

Feast of Trumpets 2017 – Offering

We know from Deuteronomy, that God gives His people an *opportunity of worship* by instructing us to *give an offering* during the Holy Day seasons. A financial offering to God is worship just as our prayers, and our tears, and our Psalms of praise are offerings to God...

Deu 16:16 "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.

Deu 16:17 Every man *shall give* as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

The Bible is a giant book of books, and it is interesting to explore some of the **various times** when God's people are called upon to **help accomplish a goal** ... a work for God.

In the example I want to bring you today, the apostle Paul is writing to the Corinthians about giving

The Context ... There is still a need in Jerusalem to help the poor in the church to survive extreme need ...

Encouragement to Give Generously

2Co 8:1 (CEV) My friends, we want you to know that the churches in Macedonia (*northern Greece eg Philippi & Thessalonica*) have shown others how kind God is.

2Co 8:2 Although they were going through **hard times and were very poor**, they were **glad to give generously**.

2Co 8:3 They gave as much as they could afford and even more, simply because **they wanted to**.

2Co 8:4 They even asked and begged us to let them have the **joy of giving** their money for God's people.

2Co 8:5 And they did more than we had hoped. They gave **themselves** first to the Lord and then to us, just as God wanted them to do.

2Co 8:6 Titus was the one who got you started doing this good thing, so we begged him to have you finish what you had begun.

2Co 8:7 **You do everything better than anyone else**. You have stronger **faith**. You **speak** better and **know** more. You are **eager to give**, and you **love** us better. Now you must **give** more generously than anyone else.

2Co 8:8 I am not ordering you to do this. I am simply **testing how real your love is** by comparing it with the concern that others have shown.

2Co 8:9 You know that our Lord Jesus Christ was kind enough to give up all his riches and become poor, so that you could become rich.

2Co 8:10 A year ago you were the first ones to give, and you gave because you wanted to. So listen to my advice.

2Co 8:11 I think you should **finish what you started**. If you give according to what you have, you will prove that you are as eager to give as you were to think about giving.

2Co 8:12 **It doesn't matter how much you have. What matters is how much you are willing to give from what you have.**

2Co 8:13 I am not trying to make life easier for others by making life harder for you. But it is only **fair**

2Co 8:14 for you to share with them when you have so much, and they have so little. Later, when they have more than enough, and you are in need, they can share with you. Then everyone will have a **fair share**,

2Co 8:15 just as the Scriptures say, "Those who gathered too much had nothing left. Those who gathered only a little had all they needed."

We don't want to be ...

... the man who abounds in spiritual interests, who is fervent, prayerful, affectionate, able to speak in the Church, but unable to part with his money.

Why? ... because it is **unbalanced!**

If each of us had a friend (who became interested in the church), and we were their mentor to help them learn about God's ways ... how might we answer the question of "**How much should I give, for a Holy Day offering?**"

One approach ... is to point out the "extremes" ... because it can clearly illustrate the key issues:

- Extreme #1 ... Don't (at the last minute) grab a couple coins out of your pocket to throw in the basket. God wants you to **consider** your offering and He wants your involvement / participation to be meaningful to you. Giving is an act of worship, so do it mindfully with thanksgiving
- Extreme #2 ... If you give up "everything" ... live in a shelter, survive on the cheapest food, not spend money on clothing or grooming or to take a bath or shower because of the cost to heat the water ... **so that you can maximise the donation you give to the church** ... Your coworkers will (rightly) think you are weird ... **and smelly**... and you may be neglecting to properly provide for your family – and you may lose your job. God is not asking you to do this... it is unbalanced. God provides blessings **to enjoy** ... He just asks that you **also** properly consider others, and the work of the church in preaching the Gospel

As Paul wrote above ... 2Co 8:12 It doesn't matter how much you have. What matters is your **being willing to give** from what you have. God is a cheerful Giver ... and we can be cheerful givers too!