

Australind Vineyard Christian Fellowship

from the Pastor's heart  The Sword of the Spirit the Word of God



GIVING - For God so loved the world that He gave.....

The idea of giving is instituted by God into our understanding as an integral part of our journey with Him. Since God conceptualised the idea of giving and connected it to sacrifice, we who are selfish in nature as human beings find the message of giving difficult to comprehend. Anyone trying to understand the cross or the message of the cross without taking into account the sacrifice associated with it ends up in confusion. The cross is foolishness to men but it is the wisdom of God.

When we take giving into account we have to approach it based on Biblical terms as opposed to just giving out of human nature. The human nature cannot give without reserve. It can only give to the extent that it can give even to the extent of death. A good man would even die for another but cannot die for another's sins. While we were yet sinners, Jesus died for us. This to us is a difficult concept when applying the same principle to ourselves on behalf of another.

Am I my brother's keeper? Dying on behalf of another's sin is not an easy concept. When Moses was asked to lead God's people through the wilderness, God never told him what he would face regarding the people. Not long after entering the wilderness, God showed him the true nature of the people. They had quickly forgotten God and turned to idolatry, fornication and worship of devils. Moses had to endure a stubborn, proud and hardhearted people who despised God's grace toward them. As a result except for a few the generation that came out of Egypt died in the wilderness and never reached the Promised Land. Moses himself never reached the Promised Land and Aaron too. They never made it because they disobeyed God in their own ways.

Yet, in the picture of Jesus on the cross we see perfect obedience in Him, dying for our sins and taking upon Himself the wrath of God. It is said; 'One man's drink is another man's poison'. The cup of our drink which was sin was the cup of poison that Jesus drank. I cannot understand how easily many push aside this great sacrifice and continue to sin freely. It is not only their sin but their nature that is more disconcerting. This causes many who walk righteously to have to put up with that nature of sin in others when they blatantly disregard the cost of the sacrifice Jesus made on their behalf.

It is my understanding that problems in life would not be as many if it were not for others. Then I see three fingers pointing at me when I point my index finger at them. This never seems to go away and always turns up at the most inappropriate moment to make my life miserable. Why should I suffer because of another? Am I my brother's keeper?

The simple answer to this question is not available except in the words of Jesus to Apostle Paul when he complained about the thorn in his flesh. Jesus replied him by saying; "My grace is sufficient for you". Wow! Is that supposed to set me free? No, it is not to set you free from the problem but to set you free from your suffering on another's behalf. It is then that one can begin to see the reasoning behind such a statement. Prison, death, suffering and the misunderstanding of God's ways are overcome through this statement. Most people cannot help themselves or understand as you are able to because God has chosen you to be the bearer of another's burdens. The more you try to get rid of the burden, the heavier it becomes till you go to Jesus the burden carrier (Ox) and cast it upon Him and take His yoke which is light and easy. Till this is done, we will strive in our own strength to solve our problems.

Moses had an opportunity to let God destroy His people and start all over again with Him as the role model. He would not have been much of a role model having been a murderer himself and a timid man who lived in much fear after his crime. He knew this and stood in the gap for Israel.

That is why Jesus became the role model. This is why God said; "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased". When you have a role model like Jesus all arguments against emulating Him will cease because it is in Him we see the burden bearer and sin destroyer. It is when we see this that we will no longer have to bear another's sins and burdens or be subject to their nature. When we put on Christ, everything fades away. The secret is to put on Christ. That requires sacrifice and giving like you have never given before. It will tear the flesh of your bones and strip your skin inch by inch and you will cry out to God and say like Jesus said; "My God My God, why have you forsaken me"? The expected answer will only come in silence. Darkness will surround you and you will feel like everyone has abandoned you in the face of your problems. No one will understand and you are left all alone. The cry of your heart will just be an echo in the valley of weeping till the third day.

On the third day you will be resurrected and new life will begin to flow and you will become a new creature in Christ Jesus. Then it will be no longer you that lives but Jesus who lives in you and you will become Christ like in your thought, speech and behaviour.

I was once challenged by God to love my Pastor who was not a nice man. In fact, he had everything dislikeable about him and there was enough information on him to confirm all that was said about him was true. Yet, God loved this man and was grieving over him. One day, God did something to humble me before this man. I was forced by the Holy Spirit to hug this man in front of the whole church when deep groanings of the Spirit began to heave out of my belly over this man. He could not move because he was held by me with the strength of the Holy Spirit and I could not let him go for the same reason. It was a comical sight with my arms wrapped around him and heaving over him with groanings. I could feel the hardness of his heart in the midst of this supernatural encounter. Then the Holy Spirit released me and told me later that He was grieving over this man's sins and the hardness of his heart. This released me from all resentment and un-forgiveness toward this man and a new love began that was not there before. The Lord then showed me clearly that my attitude and works toward my Pastor and Church from then on was to be out of love for Jesus first. Jesus then showed me how to love the Church warts and all. It was not easy as this incident was just one of many on a journey of forgiving and loving as an endless cycle of God's ways which had begun when I first accepted Jesus as my Saviour

Friends, I want to tell you; the Holy Spirit is grieving over the sins of the worldwide Church. Please pray for it. The time is short and Jesus is coming back for a spotless bride. ***Prepare ye the way of the Lord.***

Let us bear one another's burdens and let us not tolerate or condone sin. Hate sin and love the sinner. Bring the sinner to Christ and the full knowledge of God by the sacrifice of your own life. This is the gospel message of giving. Love your neighbour as yourself but do not become his victim. Jesus overcame the world by His love & faith and was not subject to sin or death. He took on sin, death and the devil and overcame them with 3 elements of overcoming that agree in one; **the blood, the word and the Spirit.**

With love - *Pastor Noble*

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