

GIVING

Objectives

To be merciful and to benefit from this great commandment

References

- ❖ HH Pope Shenouda III “The Giving”.
- ❖ “Paradise of the Spirit” by HG Anba Youannis Part 2

Biblical Verses

- ❖ “... In as much as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matthew 25:40)
- ❖ “For thus says the Lord God of Israel: The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth” (1 King 17:14)

Lesson Outlines

The Lord Jesus Christ said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). It is a sign of selflessness as the giver gives priority to others like the widow who put the two mites out of her poverty (Luke 21:4).

Giving to the poor is a Biblical commandment

- ❖ “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleanings from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 23:22).
- ❖ “Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat” (Exodus 23:10-11).
- ❖ Our Lord said: “He, who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none, and he who has food, let him do likewise” (Luke 3:11).
- ❖ He also said: “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” (Matthew 19:21).

The Blessings of Giving

- ❖ We share what we have with God Himself by giving the needy and we give Him our souls when we visit the oppressed and share our love with them (Matthew 25: 40).
- ❖ He who is merciful to the poor lends to the Lord (Proverbs 19:17).
- ❖ Giving is blessed by the Lord as He blessed the bin of flour and the jar of oil in the house of the widow who provided for Elijah (1 King 17: 8-16) and (Psalm 112:9) that said: “He has dispersed abroad, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever”.
- ❖ It intercedes even for the non believer and makes him want to believe as it did with Cornelius (Acts 10).
- ❖ It can buy the everlasting home by the unrighteous mammon (Luke 16:9).
- ❖ It delivers from time of trouble and sickness (Psalm 41:1-3).
- ❖ It delivers a person from sin (Daniel 4:27).
- ❖ It moves the mercies of God: “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy”.
- ❖ He who gives to the poor will not lack (Proverbs 28:27).

How should we give?

- ❖ With joy and love: “If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised” (Song 8: 7). The needy responds to kind feelings before he takes material things and his joy will be reflected in the giver.
- ❖ With understanding that everything is granted to us from the Lord “For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You” (1 Chronicles 29:14)
- ❖ With understanding knowing that it is humility from God Almighty to take from us “The earth is the Lord’s and all its fullness” (Psalm 24:1).
- ❖ Without waiting to be glorified. “What do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you glory as if you had not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7)
- ❖ With a free will from a lawful earning, not as a duty or shame from others (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- ❖ In secret even from yourself: “Your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly” (Matthew 6:1- 4)
- ❖ Generously: “He who gives, with liberality” (Romans 12:8) and the Lord said “For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38). St. Peter the merciful sold everything and gave to the poor; when there was nothing left, he sold himself as a slave and gave the money to the poor.
- ❖ From the best that you have as Abel (Genesis 4:4).
- ❖ With Sensitivity towards people’s needs before they ask and with no delay (Proverbs 3:27-28)
- ❖ To every one who is in need regardless of anything (Matthew 5:42) unless we know that it will be spent in a sinful way.

Conclusion

The tithes and primes are the minimum in giving. It comes under the Jewish giving and not the Christian. As for Christianity, the Bible says: “Give to him who asks you” (Matthew 5:42). Then you should not be satisfied with paying the tithes or the primes without giving those who are in need. Let love be firm in your heart, and do not deal with God, the church or the poor mathematically, without a heart!! And whenever you get a chance to do a merciful deed, do not close your heart, using the excuse that you have already paid the tithes...

Activities /Discussion Points

1. May we give to our relatives from our tithes and offerings?
Yes, give them if they are in need. As the Apostle said: “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8). Then give them, but do not give to them alone lest it is thought that it is just a duty or blood-relation that made you give. If you give all your tithing and offerings to your relatives, you will have withheld the due of the poor who deserve it too or who may be in more need for it than relatives. (Pope Shenouda III)
2. Train yourself to share with others (your friends and family included) everything you have and always remember the beautiful words of the Lord “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).