them to God and the word of his grace which is able to build them up.

2 Corinthians 9: 8: And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work:... by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men*;...for the exceeding grace of God in you. 15: Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Here are the 3 things we just saw about this doctrine of giving and all other doctrine:

1. All doctrine is understood in the Light of Christ.
2. Every good work is wrought effectually in the believer by the three in One, through Christ the Light.

3. The end purpose is that sinners in need of mercy might behold Christ who is all our Salvation.

Here are the 3 things we just saw about Godly giving:

1. Giving needy sinners the gospel.
2. Giving no offense in anything
3. Giving to relieve the weak brethren of all burdens

All for the purpose that the gospel of Christ Jesus be not hindered.

THAT THE GOSPEL BE NOT HINDERED, AS YOU WAIT ON GOD TO BRING HIS REDEEMED TO REJOICE IN CHRIST JESUS THE LIGHT THROUGH THE WORD OF HIS GRACE. THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE FOR YOU WHO BELIEVE ON HIM. WHAT DO YOU HAVE THAT YOU DID NOT RECEIVE? THERE IS NO OTHER CONSTRAINT THAN HIS EVERLASTING LOVE.

AMEN!