

## **Understanding the Church That Jesus Built: Money**

**11-23-14 AM**

If we examine the history of churches and money, we find a great deal of contention and strife. Whether it was the division in the catholic denomination over indulgences, or in the Lord's church in the 20th century over institutions, we typically have found that false doctrines are revealed by their fruits. Paul said "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:10). How a church handles money is a hallmark of whether it is or is not the church that Jesus built.

The statements made in I Corinthians 16:1-4 are the core teaching on money in the Lord's church. There we find a command for giving, an example for usage, and finally a necessary inference for purpose.

**COMMANDMENT:** I Corinthians 16:1-4 states that Christians as a church are to set aside a portion of their income (prosperity) on the first day of the week into a common collection of the church. We are told that this is a universal commandment given to all churches. The manner of giving spoken of in II Corinthians 8-9 is that of a free will offering; meaning that the amount of the giving is completely determined by the giver. It is specific to our prosperity & desire. This rules out ideas such as tithes or multiple offerings taken up at various times.

**EXAMPLE:** Paul reveals by example how church money is to be used. We are told that it was going to be used for Saints who were in particular need at that time (also revealed in Acts 11:28-30). This means that it was NOT for non-Christians, and it was used for an emergency need, not a constant support. Secondly, Paul earlier revealed that the collection was taken up to support those who taught and worked for the Gospel (for the church) in I Corinthians 9:14. Finally, this example revealed that there was a church "treasury" that was held for this purpose, so "that no collections be made when I come".

**NECESSARY INFERENCE:** Something else revealed here by inference is the limited scope of the work of the church. If the financial support of the church (consider ANY institution supported in such a fashion) was purely voluntary, and limited to a specific time, it means that the work of that institution is necessarily limited. Thus we see here that the church had a limited purpose. It rules out far reaching (and expensive) works such as social equality, justice, or poverty warfare. It means that the church is not the primary supporter of the saints (I Timothy 5), and that our giving is not exclusive to the church (Galatians 6:10).

**EXPEDIENCE:** Such conclusions lead us to other questions that fall into the category of expedience. For example, how much should be in the treasury? While we see authority for a treasury, we might also determine that we must have a purpose for a treasury. The parable of the talents reveal that God expects us to be using the things we have in his name. Another question is what should be the greatest use? Evangelism? Benevolence? Such questions are often more appropriate to the circumstances of the church than anything else.

**CONCLUSION:** From this passage we have been able to see a number of important truths about the church that Jesus built. In Ephesians 4:11-16 Paul revealed something that goes hand in hand with this passage: while we may think that the ultimate work of all Christians is to equip the church, it is actually the case that the church exists to equip Christians.