

BENEVOLENCE STUDY

by Pastor R. Douglas Meadows
Written and Compiled, 2009

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When I presented this material to my church I also included various handouts, both negative and positive, which I thought were pertinent to the study. I used the internet, books, and email as my sources for the handouts. The handouts are not included in this study.

My objective is to cover the biblical references and teachings regarding Christian benevolence. Thus, enabling the serious Bible student an opportunity to assess the Scriptures and apply its truths to the matter of Christian benevolence.

– R. Douglas Meadows, December, 2009

BENEVOLENCE STUDY

by Pastor R. Douglas Meadows

LESSON # 1

Matthew 5:42 (38-42)

I. The context is a contrast between the Law and spirit of the Law in the kingdom of God.

II. “ye have heard that it was said...but I say unto you”
~ six times, viz., vss. 21f, 27f, 31f, 33f, 38f, 43f

III. THE LETTER OF THE LAW vs. 38 cf. Lev. 24:19-20
~ involves vengeance, retribution, like-response

IV. THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW INVOLVES LOVE vs. 39
~ this will be seen more fully when we look into Luke 6

“resist not” – ma antistanai – 2AOR INFIN – anthistami – to set in opposition; to oppose, resist,
stand out against
cf. Prov. 20:22; I Cor. 6:7; I Thess. 5:15; I Pet. 3:9; Rom. 12:17, 19-21

A. Summary:

1. Don't seek retribution.
2. Let God take vengeance.
3. Don't do as they do.
4. Manifest mercy and the love of God.

B. Example of being hit with the hand, (vs. 39b).

1. Submission
2. Willingness to surrender further.

V. THREE MORE EXAMPLES GIVEN vss. 40-42

A. Being sued ~ yield, and go the next step.

B. Constrained to serve ~ yield, and go the next step.

C. Requested of...

- ~ by implication the foundation regards “evil” (vs. 39a)
~ the first two are by force, this is by choice

“give” – didou – 2PS PRES IMPERA ACT – didomi – to give, bestow, present

“asketh” – aitounti – DAT S M PRES ACT PART – aiteo – to ask, request

“borrow” – daneisasthai – 1AOR INFIN MID – daneizo – to borrow money
main root: daneion (danos, a gift, loan) – a loan, a debt

“turn not away” – ma apostrophas – 2PS 2AOR SUBJ PASS – apostrepho – to turn away, remove; to slight, reject, repulse

~ the first may be an object, the second seems to involve money

VI. OBSERVATIONS

- A. Evil actions will be acted out upon us.
- B. The Christian attitude is not one of vengeance or retribution.
- C. The Christian attitude should reflect mercy in yielding.
- D. The ultimate motivation for a submissive spirit is love.
- E. In the case of request for goods or money, whether proper or not, ...
 - 1. We are commanded to give.
 - 2. We are not to reject or ridicule.
- F. This is only one passage. There are others which address the same concepts. *We should ascertain the truths from there before making any final decisions.*

JOHN GILL COMMENTARY

Mat 5:39 - But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil,.... This is not to be understood of any sort of evil, not of the evil of sin, of bad actions, and false doctrines, which are to be opposed; nor of the evil one, Satan, who is to be resisted; but of an evil man, an injurious one, who has done us an injury. We must not render evil for evil, or repay him in the same way; see [Jam 5:6](#). Not but that a man may lawfully defend himself, and endeavour to secure himself from injuries; and may appear to the civil magistrate for redress of grievances; but he is not to make use of private revenge. As if a man should pluck out one of his eyes, he must not in revenge pluck out one of his; or should he strike out one of his teeth, he must not use him in the same manner; but patiently bear the affront, or seek for satisfaction in another way.

But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also: which is to be understood comparatively, rather than seek revenge, and is directly contrary to the Jewish canons, which require, in such a case, a pecuniary fine (g).

"He that strikes his neighbour (which Maimonides explains, he that strikes his neighbour with his hand shut, about the neck) he shall give him a "sela", or "shekel": R. Judah says, in the name of R. Jose the Galilean, one pound: if he smite him (i.e. as Maimonides says, if he smite him with his double fist upon the face; or, as Bartenora, with the palm of his hand, להי, "on the cheek", which is a greater reproach) he shall give him two hundred "zuzim"; and if he does it with the back of his hand, four hundred "zuzim"."

R. Isaac Sangari (h) manifestly refers to this passage of Christ's, when he says to the king he is conversing with,

"I perceive that thou up braidest us with poverty and want; but in them the great men of other nations glory: for they do not glory but in him, who said, "Whosoever smiteth thee thy right cheek, turn to him the left; and whosoever taketh away thy coat, give him thy cloak"."

Mat 5:40 - And if any man will sue thee at the law,.... Or "will contend with thee", or as the Syriac renders it, דנדון עמך, "will strive", or "litigate with thee"; not contest the matter, or try the cause in an open court of judicature, a sense our version inclines to; but will wrangle and quarrel in a private way, in order to **take away thy coat**, by force and violence, **let him have thy cloak also**; do not forbid, or hinder him from taking it; see Luk 6:29. The "coat", is the same with טלית, "the upper garment": and what we render a "cloak", answers to הלוק, "the inward garment"; by which words Sangari expresses the passage in the place before cited: and the sense is, if a wrangling, quarrelsome man, insists upon having thy coat, or upper garment, let him take the next; and rather suffer thyself to be stripped naked than engage in a litigious broil with him. This also is contrary to the above canon of the Jews (i), which says;

"If a man should pull another by his ear, or pluck off his hair, or spit, and his spittle should come to him, or העביר טליתו ממנו or "should take his coat from him", or uncover a woman's head in the street, he shall pay four hundred "zuzim", and all this is according to his dignity; says R. Akiba; even the poor in Israel, they consider them as if they were noblemen, who are fallen from their estates, for they are the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

(i) Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6.

Mat 5:41 - And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile,.... The word ἀγγαρευσει, rendered "compel", is generally said to be of Persic original; the "Angari", among the Persians, were the king's messengers, or those who rode post, and were maintained at the king's expenses; and had power to take horses, and other carriages, and even men, into their service, by force, when they had occasion for them: hence the word is used to force, or compel persons to do this or the other thing; the word אנגריא is often to be met with in the Jewish writings, and is in them expounded to be (k), the taking of anything for the service of the king. David de Pomis renders it by עול, "a yoke" (l); meaning, any servile work, which such, who were pressed into the king's service, were obliged unto. And (m) עשה אנגריא is used to compel persons to go along with others, to do any service; in which sense it is here used: and Christ advises, rather than to contend and quarrel with such a person, that obliges to go with him a mile, to

go with him twain: his meaning is, not to dispute such a matter, though it may be somewhat laborious and disagreeable, but comply, for the sake of peace. The Jews (n), in their blasphemous book of the birth of Christ, own that he gave advice in such words as these, when they introduce Peter thus speaking of him.

"He, that is, Jesus, hath warned and commanded you to do no more evil to a Jew; but if a Jew should say to a Nazarene, go with me one mile, he shall go with him two miles; and if a Jew shall smite him on the left cheek, he shall turn to him also the right."

Can a Jew find fault with this advice?

(k) Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 6. sect. 3. (l) Tzemach David, fol. 8. 4. (m) Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rabb. p. 131, 132. (n) Toldos Jesu, p 22.

Mat 5:42 - Give to him that asketh thee,.... To every man, Luk 6:30 whether Jew or Gentile; friend or foe; believer or unbeliever; a good, or a bad man; worthy or unworthy; deserving or not, that asketh alms, whether food or money; give it freely, readily, cheerfully, according to your abilities, and as the necessity of the object requires: for such rules are always supposed, and to be observed; and though all

are to be relieved, yet the circumstances of persons, and their relation to men, are to be considered, and special regard is to be had to the household of faith.

And from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away; refuse him not, turn not away from him with a frown, or without speaking to him, or with a denial; look upon him with a pleasant countenance, cheerfully lend him what he wants, whether he be a Jew, from whom it was not lawful to take usury, or a stranger, from whom it, was lawful to take it, yet take it not; lend him freely, "hoping for nothing again", Luk 6:35 which must not be understood of not hoping for the money lent, for then it would be giving, and not lending; but of not hoping for any reward for lending it: and indeed the money itself is not to be hoped for again, when the circumstances of the borrower are such, that he is not able to make a return.

BARNES NOTES

Mat 5:38-41 -

An eye for an eye ... - This command is found in Exo 21:24; Lev 24:20, and Deu 19:21. In these places it was given as a rule to regulate the decisions of judges. They were to take eye for eye, and tooth for tooth, and to inflict burning for burning. As a judicial rule it is not unjust. Christ finds no fault with the rule as applied to magistrates, and does not take upon himself to repeal it. But instead of confining it to magistrates, the Jews had extended it to private conduct, and made it the rule by which to take revenge. They considered themselves justified by this rule to inflict the same injury on others that they had received. Our Saviour remonstrates against this. He declares that the law had no reference to private revenge, that it was given only to regulate the magistrate, and that their private conduct was to be governed by different principles.

The general principle which he laid down was, that we are not to resist evil; that is, as it is in the Greek, nor to set ourselves against an evil person who is injuring us. But even this general direction is not to be pressed too strictly. Christ did not intend to teach that we are to see our families murdered, or be murdered ourselves; rather than to make resistance. The law of nature, and all laws, human and divine, justify self-defense when life is in danger. It cannot surely be the intention to teach that a father should sit by coolly and see his family butchered by savages, and not be allowed to defend them. Neither natural nor revealed religion ever did, or ever can, inculcate this doctrine. Our Saviour immediately explains what he means by it. Had he intended to refer it to a case where life is in danger, he would most surely have mentioned it. Such a case was far more worthy of statement than those which he did mention. A doctrine so unusual, so unlike all that the world had believed. and that the best people had acted on, deserved to be formally stated. Instead of doing this, however, he confines himself to smaller matters, to things of comparatively trivial interest, and says that in these we had better take wrong than to enter into strife and lawsuits. The first case is where we are smitten on the cheek. Rather than contend and fight, we should take it patiently, and turn the other cheek. This does not, however, prevent our remonstrating firmly yet mildly on the injustice of the thing, and insisting that justice should be done us, as is evident from the example of the Saviour himself. See Joh 18:23. The second evil mentioned is where a man is litigious and determined to take all the advantage the law can give him, following us with vexatious and expensive lawsuits. Our Saviour directs us, rather than to imitate him rather than to contend with a revengeful spirit in courts of justice to take a trifling injury, and yield to him. This is merely a question about property, and not about conscience and life.

Coat - The Jews wore two principal garments, an interior and an exterior. The interior, here called the "coat," or the tunic, was made commonly of linen, and encircled the whole body, extending down to the knees. Sometimes beneath this garment, as in the case of the priests, there was another garment corresponding to pantaloons. The coat, or tunic, was extended to the neck. and had long or short sleeves. Over this was commonly worn an upper garment, here called "cloak," or mantle. It was made commonly

nearly square, of different sizes, 5 or 6 cubits long and as many broad, and was wrapped around the body, and was thrown off when labor was performed. If, said Christ, an adversary wished to obtain, at law, one of these garments, rather than contend with him let him have the other also. A reference to various articles of apparel occurs frequently in the New Testament, and it is desirable to have a correct view of the ancient mode of dress in order to a proper understanding of the Bible. The Asiatic modes of dress are nearly the same from age to age, and hence it is not difficult to illustrate the passages where such a reference occurs. The ordinary dress consisted of the inner garment, the outer garment, the girdle (belt), and the sandals. In regard to the sandals, see the notes at Mat 3:11. In the girdle (belt) was the place of the pouch Mat 10:9, and to it the sword and dirk were commonly attached. Compare 2Sa 20:8. In modern times the pistols are also fastened to the belt. It is the usual place for the handkerchief, smoking materials, inkhorn, and, in general, the implements of one's profession. The belt served to confine the loose-flowing robe or outer garment to the body. It held the garment when it was tucked up, as it was usually in walking or in labor. Hence, "to gird up the loins" became a significant figurative expression, denoting readiness for service, activity, labor, and watchfulness; and "to loosen the loins" denoted the giving way to repose and indolence, 2Ki 4:29; Job 38:3; Isa 5:27; Luk 12:35; Joh 21:7.

Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile - The word translated "shall compel" is of Persian origin. Post-offices were then unknown. In order that the royal commands might be delivered with safety and despatch in different parts of the empire, Cyrus stationed horsemen at proper intervals on all the great public highways. One of those delivered the message to another, and intelligence was thus rapidly and safely communicated. These heralds were permitted to compel any person, or to press any horse, boat, ship, or other vehicle that they might need for the quick transmission of the king's commandments. It was to this custom that our Saviour refers. Rather, says he, than resist a public authority requiring your attendance and aid for a certain distance, go peaceably twice the distance.

A mile - A Roman mile was 1,000 paces.

Twain - Two.

Mat 5:42 -

Give to him that asketh thee - This is the general rule. It is better to give sometimes to an undeserving person than to turn away one who is really in need. It is good to be in the habit of giving. At the same time, the rule must be interpreted so as to be consistent with our duty to our families 1Ti 5:8 and with other objects of justice and charity. It is seldom, perhaps never, good to give to a person who is able to work, 2Th 3:10. To give to such is to encourage laziness, and to support the idle at the expense of the industrious. If such a one is indeed hungry, feed him; if he needs anything further, give him employment. If a widow, an orphan, a man of misfortune, or an infirmed man, lame, or sick, is at your door, never send any of them away empty. See Heb 13:2; Mat 25:35-45. So this is true of a poor and needy friend that wishes to borrow. We are not to turn away or deny him. This deserves, however, some limitation. It must be done in consistency with other duties. To lend to every worthless man would be to throw away our property, encourage laziness and crime, and ruin our own families. It should be done consistently with every other obligation, and of this everyone is to be the judge. Perhaps our Saviour meant to teach that where there was a deserving friend or brother in need, we should lend to him without usury, and without standing much about the security.

JAMIESON, FAUCET, AND BROWN COMMENTARY

Mat 5:39 -

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also — Our Lord's own meek, yet dignified bearing, when smitten rudely on the cheek (Joh 18:22, Joh 18:23), and *not* literally presenting the other, is the best comment on these words. It is

the preparedness, after one indignity, not to invite but to submit meekly to another, without retaliation, which this strong language is meant to convey.

Mat 5:40 -

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat — the inner garment; in pledge for a debt (Exo 22:26, Exo 22:27).

let him have thy cloak also — the outer and more costly garment. This overcoat was not allowed to be retained over night as a pledge from the poor because they used it for a bed covering.

Mat 5:41 -

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain — an allusion, probably, to the practice of the Romans and some Eastern nations, who, when government dispatches had to be forwarded, obliged the people not only to furnish horses and carriages, but to give personal attendance, often at great inconvenience, when required. But the thing here demanded is a readiness to submit to unreasonable demands of whatever kind, rather than raise quarrels, with all the evils resulting from them. What follows is a beautiful extension of this precept.

Mat 5:42 -

Give to him that asketh thee — The sense of *unreasonable* asking is here implied (compare Luk 6:30) **and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away** — Though the word signifies classically “to have money lent to one on security,” or “with interest,” yet as this was not the original sense of the word, and as usury was forbidden among the Jews (Exo 22:25, etc.), it is doubtless simple borrowing which our Lord here means, as indeed the whole strain of the exhortation implies. This shows that such counsels as “Owe no man anything” (Rom 13:8), are not to be taken absolutely; else the Scripture commendations of the righteous for “lending” to his necessitous brother (Psa 37:36; Psa 112:5; Luk 6:37) would have no application.

turn not thou away — a graphic expression of unfeeling refusal to relieve a brother in extremity.

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LESSON # 2

Luke 6:30-36

I. In the context, there is an abbreviated listing of the beatitudes (vss. 20-23) followed by an address on love (vss. 27-38).

II. DECLARATION OF CONDUCT vss. 27-28

- A. Love your enemies.
- B. Do good to them that hate you.
- C. Bless them which curse you.
- D. Pray for them which despitefully use you.
- E. These thoughts are reflected in Matthew 5:43-48 wherein there is a contrast between *what has been said* and *what Jesus is saying*.
 - 1. The letter of the Law speaks of hating your enemy, (vs. 43). cf. Lev. 19:17-18
 - 2. The spirit of the Law (Jesus' new direction) says to love them, (vs. 44).
~ love, bless, do good, pray (*above*)
 - 3. Our conduct indicates our Christianity, vs. 45a.
 - 4. God Himself does good to those who are evil and blesses the unjust, (vs. 45b).
 - 5. A challenge to Christians, vss. 46-47.
 - 6. An exhortation to Christians, vs. 48

III. EXAMPLES OF PROPER CONDUCT vss. 29-30

~ obviously, love is the foundation for these actions

- A. Smitten with the hand ~ yield, and go the next step. [Matt. 5:39]
- B. Being sued ~ yield, and go the next step. [Matt. 5:40]
- C. Requested of... ~ yield, and go the next step. [Matt. 5:42]

“give” – didou – 2PS PRES IMPERA ACT – didomi – to give, bestow, present
[Matt. 5:42]

“asketh” – aitounti – DAT S M PRES ACT PART – aiteo – to ask, request
[Matt. 5:42]

“taketh away” – aironos – GEN S M PRES ACT PART – airo – to take up, lift; bear,
carry; take away, remove

“ask *them* not again” – ma apaitai – 2PS PRES IMPERA – apaitao – to demand, require;
to demand back

IV. THE PRINCIPLE OF PROPER CONDUCT vss. 31-36 ref.

- A. The *Golden Rule*, vs. 31.
- B. The challenge to Christians, vss. 32-34.
- C. The exhortation to Christians, vss. 35-36.

V. A PROMISE IN GIVING vs. 38

VI. OBSERVATIONS

- A. As Christians our conduct is to be rooted in love.
- B. This includes the “ye have it heard it was said,...but, I say unto you” instructions.
- C. Enter, the *Golden Rule* concept.
- D. With all this in mind, an arbitrary response is not always what is best for the “enemy” person.
- E. As far as “We might run out of resources.” is concerned, the promise of God’s provisions seems to contradict that notion.

JOHN GILL COMMENTARY

Luk 6:27 - But I say unto you which hear,.... The Ethiopic version adds "me", and the generality of interpreters understand the passage of the hearers of Christ, as distinct from the disciples, or together with them, and of the better sort of them; and of such as had ears to hear, and who heard with a desire of understanding, and of putting into practice what they heard; but I rather think it regards the hearers of the Scribes and Pharisees, then present, who had heard and received the traditions of the elders, to which the following rules of Christ are opposed; and to each of which, with others in Matthew, these words are prefixed; **ye have heard that it was said by them of old time--but I say unto you,....** Mat 5:21 with which compare this phrase, and the sense will appear to be this; to you that hear day by day, the traditions of the elders urged upon you, and the false glosses the Scribes and Pharisees put upon the word of God; in opposition to them, I say to you what follows: **love your enemies**; whereas you have heard them say, hate your enemies, keep enmity in your hearts to them, and revenge yourselves on them: **do good to them that hate you**; whereas you have heard it said, that you should only do good to your friends, and should keep anger in your bosoms to such who hate you, and do you an injury; See Gill on Mat 5:43, Mat 5:44

Luk 6:28 - Bless them that curse you;.... In common discourse, or anathematize you in their synagogues: and pray for them which despitefully use you: so Christ himself did; See Gill on Mat 5:44.

Luk 6:29 - And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek,.... The right cheek, offer also the other; the left cheek, by turning it to him, that he may smite that likewise, if he thinks fit: by which proverbial expression, Christ teaches patience in bearing injuries and affronts, and not to seek private revenge; but rather, suffer more, than indulge such a temper; and for the same purpose is what follows urged: **and him that taketh away thy cloak**, forbid not to take thy coat also: the phrase is inverted in Matthew; See Gill on Mat 5:39. See Gill on Mat 5:40.

(g) Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. (h) Sepher Cosri, Orat. 1. Sign. 113. fol. 56. 1.

Luk 6:30 - And give to every man that asketh,.... See Gill on [Mat 5:42](#).

And of him that taketh away thy goods; not by force, but by consent, having either lent them, or sold them to him: for if they were taken away by force, the person so taking them was to be deemed a thief and a robber, and to be treated as such; but one that takes them by agreement, and is not able to make a return of them, or to give a valuable consideration for them, of such an one ask them not again: do not exact or demand them, but give him a release, as the law requires, in [Deu 15:2](#) which seems to be respected here; and where the same word is used by the Septuagint, as here.

Luk 6:31 - And as ye would that men should do to you,.... In matters of justice and beneficence were they in your case, and you in theirs; **do ye also to them likewise:** a golden rule this, agreeably to the light of nature, and divine revelation, and is the sum and substance of the law and prophets; See Gill on [Mat 7:12](#).

Luk 6:32 - For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye?.... Or, "what grace have ye?" this is no fruit, nor evidence of grace, nor any exercise of the true grace of love; nor is it any favour conferred upon the object loved, which deserves the respect shown, nor can any reward be expected for such treatment: and thus it is expressed in Matthew, "what reward have ye?" and the Arabic version renders it so here: **for sinners also love those who love them:** men that are destitute of the grace of God, profligate sinners, even the worst of them, such as publicans, do this; See Gill on [Mat 5:46](#).

Luk 6:33 - And if ye do good to them which do good to you,.... As one good turn deserves another: **what thank have ye?** what grace or goodness is there in such an action? what glory or merit is there in it? **for sinners also do even the same:** wherefore no man should conclude himself a righteous man, or better than sinners, on such an account: this is to be found among the worst of men, and is natural to them, unless they are brutes indeed, to be kind to such as are kind to them. And yet, this was the whole of the doctrine of the Jews about doing good to men: for so they say (u),

"an Israelite is obliged to do good to an Israelite his companion, and to lend without usury: this is kindness and goodness, and a greater good it is than a gift; for many men are ashamed to take a gift, and are not ashamed to take a loan: but not so an Israelite to a Gentile; for he is not bound to do good, or show kindness to him, or to lend him his money freely; for many of them hate the Israelites; but it must be owned, that if a Gentile does a kindness, or good, to an Israelite; the Israelite is also bound to show kindness to him, and do him good."

In direct opposition to such narrow sentiments does our Lord deliver himself in this, and the following verses.

(u) Kimchi in Psal. xv. apud Huls. Theolog. Jud. par. 1. p. 420.

Luk 6:34 - And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive,.... The same again, as from their brethren the Jews; or usury, as from the Gentiles: **what thank have ye?** and yet they looked upon this, in the first instance of it, as a very great kindness, and act of goodness, as appears from the above citation: **for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again;** or "what is equal", and answerable to what they have lent them; that is, the same, or what is equivalent to it.

Luk 6:35 - But love ye your enemies,.... As before urged in [Luk 6:27](#) **and do good and lend;** not to your friends only, but to your enemies; **hoping for nothing again;** either principal or interest,

despairing of seeing either; lending to such persons, from whom, in all appearance, it is never to be expected again. The Persic version renders it, "that ye may not cause any to despair": and the Syriac version, "that ye may not cut off", or "cause to cease the hope of men"; and the Arabic version, "that ye do not deceive the hope of any" that is, by sending such away, without lending to them, who come big with expectations of succeeding: **and your reward shall be great:** God will bless you in your worldly substance here, and will not forget your beneficence hereafter: **and ye shall be the children of the Highest:** that is of God; one of whose names is עליון "the Most High"; Psa 82:6 the meaning is, that such who from principles of grace, and with right views do such acts of kindness and beneficence to their fellow creatures and Christians, shall be, made manifest, and declared to be the children of God; since they will appear to be born of him, and made partakers of the divine nature, and bear a resemblance to him, by their imitating him: **for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil;** by causing his sun to rise, and his rain to fall on them, as on the righteous and the good; for as Jews (w) observe,

"there is no difference with him, whether on the right hand or the left; for he is gracious, and does good, even to the ungodly."

And elsewhere they say (x), that

"he does good, and feeds the righteous and the ungodly."

(w) R. Abraham ben Dior in Sepher Jetzira, p. 19. (x) Zohar in Exod. fol. 69. 2, 3.

Luk 6:36 - Be ye therefore merciful,.... Tenderhearted, kind, beneficent to all men, friends and foes: **as your Father also is merciful;** that is your Father which is in heaven; who is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works: nothing is more common in Zohar (y), and the Talmud (z) than to express the Divine Being by no other name, than "the Merciful"; רחמנא אמר, "the Merciful said" so, and so; that is, God: and so the Arabians generally begin their books and chapters with these words, "in the name of God, exceeding merciful", or "the merciful commiserator": a saying much like to this in the text, is the Targum of Jonathan, on Lev 22:28.

"O my people, the children of "Israel, as your father", רחמן, "is merciful" in heaven, so be ye merciful on earth."

(y) Zohar in Lev. fol. 2. 2. & 9. 4. & 20. 1. & 22. 1. (z) T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 15. 2.

BARNES NOTES

Luk 6:27, Luk 6:28

See Mat 5:44-45.

Mat 5:44 -

Love your enemies - There are two kinds of love, involving the same general feeling, or springing from the same fountain of good-will to all mankind, but differing so far as to admit of separation in idea. The one is that feeling by which we approve of the conduct of another, commonly called the love of complacency; the other, that by which we wish well to the person of another, though we cannot approve his conduct. This is the love of benevolence, and this love we are to bear toward our enemies. It is impossible to love the conduct of a person who curses and reviles us, who injures our person or property, or who violates all the laws of God; but, though we may hate his conduct, and suffer keenly when we are affected by it, yet we may still wish well to the person; we may pity his madness and folly; we may speak kindly of him and to him; we may return good for evil; we may aid him in the time of

trial; we may seek to do him good here and to promote his eternal welfare hereafter, Rom 12:17-20. This seems to be what is meant by loving our enemies; and this is a special law of Christianity, and the highest possible test of piety, and probably the most difficult of all duties to be performed. Bless them that curse you - The word "bless" here means to "speak well of" or "speak well to:" - not to curse again or to slander, but to speak of those things which we can commend in an enemy; or, if there is nothing that we can commend, to say nothing about him. The word "bless," spoken of God, means to regard with favor or to confer benefits, as when God is said to bless his people. When we speak of our "blessing God," it means to praise Him or give thanks to Him. When we speak of blessing people, it "unites" the two meanings, and signifies to confer favor, to thank, or to speak well of. Despitefully use you - The word thus translated means, first, to injure by prosecution in law; then, wantonly and unjustly to accuse, and to injure in any way. This seems to be its meaning here. Persecute - See the notes at Mat 5:10.

Mat 5:45 -

That ye may be the children of your Father - In Greek, the sons of your Father. The word "son" has a variety of significations. See the notes at Mat 1:1. Christians are called the "sons" or "children" of God in several of these senses: as his offspring; as adopted; as his disciples; as imitators of Him. In this passage the word is applied to them because, in doing good to enemies, they resemble God. He makes His sun to rise upon the evil and good, and sends rain, without distinction, on the just and unjust. So His people should show that they imitate or resemble Him, or that they possess His spirit, by doing good in a similar way.

Luk 6:29

See Mat 5:39-40. (above)

Luk 6:30

See Mat 5:42. (see lesson # 1)

Luk 6:31

See Mat 7:12.

Mat 7:12 -

All things whatsoever ... - This command has been usually called the "Saviour's golden rule," a name given to it on account of its great value. All that you "expect" or "desire" of others in similar circumstances, do to them. Act not from selfishness or injustice, but put yourself in the place of the other, and ask what you would expect of him. This would make you impartial, candid, and just. It would destroy avarice, envy, treachery, unkindness, slander, theft, adultery, and murder. It has been well said that this law is what the balance-wheel is to machinery. It would prevent all irregularity of movement in the moral world, as that does in a steam-engine. It is easily applied, its justice is seen by all people, and all must acknowledge its force and value.

This is the law and the prophets - That is, this is the sum or substance of the Old Testament. It is nowhere found in so many words, but it is a summary expression of all that the law required. The sentiment was in use among the Jews. Hillel, an ancient Rabbi, said to a man who wished to become a proselyte, and who asked him to teach him the whole law, "Whatever is hateful to you, do not do to another." Something of the same sentiment was found among the ancient Greeks and Romans, and is found in the writings of Confucius.

Luk 6:32-36

See Mat 5:46-48.

Mat 5:46 -

What reward have ye? - The word "reward" seems to be used in the sense of "deserving of praise." If you only love those that love you, you are selfish; it is not genuine love for the "character," but love for

the “benefit,” and you deserve no commendation. The very “publicans” would do the same. The publicans - The publicans were tax-gatherers. Judea was a province of the Roman empire. The Jews bore this foreign yoke with great impatience, and paid their taxes with great reluctance. It happened, therefore, that those who were appointed to collect taxes were objects of great detestation. They were, besides, people who would be supposed to execute their office at all hazards; men who were willing to engage in an odious and hated employment; people often of abandoned character, oppressive in their exactions, and dissolute in their lives. By the Jews they were associated in character with thieves and adulterers; with the profane and the dissolute. Christ says that even these wretched people would love their benefactors.

Mat 5:47 -

And if you salute your brethren ... - The word “salute” here means to show the customary tokens of civility, or to treat with the common marks of friendship. See the notes at Luk 10:4. The Saviour says that the worst men, the very publicans, would do this. Christians should do more; they should show that they have a different spirit; they should treat their “enemies” as well as wicked people do their “friends.” This should be done:

1. Because it is “right;” it is the only really amiable spirit; and,
2. We should show that religion is not selfish, and is superior to all other principles of action.

Mat 5:48 -

Be ye therefore perfect ... - The Saviour concludes this part of the discourse by commanding his disciples to be “perfect.” This word commonly means “finished, complete, pure, holy.” Originally, it is applied to a piece of mechanism, as a machine that is complete in its parts. Applied to people, it refers to completeness of parts, or perfection, where no part is defective or wanting. Thus, Job Job 1:1 is said to be “perfect;” that is, not holy as God, or “sinless” - for fault is afterward found with him Job 9:20; Job 42:6; but his piety was “proportionate” - had a completeness of parts was consistent and regular. He exhibited his religion as a prince, a father, an individual, a benefactor of the poor. He was not merely a pious man in one place, but uniformly. He was consistent everywhere. See the notes at that passage. This is the meaning in Matthew. Be not religious merely in loving your friends and neighbors, but let your piety be shown in loving your enemies; imitate God; let your piety be “complete, proportionate, regular.” This every Christian may be; this every Christian must be.

JAMIESON, FAUCET, AND BROWN COMMENTARY

Luk 6:27-36

(See on Mat 5:44-48; see on Mat 7:12; and see on Mat 14:12-14 [not included here].)

Mat 5:44 -

But I say unto you, Love your enemies — The word here used denotes *moral* love, as distinguished from the other word, which expresses *personal* affection. Usually, the former denotes “complacency in the character” of the person loved; but here it denotes the benignant, compassionate outgoings of desire for another’s good.

bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you — The best commentary on these matchless counsels is the bright example of Him who gave them. (See 1Pe 2:21-24; and compare Rom 12:20, Rom 12:21; 1Co 4:12; 1Pe 3:9). But though such precepts were never before expressed - perhaps not even conceived - with such breadth, precision, and sharpness as here, our Lord is here only the incomparable Interpreter of the law in force from the beginning; and this is the only satisfactory view of the entire strain of this discourse.

Mat 5:45 -

That ye may be the children — sons.

of your Father which is in heaven — The meaning is, “that ye may show yourselves to be such by *resembling* Him” (compare Mat 5:9; Eph 5:1).

for he maketh his sun — “your Father’s sun.” Well might Bengel exclaim, “Magnificent appellation!” to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust — rather, (without the article) “on evil and good, and on just and unjust.” When we find God’s own procedure held up for imitation in the law, and much more in the prophets (Lev 19:2; Lev 20:26; and compare 1Pe 1:15, 1Pe 1:16), we may see that the principle of this surprising verse was nothing new: but the form of it certainly is that of One who spake as never man spake.

Mat 5:46 -

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? —

The publicans, as collectors of taxes due to the Roman government, were ever on this account obnoxious to the Jews, who sat uneasy under a foreign yoke, and disliked whatever brought this unpleasantly before them. But the extortion practiced by this class made them hateful to the community, who in their current speech ranked them with “harlots.” Nor does our Lord scruple to speak of them as others did, which we may be sure He never would have done if it had been calumnious. The meaning, then, is, “In loving those who love you, there is no evidence of superior principle; the worst of men will do this: even a publican will go that length.”

Mat 5:47 -

And if ye salute your brethren only — of the same nation and religion with yourselves.

what do ye more *than others*? — what do ye uncommon or extraordinary? that is, wherein do ye *excel*? do not even the publicans so? — The true reading here appears to be, “Do not even the heathens the same?” Compare Mat 18:17, where the excommunicated person is said to be “as an heathen man and a publican.”

Mat 5:48 -

Be ye therefore — rather, “Ye shall therefore be,” or “Ye are therefore to be,” as My disciples and in My kingdom. **perfect** — or complete. Manifestly, our Lord here speaks, not of *degrees* of excellence, but of the *kind* of excellence which was to distinguish His disciples and characterize His kingdom. When therefore He adds, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect — He refers to that full-orbed glorious completeness which is in the great Divine Model, “their Father which is in heaven.”

Mat 7:12 -

Golden Rule.

Therefore — to say all in one word.

all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them — the same thing and in the same way.

for this is the law and the prophets — “This is the substance of all relative duty; all Scripture in a nutshell.” Incomparable summary! How well called “the royal law!” (Jam 2:8; compare Rom 13:9). It is true that similar maxims are found floating in the writings of the cultivated Greeks and Romans, and naturally enough in the Rabbinical writings. But so expressed as it is here - in immediate connection with, and as the sum of *such* duties as has been just enjoined, and such principles as had been before taught - it is to be found nowhere else. And the best commentary upon this fact is, that never till our Lord came down thus to teach did men effectually and widely exemplify it in their practice. The precise sense of the maxim is best referred to common sense. It is not, of course, what - in our wayward, capricious, gasping moods - we should *wish* that men would do to us, that we are to hold ourselves bound to do to them; but only what - in the exercise of an impartial judgment, and putting ourselves in their place - we consider it reasonable that they should do to us, that we are to do to them.

BENEVOLENCE STUDY

by Pastor R. Douglas Meadows

LESSON # 3

I John 3:16-18

I. Context:

John is drawing a distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil (vs. 10f). Evidence of the unsaved is the lack of righteousness and the absence of love (vs. 10). The truth of Christianity is love one for another (vs. 11 cf. Jn. 15:12). He gives a negative example of Cain who killed Abel (vs. 12). A quick application which ensues is that we should not be surprised if the world hates us (vs. 13).

Continuing on and speaking in contrast to the world, evidence of true Christianity is our love for the brethren (vs. 14). He that loves not abides in death (vs. 14b). Whoever hates is a murderer (vs. 15 cf. Matt. 5:21-22; I Jn. 4:20). So, how is it we know God loves us? Because Jesus died for us (vs. 16a). Therefore, Christians should die for the brethren (vs. 16b). Logically, regarding a lesser thing, the Christian demonstrates love by giving (vs. 17). The exhortation then, don't just *say* but *do* (vs. 18).

II. THE PRIME EXAMPLE IS FIRST vs. 16a

- A. God loved the unlovely, unloving, and unlovable.
- B. His love motivated Him to action. cf. 4:9-11; Rom. 5:8
- C. This was an extreme sacrifice. cf. Jn. 15:13

III. THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE vs. 16b

- A. The greatest example leads to the greatest action.
- B. The highest example leads to the highest motivation. cf. 4:11; also, 3:14

IV. WHAT DO OUR ACTIONS INDICATE? vs. 17

- A. Resource is Available. "hath this world's goods"
- B. Recognition of Affliction.
- C. Refusal of Assistance.

"shutteth" – kleisa – 3PS 1AOR SUBJ ACT – kleio – to close, shut; to be hard-hearted

"bowels" – splanchna – NOM & ACC PL – splanchnon – the chief intestines, viscera; the bowels; *met.* the heart, the affections of the heart

- D. Reason for Affection?

V. THE EXHORTATION IS TO LOVE vs. 18

- A. The instruction is to the Christian. "my little children"

B. Love is automatically assumed.

C. Love is more than in...

“word” – *logo* – DAT SING – *logos* – *lego* – a word, a thing uttered; speech, talk

“tongue” – *glossa* – DAT SING – *glossa* – the tongue; *met.* speech, talk, language

D. Love results in action.

“deed” – *ergo* – DAT SING – *ergon* – anything done or to be done; a deed, work, or action

E. Love has a qualifier.

“truth” – *alatheias* – DAT SING – *alatheia* – truth, verity; veracity

VI. OBSERVATIONS

A. There is an obligation which a Christian has toward the brethren, even to the surrender of his own life.

B. This obligation would extend to our neighbor (all men). See, Matt. 5:46-48; Lk. 10:25-37.

C. If we are commanded the extreme, we ought to be willing to do the less.

1. This includes the general needs of life, i.e. food, shelter, clothing, etc.
2. When we become aware we are responsible to give assistance.
3. God's love will generate the compassionate toward the less fortunate.
4. There is a statement of having resources but without qualification.
5. The qualifier is a “need” not a wish, want, or desire.

D. To not help when help truly ought to be given, is to harden a heart against the Spirit of God and in opposition to the love of God, and demonstrates a lack of God's love in him.
~ *our problem arises in determining the proper time to help*

E. Genuine love will result in action.

JOHN GILL COMMENTARY

1Jn 3:16 - Hereby perceive we the love of God,.... The phrase "of God" is not in the Oriental versions, nor in the Greek copies, but is in the Complutensian edition, and in the Vulgate Latin version, and is favoured by the Syriac version, which reads, "by this we know his love to us"; and so the Ethiopic version, "by this we know his love". That is, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly and properly God, the great God, the mighty God, the true God, and God over all, blessed for ever. His love is manifested to his people, and perceived by them in various instances; but in nothing is it more clearly seen than in the following one: **because he laid down his life for us:** of the life of Christ, and his laying it down in the room of his people; see Gill on [John 15:13](#), which shows his love, his free grace and favour; for this arose not from any merit or worth in the persons he died for; not from their love, loveliness, or duty, but from his rich mercy, and the great love wherewith he loved them; and which,

though it cannot be equalled, should be imitated: **and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren:** not in such sense, or for such ends and purposes, as Christ laid down his life for us; for no man, as by giving his money, so by laying down his life, can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him: but the meaning is, that saints ought to risk their lives, and expose themselves to dangers, for the sake of their brethren, when they are called to it, and the case requires it: as Priscilla and Aquila laid down their necks, or ventured their lives for the Apostle Paul, Rom 16:3; and they should also, when called unto it, freely lay down their lives in the cause of Christ, and for the sake of his Gospel, for the gaining of souls to Christ, and for the confirming of the faith of the brethren in him, as the apostles of Christ, and the martyrs of Jesus, have done; this is an argument for brotherly love, in the highest instance of it, taken from the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, than which nothing is more forcible, or can lay a greater obligation on the saints.

1Jn 3:17 - But whoso hath this world's good,.... The possessions of this world, worldly substance, the temporal good things of it; for there are some things in it, which are honestly, pleasantly, and profitably good, when used lawfully, and not abused, otherwise they are to the owner's hurt: or "the living of this world"; that which the men of the world give up themselves to, are bent upon, and pursue after; or on which men live, and by which life is maintained, and preserved, and made comfortable in the present state of things; such as meat, drink, apparel, money, houses, lands, &c. The Ethiopic version renders it, "he that hath the government of this world"; as if it pointed at a person that is in some high office of worldly honour and profit, and is both great and rich; but the words are not to be restrained to such an one only, but refer to any man that has any share of the outward enjoyments of life; that has not only a competency for himself and family, but something to spare, and especially that has an affluence of worldly substance; but of him that has not, it is not required; for what a man distributes ought to be his own, and not another's, and in proportion to what he has, or according to his ability: **and seeth his brother have need;** meaning, not merely a brother in that strict and natural relation, or bond of consanguinity; though such an one in distress ought to be, in the first place, regarded, for no man should hide himself from, overlook and neglect his own flesh and blood; but any, and every man, "his neighbour", as the Ethiopic version reads, whom he ought to love as himself; and especially a brother in a spiritual relation, or one that is of the household of faith: if he has need; that is, is naked and destitute of daily food, has not the common supplies of life, and what nature requires; and also, whose circumstances are low and mean, though not reduced to the utmost extremity; and if he sees him in this distress with his own eyes, or if he knows it, hears of it, and is made acquainted with it, otherwise he cannot be blameworthy for not relieving him. **And shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him;** hardens his heart, turns away his eyes, and shuts his hand; has no tenderness in him for, nor sympathy with his distressed brother, nor gives him any succour: and this shows, that when relief is given, it should be not in a morose and churlish manner, with reflection and reproach, but with affection and pity; and where there is neither one nor the other, **how dwelleth the love of God in him?** neither the love with which God loves men; for if this was shed abroad in him, and had a place, and dwelt in him, and he was properly affected with it, it would warm his heart, and loosen his affections, and cause his bowels to move to his poor brother: nor the love with which God is loved; for if he does not love his brother whom he sees in distress, how should he love the invisible God? 1Jo 4:20; nor that love which God requires of him, which is to love his neighbour as himself.

1Jn 3:18 - My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue,.... Which though it holds good of love to God, and to Jesus Christ, yet here is to be understood of love to the brethren, as the context shows; and so the Syriac version reads, "let us not love one another in word", &c. that is, without the heart, or with a double heart; speaking one thing with the lip, and designing another thing in the heart; speaking peaceably with the mouth, and with the heart laying wait; or we should not love in this manner "only"; and so the Arabic version of De Dieu adds. It is very lawful, and right to express our love to one another, and to all men in words, to give good words, and use courteous language, and speak in a kind, tender, and affectionate manner, and especially to persons in distress; but this should not be

all, it will be of no avail to say to such, be warmed and filled, and give them nothing but these good words, nothing to warm and fill them with; see [Jam 2:15](#); **but in deed and in truth**; for true love is a laborious and operative grace, hence we read of the work and labour of love; it shows itself by the saints serving one another, in spirituals; as by bearing one another's burdens, forbearing with, and forgiving one another, praying for each other, and building up one another on their most holy faith; exhorting each other to the duties of religion, and not suffering sins upon one another, but admonish in love, and restore with meekness; and in temporals, distributing to the necessities of the saints, ministering: to them of their worldly substance, and supplying their daily wants: and this is loving "in deed", or "in work"; this is actual love, love in fact, and what is apparent and evident: and it is "in truth", when it is in reality, and not in show only; and when it is cordially and heartily done, with cheerfulness, and without grudging.

BARNE'S NOTES

1Jn 3:16 -

Hereby perceive we the love of God - The words "of God" are not in the original, and should not have been introduced into the translation, though they are found in the Latin Vulgate, and in the Genevan versions, and in one manuscript. They would naturally convey the idea that "God" laid down his life for us; or that God himself, in his divine nature, suffered. But this idea is not expressed in this passage as it is in the original, and of course no argument can be derived from it either to prove that Christ is God, or that the divine nature is capable of suffering. The original is much more expressive and emphatic than it is with this addition: "By this we know love;" that is, we know what true love is; we see a most affecting and striking illustration of its nature. "Love itself" - its real nature, its power, its sacrifices, its influences - was seen in its highest form, when the Son of God gave himself to die on a cross. For an illustration of the sentiment, see the notes at [Joh 3:16](#); [Joh 15:13](#).

Because he laid down his life for us - There can be no doubt that the Saviour is here referred to, though his name is not mentioned particularly. There are several instances in the New Testament where he is mentioned under the general appellation "he," as one who was well known, and about whom the writers were accustomed to speak.

And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren - For the good of our fellow Christians, if it be necessary. That is, circumstances may occur where it would be proper to do it, and we ought always to be ready to do it. The spirit which led the Saviour to sacrifice his life for the good of the church, should lead us to do the same thing for our brethren if circumstances should require it. That this is a correct principle no one can doubt; for:

- (1) The Saviour did it, and we are bound to imitate his example, and to possess his spirit;
- (2) The prophets, apostles, and martyrs did it, laying down their lives in the cause of truth, and for the good of the church and the world; and,
- (3) It has always been held that it is right and proper, in certain circumstances, for a man to lay down his life for the good of others.

So we speak of the patriot who sacrifices his life for the good of his country; so we feel in the case of a shipwreck, that it may be the duty of a captain to sacrifice his life for the good of his passengers and crew; so in case of a pestilential disease, a physician should not regard his own life, if he may save others; and so we always hold the man up to honor who is willing to jeopard his own life on noble principles of self-denial for the good of his fellow-men. In what cases this should occur the apostle does not state; but the general principle would seem to be, that it is to be done when a greater good would result from our self-sacrifice than from carefully guarding our own lives. Thus, in the case of a patriot, his death, in the circumstances, might be of greater value to his country than his life would be; or, his exposing himself to death would be a greater service to his country, than if that should not be done.

Thus, the Saviour laid down his life for the good of mankind; thus the apostles exposed their lives to constant peril in extending the principles of religion; and thus the martyrs surrendered their lives in the cause of the church and of truth. In like manner, we ought to be ready to hazard our lives, and even to lay them down, if in that way we may promote the cause of truth, and the salvation of sinners, or serve our Christian brethren. In what way this injunction was understood by the primitive Christians, may be perceived from what the world is reported to have said of them, "Behold, how they love one another; they are ready to die for one another." - Tertullian, *Apol.* c. 39. So Eusebius (*Ecccl. His.* vii. 22) says of Christians, that "in a time of plague they visited one another, and not only hazarded their lives, but actually lost them in their zeal to preserve the lives of others." We are not indeed to throw away our lives; we are not to expose them in a rash, reckless, imprudent manner; but when, in the discharge of duty, we are placed in a situation where life is exposed to danger, we are not to shrink from the duty, or to run away from it. Perhaps the following would embrace the principal instances of the duty here enjoined by the apostle:

- (1) We ought to have such love for the church that we should be willing to die for it, as patriot is willing to die for his country.
- (2) We ought to have such love for Christians as to be willing to jeopard our lives to aid them - as in case of a pestilence or plague, or when they are in danger by fire, or flood, or foes.
- (3) We ought to have such love for the truth as to be willing to sacrifice our lives rather than deny it.
- (4) We ought to have such love for the cause of our Master as to be willing to cross oceans, and snows, and sands; to visit distant and barbarous regions, though at imminent risk of our lives, and though with the prospect that we shall never see our country again.
- (5) We ought to have such love for the church that we shall engage heartily and constantly in services of labor and self-sacrifice on its account, until, our work being done, exhausted nature shall sink to rest in the grave. In one word, we should regard ourselves as devoted to the service of the Redeemer, living or dying to be found engaged in his cause. If a case should actually occur where the question would arise whether a man would abandon his Christian brother or die, he ought not to hesitate; in all cases he should regard his life as consecrated to the cause of Sion and its friends. Once, in the times of primitive piety, there was much of this spirit in the world; how little, it is to be feared, does it prevail now!

1Jn 3:17 -

But whoso hath this world's good - Has property - called "this world's good," or a good pertaining to this world, because it is of value to us only as it meets our wants this side of the grave; and perhaps also because it is sought supremely by the people of the world. The general meaning of this verse, in connection with the previous verse, is, that if we ought to be willing to lay down our lives for others, we ought to be willing to make those comparatively smaller sacrifices which are necessary to relieve them in their distresses; and that if we are unwilling to do this, we can have no evidence that the love of God dwells in us.

And seeth his brother have need - Need of food, of raiment, of shelter; or sick, and poor, and unable to provide for his own wants and those of his family.

And shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him - The bowels, or "upper viscera," embracing the heart, and the region of the chest generally, are in the Scriptures represented as the seat of mercy, piety, and compassion, because when the mind feels compassion it is that part which is affected. Compare the notes at [Isa 16:11](#).

How dwelleth the love of God in him? - How can a man love God who does not love those who bear his image? See the notes at [1Jo 4:20](#). On the general sentiment here, see the notes at [Jam 2:14-16](#). The meaning is plain, that we cannot have evidence of piety unless we are ready to do good to others, especially to our Christian brethren. See the [Mat 25:45](#) note; [Gal 6:10](#) note.

1Jn 3:18 -

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue - By mere profession; by merely saying that we love each other. See [1Pe 1:22](#).

But in deed and in truth - In such acts as shall show that our professed love is sincere and real. Let us do the deed of love, whether anything is said about it or not. See the notes at [Mat 6:3](#).

JAMIESON, FAUCET, AND BROWN COMMENTARY

1Jn 3:16 -

What true *love to the brethren* is, illustrated by the love of Christ to us.

Hereby — *Greek*, “Herein.”

the love of God - The words “of God” are not in the original. Translate, “We arrive at the knowledge of love”; we apprehend what true love is.

he — Christ.

and we — on our part, if absolutely needed for the glory of God, the good of the Church, or the salvation of a brother.

lives — Christ alone laid down His one *life* for us all; we ought to lay down our *lives* severally for the lives of the brethren; if not actually, at least virtually, by giving our time, care, labors, prayers, substance: *Non nobis, sed omnibus*. Our life ought not to be dearer to us than God’s own Son was to Him. The apostles and martyrs acted on this principle.

1Jn 3:17 -

this world’s good — literally, “livelihood” or substance. If we ought to lay down our *lives* for the brethren ([1Jo 3:16](#)), how much more ought we not to withhold our *substance*?

seeth — not merely *casually*, but deliberately *contemplates* as a spectator; *Greek*, “beholds.”

shutteth up his bowels of compassion - which had been momentarily opened by the *spectacle* of his brother’s need. The “bowels” mean the *heart*, the seat of compassion.

how — *How* is it possible that “the love of (that is, ‘to’) God dwelleth (*Greek*, ‘abideth’) in him?” Our superfluities should yield to the necessities; our comforts, and even our necessities in some measure, should yield to the extreme wants of our brethren. “Faith gives Christ to me; love flowing from faith gives me to my neighbor.”

1Jn 3:18 -

When the venerable John could no longer walk to the meetings of the Church but was borne thither by his disciples, he always uttered the same address to the Church; he reminded them of that one commandment which he had received from Christ Himself, as comprising all the rest, and forming the distinction of the new covenant, “My little children, love one another.” When the brethren present, wearied of hearing the same thing so often, asked why he always repeated the same thing, he replied, “Because it is the commandment of the Lord, and if this one thing be attained, it is enough” [Jerome].

in word — *Greek*, “with word ... with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

BENEVOLENCE STUDY

by Pastor R. Douglas Meadows

LESSON # 4

James 2:15-16

I. Context:

The concept of treating all men equal (vss. 1-7) concludes with an expression of a variation of the Golden Rule entitled the Royal Law (vss. 8-9). Therein is a statement that to have a respect of persons is to commit sin. Though such sin may not seem like much, it is still a transgression of the Law (vs. 9b). And, a sinner is a sinner (vss. 10-11). Therefore, the Christian must keep in mind that he too will be judged (vs. 12) and, as we say, “What goes around comes around.” (vs. 13). This being so, the Christian is to be careful to maintain good works; he is to be sure to **do** and just not **say** (vs. 14).

II. AN EXAMPLE IS GIVEN vss. 15-16

III. A SPIRITUAL APPLICATION IS MADE vs. 17

III. THE EXAMPLE

A. A fellow Christian has a **severe** need.

1. Without sufficient clothing.

“naked” – gumnoi – N PL M – gumnos – naked, without clothing; not covered, bare; (doesn’t have to mean stark naked – could be partially clothed)

2. Without food at all (or, of sufficient quantity / quality).

“destitute” – leipomenoi – N PL M PRES PASS PART – leipo – to leave, forsake; *pass.* to be left, deserted; *by impl.* to be destitute, deficient of

B. The Christian **speaks** well. “one of you say”

1. There is appearance of meeting the need.

2. Yet, no real action is taken.

C. The result? “what *doth it* profit?”

~ both for the one in need and for the one speaking good things

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

A. The application to the subject of benevolence is by implication only.

B. Christians do encounter severe needs.

C. Other Christians are to help.

~ in fact, to help is an evidence of genuine faith

V. OBSERVATIONS

A. There is an awareness of a fellow Christian’s need.

- B. There is no indication a request was made.
- C. The initial desire to assist is not sufficient in and of itself.
- D. Appropriate and adequate action must occur if the need is to be supplied by those who have a desire to help.
 - 1. Appropriate ~ Matt. 7:9-10
 - 2. Adequate ~ Jas. 2:16b
- E. To refuse assistance to such an obvious need is to imply the lack of genuine faith.

JOHN GILL COMMENTARY

Jas 2:15 - If a brother or sister,.... A Christian man or woman, a fellow member of a church of Christ; for this relation is to be understood in a spiritual sense, though it does not exclude such who are in this relation in a natural sense: **be naked**; or clothed in rags, or in very mean and sordid apparel, such as will neither keep them warm, nor clean and decent; for they must not be supposed to be entirely naked, but to be in a very uncomfortable and indecent garb: **and destitute of daily food**; have not food sufficient for the day; or ought to support nature with, and yield them proper refreshment and nourishment.

Jas 2:16 - And one of you say unto them,.... That is, one of the same faith, and in the same communion and church fellowship. **Depart in peace**; wishing them all prosperity and happiness, inward and outward: **be ye warmed and filled**; clothed and fed; signifying, that they wished them all the accommodations of life: **notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body**; neither clothes to wear, nor food to eat; nothing to warm their bodies, or fill their bellies: **what doth it profit?** the Ethiopic version reads, "what doth it profit them?" either the poor brother, or sister, to whom these good words are given, and nothing else; for these will neither warm them, nor fill them; or the persons themselves, that say these tidings to them: and the apostle, by this instance, shows, that as that charity which lies only in words, and in tongue, and not in deed, and in truth, is unprofitable, and good for nothing, even to them that profess it; so that faith, which a man says he has, and yet is without works, is alike unprofitable unto him.

BARNE'S NOTES

Jas 2:15-17 -

If a brother or sister be naked ... - The comparison in these verses is very obvious and striking. The sense is, that faith in itself, without the acts that correspond to it, and to which it would prompt, is as cold, and heartless, and unmeaning, and useless, as it would be to say to one who was destitute of the necessaries of life, depart in peace." In itself considered, it might seem to have something that was good; but it would answer none of the purposes of faith unless it should prompt to action. In the case of one who was hungry or naked, what he wanted was not good wishes or kind words merely, but the acts to which good wishes and kind words prompt. And so in religion, what is wanted is not merely the abstract state of mind which would be indicated by faith, but the life of goodness to which it ought to lead. Good wishes and kind words, in order to make them what they should be for the welfare of the world, should be accompanied with corresponding action. So it is with faith. It is not enough for salvation without the benevolent and holy acts to which it would prompt, any more than the good wishes and kind words of the benevolent are enough to satisfy the wants of the hungry, and to clothe the naked, without correspondent action. Faith is not and cannot be shown to be genuine, unless it is accompanied with corresponding acts; as our good wishes for the poor and needy can be shown to be genuine, when we have the means of aiding them, only by actually ministering to their necessities. In

the one case, our wishes would be shown to be unmeaning and heartless; in the other, our faith would be equally so. In regard to this passage, therefore, it may be observed:

(1) That in fact faith is of no more value, and has no more evidence of genuineness when it is unaccompanied with good works, than such empty wishes for the welfare of the poor would be when unaccompanied with the means of relieving their wants. Faith is designed to lead to good works. It is intended to produce a holy life; a life of activity in the service of the Saviour. This is its very essence; it is what it always produces when it is genuine. Religion is not designed to be a cold abstraction; it is to be a living and vivifying principle.

(2) There is a great deal of that kindness and charity in the world which is expressed by mere good wishes. If we really have not the means of relieving the poor and the needy, then the expression of a kind wish may be in itself an alleviation to their sorrows, for even sympathy in such a case is of value, and it is much to us to know that others feel for us; but if we have the means, and the object is a worthy one, then such expressions are mere mockery, and aggravate rather than soothe the feelings of the sufferer. Such wishes will neither clothe nor feed them; and they will only make deeper the sorrows which we ought to heal. But how much of this is there in the world, when the sufferer cannot but feel that all these wishes, however kindly expressed, are hollow and false, and when he cannot but feel that relief would be easy!

(3) In like manner there is much of this same kind of worthless faith in the world - faith that is dead; faith that produces no good works; faith that exerts no practical influence whatever on the life. The individual professes indeed to believe the truths of the gospel; he may be in the church of Christ; he would esteem it a gross calumny to be spoken of as an infidel; but as to any influence which his faith exerts over him, his life would be the same if he had never heard of the gospel. There is not one of the truths of religion which is bodied forth in his life; not a deed to which he is prompted by religion; not an act which could not be accounted for on the supposition that he has no true piety. In such a case, faith may with propriety be said to be dead.

Being alone - Margin, "by itself." The sense is, "being by itself:" that is, destitute of any accompanying fruits or results, it shows that it is dead. That which is alive bodies itself forth, produces effects, makes itself visible; that which is dead produces no effect, and is as if it were not.

JAMIESON, FAUCET, AND BROWN COMMENTARY

Jas 2:15 -

The *Greek* is, "But if," etc.: the "But" taking up the argument against such a one as "said he had faith, and yet had not works," which are its fruits.

a brother, etc. — a *fellow Christian*, to whom we are specially bound to give help, independent of our general obligation to help all our fellow creatures.

be — The *Greek* implies, "be found, on your access to them."

Jas 2:16 -

The habit of receiving passively sentimental impressions from sights of woe without carrying them out into active habits only hardens the heart.

one of you — James brings home the case to his hearers individually.

Depart in peace — as if all their wants were satisfied by the mere words addressed to them. The same words in the mouth of Christ, whose faith they said they had, were accompanied by efficient deeds of love.

be ... warmed — with clothing, instead of being as heretofore "naked" (Jam 2:15; Job 31:20).

filled — instead of being "destitute of food" (Mat 15:37).

what doth it profit — concluding with the same question as at the beginning, Jam 2:14. Just retribution: kind professions unaccompanied with corresponding acts, as they are of no "profit" to the needy object of them, so are of no profit to the professor himself. So faith consisting in mere profession is unacceptable to God, the object of faith, and profitless to the possessor.

BENEVOLENCE STUDY

by Pastor R. Douglas Meadows

LESSON # 5

Deuteronomy 15:7-11

I. CONTEXT

We must keep in mind that the text before us is the Law as handed down by Moses. This instruction is given to the children of Israel as a nation and as a people. Obviously, not all things in the Law are applicable to New Testament saints. Jesus Himself said that, “You have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, . . . but I say unto you” (Matthew 5:21-48). Further, later revelation may surpass earlier regulation [For example, the dietary laws are given to the Jews and gives them distinction from other nations, yet, Paul expressed that any type of food may be eaten, I Tim. 4:4. Note also, Col. 2:16.] However, do not forget that Jesus said He came to fulfill the law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17) and that Moses wrote about Him (John 5:46).

On the other hand, we can study the rules of engagement for “God’s people” and learn the premise behind them. Generally, if the instructions were good for them they would be good for us. The society may change but the social rules may remain. If adultery was wrong then, it will be wrong now; however, we wouldn’t apply capital punishment to the offenders.

Therefore, if God teaches the Jews to be benevolent, we would do well to take heed . . .

II. THE PASSAGE Deut. 15:7-11 ref.

- A. The emergence of a poor man among the Jews, (vs. 7a).
- B. The command to be benevolent, vs. 7b.
- C. The instruction on “how” to help, vs. 8.
 - 1. There is generosity. “open thine hand wide”
 - 2. There is adequate provision. “lend him sufficient”
 - 3. There is qualification. “for his need”
 - ~ he desires his need be met “in that which he wanteth”
- D. A warning is extended against evil thoughts and poor attitudes, vss. 9-10.
 - 1. Do not withhold because you won’t be making a profit.
 - 2. Rather, give, and that, with a joyful heart.
 - 3. If you do so, keep in mind that God will bless all you do.
- E. There will be perpetual opportunity to serve God by helping the poor, vs. 11.
 - 1. There will *always* be someone in need.
 - 2. They were commanded; it was not an option.
 - 3. Be generous in helping the poor brethren, but also to the poor and needy.

III. REGARDING THE YEAR OF THE JUBILEE Lev. 25:25-55

- A. Every seven years was a Sabbath year for Israel, Lev.25:4.

B. At the end of seven Sabbaths, the year of Jubilee began, Lev. 25:8-9.
~ this was a time of restoration for the people, vs. 10

C. Loans and leases were figured to / from the year of Jubilee, Lev.25:13-17.

D. Instruction of the passage:

1. The poor may sell a possession and redeem it; if not able, it would return in the year of Jubilee, (vss. 25-28).
2. Yet, if it was a property in a walled city, it would not be released, (vss. 29-31).
3. For the Levites, however, the property could always be redeemed, (vss. 32-34).
4. A command to be benevolent toward fellow Jews, vss. 35-38.
 - a. interest-free loans
 - b. assistance without gain
5. A poor brother may be “sold” as a hired servant but not treated as a slave, vss. 39-43.
See also, vss. 47-55.
6. Slaves may be had from among the heathen, (vss. 44-46).

E. Considerations:

1. There will be “the poor” among the people.
2. There is a difference of treatment between the Jewish poor and the Gentile poor.
3. Especially is seen (vs. 35) is the command to be benevolent. “thou shalt relieve him”
4. Assistance was not given for personal gain.
5. The treatment of the poor is founded upon a proper reverence of God.
“but fear thy God” (vs. 36)

IV. RELATED NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES

A. Lk. 6:34 ~ See, Lesson # 2

1. This was found within the *challenge to Christians*, (vss. 32-34).
2. Do we give with the understanding we will get it back?

B. II Co. 9:5-13

1. Context: Paul writes to the church to discuss the matter of the brethren helping out other saints (vs. 1). He knew that the believers at Corinth desired to be benevolent but they just hadn't really fulfilled that aspect of their service yet (vss. 2-4). Therefore, Paul sent messengers ahead in the effort to compel the Corinthians to be ready with their benevolence (vs. 5). Then, he taught them about proper giving (vss. 6-14), concluding with an example of encouragement in giving, i.e. Jesus (vs. 15).

2. Terms

“bounty” – eulogian – ACC S – eulogia – *pr.* good speaking; fair speech; *in N. T.* blessing, praise

“coveteousness” – pleonexian – ACC S – pleonexia – some advantage which one possesses over another; an inordinate desire of riches, covetousness

“sparingly” – pheidomenos – NOM S M PRES PART – pheidomai – to spare, be thrifty of; to spare

“bountifully” – eulogiais – DAT PL – eulogia – *above*

“purposeth” – proaireitai – 3PS PI – proaireomai – to prefer, choose; *met.* to purpose

“grudgingly” – ek_lupas – [ek ~ out of] GEN S – lupa – pain, distress; grief, sorrow

“necessity” – anagkas – GEN S – anagka – (agcho ~ to compress) necessity; constraint, compulsion; obligation of duty

“cheerful” – hilaron – ACC S M – hilaros – cheerful, not grudging

“dispersed” – edoken – 3PS 1AOR IND – didomi – to give, bestow, present

“ministereth” – epichoragon – NOM S M PRES ACT PART – epichorageo – to supply further; to super-add; to supply, furnish, give

“administration” – tas_leitourgias_tautas – GEN S – leitourgia – *pr.* a public service discharged by a citizen at his own expense; *in N. T.* a sacred ministration

“ministration” – tas_diakonias_tautas – GEN S – diakonos – one who renders service to *another*; an attendant, servant

3. General considerations:

- a. This involves meeting the needs of the saints, vs. 1a, 12a.
- b. The exhortation is to the brethren to give assistance, vs. 5.
- c. There is a *sowing and reaping principle*, vs. 6. cf. Gal. 6:7
- d. There is a promise attached to being benevolent, vss. 7-11.
- e. Benevolence not only meets the needs of others, God is glorified, vs. 12b.
- f. Benevolence demonstrates our relationship to God, vs. 13.

4. A few details:

- a. Relationship demands a greater responsibility. “saints...brethren”
- b. Assistance is counted as a *blessing*. “bounty = eulogia”
- c. Two extremes are mentioned: sparingly vs. bountifully.
- d. *Any manner* of giving has its own corresponding reaping. cf. Matt. 7:2
- e. A person is to give as his heart tells him. “purposeth”
- f. Whatever you give, do so with a joyous heart. “cheerful”
- g. God is able to bless the giver beyond financial reward. “every good work”
- h. The example in vss. 9-10 speaks of:
 - 1) God gives
 - 2) God gives to the poor
 - 3) He not only gives enough for food
 - 4) He gives enough to use for replanting
- i. The thanksgiving spoken of is on behalf of both the giver and receiver.
- j. The word “ministereth” in vs. 10 indicates more than *just enough*.
- k. The word “administration” in vs. 12 indicates a *public* duty.
- l. The word “ministration” in vs. 13 speaks of *humble service*.

C. Considerations

1. The saints are sometimes in need.
2. The brethren can only help when there is knowledge of the need.
3. Giving when God leads, plus, with the proper heart, ensures God's blessings.
~ inferred in this would be sufficient resource and not a draining of funds
4. The example in vs. 9-10 suggests that God supplies and allows for a "reinvestment" which will bring future provision and further replanting.
5. When God is thanked, He is glorified; when He is glorified, He is worshiped.
6. God gives to His people, but He will often use His children to do so, (vs. 12a).
7. A Christian's benevolence is spoken of as being "liberal" (vs. 13).

"liberal" – haplotati – DAT S – haplotas – simplicity, sincerity; liberality, *as arising from simplicity and frankness of character*

JOHN GILL COMMENTARY

Deu 15:7 - If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren,.... As there would be, according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, if they did not keep the commandments of the law, and continue therein: **within any of thy gates, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee;** a native of the land was to be preferred to a foreigner, and a brother, whether in relation or religion, to a proselyte of the gate; and the poor of a city to which a man belonged, to the poor of another city, as Jarchi observes; which he gathers from this phrase: **within any of thy gates: thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy brother;** so as not to pity his distressed case, and have no bowels of compassion for him, and feel for his want, and so as not to distribute to his necessities, and relieve him.

Deu 15:8 - But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him,.... And give him bountifully and liberally; in order to which the heart must be first opened, the affections moved, and a willing mind disposed to give generously: **and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth:** enough to answer his present exigencies, but not to cause him to abound, or to supply him with things needless and superfluous.

Deu 15:9 - Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart,.... "Or, thy heart of Belial" (f); thy worthless heart, and which is without a yoke not subjected to the law of God, as every carnal heart is; and in which Belial, Satan, the prince of this world, works effectually, and inclines to evil thoughts, afflictions, and desires, which are to be guarded against: **saying, the seventh year, the year of release, is at hand:** perhaps next year, or within a few months: **and thine eye be evil against thy brother, and thou give him nought;** being of an uncompassionate and covetous disposition, shall refuse to give or lend him anything on this consideration, because the year of release will quickly come, when, if poor and unable to pay him, he would be obliged to release his debt: **and he cry unto the Lord against thee;** go to the throne of grace, and in prayer bring a charge, and lodge a complaint of unkindness and uncharitableness: and it be a sin unto thee; the Lord shall reckon it as a sin, a very heinous one, and call to an account for it.

(f) לִבְכֹּךְ בְּלִיעֵל "corde tuo Belial", Montanus.

Deu 15:10 - Thou shalt surely give him,.... Or lend to him; though lending in such a case and circumstances, that person being extremely poor, and the year of release at hand, is the same as giving. Jarchi remarks that money must be given him, even a hundred times if he asks it; but the limitation is to what he wants, and what is sufficient for his present wants, Deu 15:8. **and thine heart shall not**

be grieved when thou givest unto him; grieved at parting with his money he has little or no hope of seeing again, grudging it to him to whom it is given; when, on the other hand, it should he given freely and cheerfully, for God loves a cheerful giver: **because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all thou putteth thine hand unto;** that is, for lending or giving largely, liberally, and cheerfully, to persons in distress; see Pro 11:24.

Deu 15:11 - For the poor shall never cease out of the land,.... There would be always such objects to exercise their charity and beneficence towards, Joh 12:8, which is no contradiction to Deu 15:4 for had they been obedient to the laws of God, they would have been so blessed that there would have been none; so the Targums; but he foresaw that they would not keep his commands, and so this would be the case, and which he foretells that they might expect it, and do their duty to them, as here directed: **therefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother;** not give sparingly, but largely, in proportion to the necessities of the poor, and according to the abilities of the lender or giver; and this must be done to a brother, one that is near in the bonds of consanguinity, and to him a man must give or lend first, as Aben Ezra observes, and then "to thy poor"; the poor of thy family, as the same writer: **and to thy needy in the land;** that are in very distressed circumstances, though not related, and particularly such as are in the same place where a man dwells; for, as the same writer remarks, the poor of thy land are to be preferred to the poor of another place,

BARNE'S NOTES

Deu 15:1-11 -

The year of release is no doubt identical with the sabbatical year of the earlier legislation (Exo 23:10 ff, and Lev 25:2 ff), the command of the older legislation being here amplified. The release was probably for the year, not total and final, and had reference only to loans lent because of poverty (compare Deu 15:4, Deu 15:7). Yet even so the law was found to be too stringent for the avarice of the people, because it was one of those which the rabbis "made of none effect by their traditions."

2Co 9:10 -

Now he that ministereth seed to the sower - This is an expression of an earnest wish. In the previous verses he had stated the promises, or had shown what we had a right to expect as a consequence of liberality. He here unites the expression of an earnest desire that they might experience this themselves. The allusion is to the act of sowing seed. The idea is, that when a man scatters seed in his field God provides him with the means of sowing again. He not only gives him a harvest to supply his needs, but he blesses him also in giving him the ability to sow again. Such was the benevolent wish of Paul. He desired not only that God would supply their returning needs, but he desired also that he would give them the ability to do good again; that he would furnish them the means of future benevolence. He acknowledges God as the source of all increase, and wishes that they may experience the results of such increase. Perhaps in this language there is an allusion to Isa 4:10; and the idea is, that it is God who furnishes by his providence the seed to the sower. In like manner he will furnish you the means of doing good.

Minister bread for your food - Furnish you with an ample supply for your needs.

Multiply your seed sown - Greatly increase your means of doing good; make the result of all your benefactions so to abound that you may have the means of doing good again, and on a larger scale, as the seed sown in the earth is so increased that the farmer may have the means of sowing more abundantly again.

And increase the fruits of your righteousness - This evidently means, the results and effects of their benevolence. The word "righteousness" here refers to their liberality; and the wish of the apostle is, that the results of their beneficence might greatly abound, that they might have the means of doing extensive good, and that they might be the means of diffusing happiness from afar.

2Co 9:11 -

Being enriched in everything ... - In all respects your riches are conferred on you for this purpose. The design of the apostle is to state to them the true reason why wealth was bestowed. It was not for the purposes of luxury and self-gratification; not to be spent in sensual enjoyment, not for parade and display; it was that it might be distributed to others in such a way as to cause thanksgiving to God. At the same time, this implies the expression of an earnest wish on the part of Paul. He did not desire that they should be rich for their own gratification or pleasure; he desired it only as the means of their doing good to others. Right feeling will desire property only as the means of promoting happiness and producing thanksgiving to God. They who truly love their children and friends will wish them to be successful in acquiring wealth only that they may have the means and the disposition to alleviate misery, and promote the happiness of all around them. No one who has true benevolence will desire that anyone in whom he feels an interest should be enriched for the purpose of living amidst luxury, and encompassing himself with the indulgences which wealth can furnish. If a man has not a disposition to do good with money, it is not true benevolence to desire that he may not possess it.

To all bountifulness - Margin, Simplicity, or liberality. The word (ἀπλότης haplotēs) means properly sincerity, candor, probity; then also simplicity, frankness, fidelity, and especially as manifesting itself in liberality; see Rom 12:8; 2Co 8:2. Here it evidently means “liberality,” and the idea is, that property is given for this purpose, in order that there may be liberality evinced in doing good to others.

Which causeth through us ... - That is, we shall so distribute your alms as to cause thanksgiving to God. The result will be that by our instrumentality, thanks will be given to the great Source and Giver of all wealth. Property should always be so employed as to produce thanksgiving. If it is made to contribute to our own support and the support of our families, it should excite thanksgiving. If it is given to others, it should be so given, if it is possible, that the recipient should be more grateful to God than to us; should feel that though we may be the honored instrument in distributing it, yet the true benefactor is God.

2Co 9:12 -

For the administration of this service - The distribution of this proof of your liberality. The word “service” here, says Doddridge, intimates that this was to be regarded not merely as an act of humanity, but religion.

The want of the saints - Of the poor Christians in Judea on whose behalf it was contributed.

But is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God - Will abound unto God in producing thanksgivings. The result will be that it will produce abundant thanksgiving in their hearts to God.

2Co 9:13 -

Whiles by the experiment ... - Or rather, by the experience of this ministration; the proof (δοκιμῆς dokimēs), the evidence here furnished of your liberality. They shall in this ministration have experience or proof of your Christian principle.

They glorify God - They will praise God as the source of your liberality, as having given you the means of being liberal, and having inclined your hearts to it.

For your professed subjection ... - Literally, “For the obedience of your profession of the gospel.” It does not imply merely that there was a profession of religion, but that there was a real subjection to the gospel which they professed. This is not clearly expressed in our translation. Tyndale has expressed it better, “Which praise God for your obedience in acknowledging the gospel of Christ.” There was a real and sincere submission to the gospel of Christ, and that was manifested by their giving liberally to supply the needs of others. The doctrine is, that one evidence of true subjection to the gospel; one proof that our profession is sincere and genuine, is a willingness to contribute to relieve the needs of the poor and afflicted friends of the Redeemer. And unto all people. That is, all others whom you may have the opportunity of relieving.

JAMIESON, FAUCET, AND BROWN COMMENTARY

Deu 15:7-11 -

If there be among you a poor man ... thou shalt not harden thine heart — Lest the foregoing law should prevent the Israelites lending to the poor, Moses here admonishes them against so mean and selfish a spirit and exhorts them to give in a liberal spirit of charity and kindness, which will secure the divine blessing (Rom 12:8; 2Co 9:7).

KEIL AND DELITZSCH COMMENTARY ON THE OLD TESTAMENT

Deu 15:7-8 -

And in general Israel was to be ready to lend to the poor among its brethren, not to harden its heart, to be hard-hearted, but to lend to the poor brother דֵּי מַחְסָרוֹ, “the sufficiency of his need,” whatever he might need to relieve his wants.

Deu 15:9-10 -

Thus they were also to beware “*that there was not a word in the heart, worthlessness,*” i.e., that a worthless thought did not arise in their hearts (פְּלִיעַל is the predicate of the sentence, as the more precise definition of the word that was in the heart); so that one should say, “*The seventh year is at hand, the year of release,*” sc., when I shall not be able to demand what I have lent, and “*that thine eye be evil towards thy poor brother,*” i.e., that thou cherishest ill-will towards him (cf. Deu 28:54, Deu 28:56), “*and givest him not, and he appeals to Jehovah against thee, and it becomes sin to thee,*” sc., which brings down upon thee the wrath of God.

Deu 15:10

Thou shalt give him, and thy heart shall not become evil, i.e., discontented thereat (cf. 2Co 9:7), for Jehovah will bless thee for it (cf. Pro 22:9; Pro 28:27; Psa 41:2; Mat 6:4).

Deu 15:11 -

For the poor will never cease in the land, even the land that is richly blessed, because poverty is not only the penalty of sin, but is ordained by God for punishment and discipline.

Lev 25:23-27

What was already implied in the laws relating to the purchase and sale of the year's produce (Lev 25:15, Lev 25:16), namely, that the land could not be alienated, is here clearly expressed; and at the same time the rule is laid down, showing how a man, who had been compelled by poverty to sell his patrimony, was to recover possession of it by redemption. In the first place, Lev 25:23 contains the general rule, “the land shall not be sold לְצַמְיֹתָהּ” (lit., to annihilation), i.e., so as to vanish away from, or be for ever lost to, the seller. For “*the land belongs to Jehovah:*” the Israelites, to whom He would give it (Lev 25:2), were not actual owners or full possessors, so that they could do what they pleased with it, but “strangers and sojourners with Jehovah” in His land. Consequently (Lev 25:24) throughout the whole of the land of their possession they were to grant גְּאֻלָּה release, redemption to the land. There were three ways in which this could be done. The first case (Lev 25:25) was this: if a brother became poor and sold his property, his nearest redeemer was to come and release what his brother had sold, i.e., buy it back from the purchaser and restore it to its former possessor. The nearest redeemer was the relative upon whom this obligation rested according to the series mentioned in Lev 25:48, Lev 25:49. - The second case (Lev 25:26, Lev 25:27) was this: if any one had no redeemer, either because there were no relatives upon whom the obligation rested, or because they were all too poor, and he had earned and acquired sufficient to redeem it, he was to calculate the years of purchase, and return the surplus to the man who had bought it, i.e., as much as he had paid for the years that still remained up to the next year of jubilee, that so he might come into possession of it again. As the purchaser had only paid the amount of the annual harvests till the next year of jubilee, all that he could demand back was as much as he had paid for the years that still remained.

Lev 25:28

The third case was this: if a man had not earned as much as was required to make compensation for the recovery of the land, what he had sold was to remain in the possession of the buyer till the year of jubilee, and then it was to “go out,” i.e., to become free again, so that the impoverished seller could enter into possession without compensation. The buyer lost nothing by this, for he had fully recovered all that he paid for the annual harvests up to the year of jubilee, from the amount which those harvests yielded. Through these legal regulations every purchase of land became simply a lease for a term of years.

Lev 25:29-30

Alienation and redemption of houses. - Lev 25:29, Lev 25:30. On the sale of a dwelling-house in a wall-town (a town surrounded by a wall) there was to be redemption till the completion of the year of its purchase. ימים, “days (i.e., a definite period) shall its redemption be;” that is to say, the right of redemption or repurchase should be retained. If it was not redeemed within the year, it remained to the buyer for ever for his descendants, and did not go out free in the year of jubilee. קם to arise for a possession, i.e., to become a fixed standing possession, as in Gen 23:17. אשר לו לא אשר לו as in Lev 11:21 (see at Exo 21:8). This law is founded upon the assumption, that the houses in unwalled towns are not so closely connected with the ownership of the land, as that the alienation of the houses would alter the portion originally assigned to each family for a possession. Having been built by men, they belonged to their owners in full possession, whether they had received them just as they were at the conquest of the land, or had erected them for themselves. This last point of view, however, was altogether a subordinate one; for in the case of “the houses of the villages” (i.e., farm-buildings and villages, see Jos 13:23, etc.), which had no walls round them, it was not taken into consideration at all.

Lev 25:31

Such houses as these were to be reckoned as part of the land, and to be treated as landed property, with regard to redemption and restoration at the year of jubilee.

Lev 25:32

On the other hand, so far as the Levitical towns, viz., the houses of the Levites in the towns belonging to them, were concerned, there was to be eternal redemption for the Levites; that is to say, when they were parted with, the right of repurchase was never lost. עולם (eternal) is to be understood as a contrast to the year allowed in the case of other houses (Lev 25:29, Lev 25:30).

Lev 25:33

“And whoever (if any one) redeems, i.e., buys, of the Levites, the house that is sold and (indeed in) the town of his possession is to go out free in the year of jubilee; for the houses of the Levitical towns are their (the Levites’) possession among the children of Israel.” The meaning is this: If any one bought a Levite’s house in one of the Levitical towns, the house he had bought was to revert to the Levite without compensation in the year of jubilee. The difficulty connected with the first clause is removed, if we understand the word גאל (to redeem, i.e., to buy back), as the Rabbins do, in the sense of קנה to buy, acquire. The use of גאל for קנה may be explained from the fact, that when the land was divided, the Levites did not receive either an inheritance in the land, or even the towns appointed for them to dwell in as their own property. The Levitical towns were allotted to the different tribes in which they were situated, with the simple obligation to set apart a certain number of dwelling-houses for the Levites, together with pasture-ground for their cattle in the precincts of the towns (cf. Num 35:1. and my Commentary on Joshua, p. 453 translation). If a non-Levite, therefore, bought a Levite’s house, it was in reality a repurchase of property belonging to his tribe, or the redemption of what the tribe had relinquished to the Levites as their dwelling and for their necessities.

The words ועיר אה are an explanatory apposition - “and that in the town of his possession,” - and do not mean “whatever he had sold of his house-property or anything else in his town,” for the Levites had no other property in the town besides the houses, but “the house which he had sold, namely, in the town of his possession.” This implies that the right of reversion was only to apply to the houses ceded to the Levites in their own towns, and not to houses which they had acquired in other towns either by

purchase or inheritance. The singular אִתּוֹ is used after a subject in the plural, because the copula agrees with the object (see *Ewald*, §319c). As the Levites were to have no hereditary property in the land except the houses in the towns appointed for them, it was necessary that the possession of their houses should be secured to them for all time, if they were not to fall behind the other tribes.

Lev 25:34

The field of the pasture-ground of the Levitical towns was not to be sold. Beside the houses, the Levites were also to receive שְׂדֵה מִדְּבָר pasturage for their flocks (from דָּרַב to drive, to drive out the cattle) round about these cities (Num 35:2-3). These meadows were not to be saleable, and not even to be let till the year of jubilee; because, if they were sold, the Levites would have nothing left upon which to feed their cattle.

Leviticus 25:35-38

The *second* effect of the jubilee year, viz., *the return of an Israelite, who had become a slave, to liberty and to his family*, is also introduced with an exhortation to support an impoverished brother (Lev 25:35-38), and preserve to him his personal freedom.

Lev 25:35

“If thy brother (countryman, or member of the same tribe) becomes poor, and his hand trembles by thee, thou shalt lay hold of him;” i.e., if he is no longer able to sustain himself alone, thou shalt take him by the arm to help him out of his misfortune. “Let him live with thee as a stranger and sojourner.” אִתּוֹ introduces the apodosis (see *Ges.* §126, note 1).

Lev 25:36-41

If he borrowed money, they were not to demand interest; or if food, they were not to demand any addition, any larger quantity, when it was returned (cf. Exo 22:24; Deu 23:20-21), from fear of God, who had redeemed Israel out of bondage, to give them the land of Canaan. In Lev 25:37 אִתּוֹ is an abbreviation of אִתּוֹ, which only occurs here. - From Lev 25:39 onwards there follow the laws relating to the bondage of the Israelite, who had been obliged to sell himself from poverty. Lev 25:36-46 relate to his service in bondage to an (other) Israelite. The man to whom he had sold himself as servant was not to have slave-labour performed by him (Exo 1:14), but to keep him as a day-labourer and sojourner, and let him serve with him till the year of jubilee. He was then to go out free with his children, and return to his family and the possession of his fathers (his patrimony). This regulation is a supplement to the laws relating to the rights of Israel (Exo 21:2-6), though without a contradiction arising, as *Knobel* maintains, between the different rules laid down. In Ex 21 nothing at all is determined respecting the treatment of an Israelitish servant; it is simply stated that in the seventh year of his service he was to recover his liberty. This limit is not mentioned here, because the chapter before us simply treats of the influence of the year of jubilee upon the bondage of the Israelites. On this point it is decided, that the year of jubilee was to bring freedom even to the Israelite who had been brought into slavery by his poverty, - of course only to the man who was still in slavery when it commenced and had not served seven full years, provided, that is to say, that he had not renounced his claim to be set free at the end of his seven years' service, according to Exo 21:5-6. We have no right to expect this exception to be expressly mentioned here, because it did not interfere with the idea of the year of jubilee. For whoever voluntarily renounced the claim to be set free, whether because the year of jubilee was still so far off that he did not expect to live to see it, or because he had found a better lot with his master than he could secure for himself in a state of freedom, had thereby made a voluntary renunciation of the liberty which the year of jubilee might have brought to him (see *Oehler's art.* in *Herzog's Cycl.*, where the different views on this subject are given).

Lev 25:42-43

Because the Israelites were servants of Jehovah, who had redeemed them out of Pharaoh's bondage and adopted them as His people (Exo 19:5; Exo 18:10, etc.), they were not to be sold “a selling of slaves,” i.e., not to be sold into actual slavery, and no one of them was to rule over another with severity (Lev 25:43, cf. Exo 1:13-14). “Through this principle slavery was completely abolished, so far as the people of the theocracy were concerned” (*Oehler*).

Lev 25:44-46

As the Israelites could only hold in slavery servants and maid-servants whom they had bought of foreign nations, or foreigners who had settled in the land, these they might leave as an inheritance to their children, and “through them they might work,” i.e., have slave-labour performed, but not through their brethren the children of Israel (Lev 25:46, cf. Lev 25:43).

Lev 25:47-50

The servitude of an Israelite to a settler who had come to the possession of property, or a non-Israelite dwelling in the land, was to be redeemable at any time. If an Israelite had sold himself because of poverty to a foreign settler (גֵר תוֹשֵׁב, to distinguish the non-Israelitish sojourner from the Israelitish, Lev 25:35), or to a stock of a foreigner, then one of his brethren, or his uncle, or his uncle's son or some one of his kindred, was to redeem him; or if he came into the possession of property, he was to redeem himself. When this was done, the time was to be calculated from the year of purchase to the year of jubilee, and “the money of his purchase was to be according to the number of the years,” i.e., the price at which he had sold himself was to be distributed over the number of years that he would have to serve to the year of jubilee; and “according to the days of a day-labourer shall he be with him,” i.e., the time that he had worked was to be estimated as that of a day-labourer, and be put to the credit of the man to be redeemed.

Lev 25:51-52

According as there were few or many years to the year of jubilee would the redemption-money be paid be little or much. רַבּוֹת בְּשָׁנִים much in years: רַבּוֹת neuter, and כּ as in Gen 7:21; Gen 8:17 etc. לְכִיזָק according to the measure of the same.

Lev 25:53

During the time of service the buyer was to keep him as a day-labourer year by year, i.e., as a labourer engaged for a term of years, and not rule over him with severe oppression. “*In thine eyes*,” i.e., so that thou (the nation addressed) seest it.

Lev 25:54-55

If he were not redeemed by these (the relations mentioned in Lev 25:48, Lev 25:49), he was to go out free in the year of jubilee along with his children, i.e., to be liberated without compensation. For (Lev 25:55) he was not to remain in bondage, because the Israelites were the servants of Jehovah (cf. Lev 25:42).

But although, through these arrangements, the year of jubilee helped every Israelite, who had fallen into poverty and slavery, to the recovery of his property and personal freedom, and thus the whole community was restored to its original condition as appointed by God, through the return of all the landed property that had been alienated in the course of years to its original proprietor the restoration of the theocratical state to its original condition was not the highest or ultimate object of the year of jubilee. The observance of sabbatical rest throughout the whole land, and by the whole nation, formed part of the liberty which it was to bring to the land and its inhabitants. In the year of jubilee, as in the sabbatical year, the land of Jehovah was to enjoy holy rest, and the nation of Jehovah to be set free from the bitter labour of cultivating the soil, and to live and refresh itself in blessed rest with the blessing which had been given to it by the Lord its God. In this way the year of jubilee became to the poor, oppressed, and suffering, in fact to the whole nation, a year of festivity and grace, which not only brought redemption to the captives and deliverance to the poor out of their distresses, but release to the whole congregation of the Lord from the bitter labour of this world; a time of refreshing, in which all oppression was to cease, and every member of the covenant nation find his redeemer in the Lord, who brought every one back to his own property and home. Because Jehovah had brought the children of Israel out of Egypt to give them the land of Canaan, where they were to live as His servants and serve Him, in the year of jubilee the nation and land of Jehovah were to celebrate a year of holy rest and refreshing before the Lord, and in this celebration to receive foretaste of the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, which were to be brought to all men by One anointed with the Spirit of the Lord, who would come to preach the Gospel to the poor, to bind up the broken-hearted, to bring liberty to the captives and the opening of the prisons to them that were bound, to proclaim to all that mourn a year of grace from the Lord (Isa 61:1-3; Luk 4:17-21); and who will come again from heaven in the times of the restitution of all things to complete the ἀποκατάστασις τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ, to glorify the

whole creation into a kingdom of God, to restore everything that has been destroyed by sin from the beginning of the world, to abolish all the slavery of sin, establish the true liberty of the children of God, emancipate every creature from the bondage of vanity, under which it sighs on account of the sin of man, and introduce all His chosen into the kingdom of peace and everlasting blessedness, which was prepared for their inheritance before the foundation of the world (Act 3:19-20; Rom 8:19; Mat 25:34; Col 1:12; 1Pe 1:4).

VINCENT'S WORD STUDIES

2Co 9:6 -

Bountifully (ἐπ' εὐλογίαις)

Lit., *with blessings*. Compare 1Co 9:10, "plow in hope (ἐπ' ἐλπίδι)."

2Co 9:7 -

Purposeth (προαιρείται)

Read προορῆται, perfect tense, *hath purposed*.

Grudgingly (ἐκ λύπης)

Lit., *out of sorrow*.

Cheerful (ἠλαρόν)

Only here in the New Testament. See on the kindred ἠλαρότης *cheerfulness*, note on Rom 12:8.

God loveth, etc.

From Pro 22:9, where the Hebrew is, *a kind man shall be blessed*. Sept., *God blesseth a man who is cheerful and a giver*.

2Co 9:8 -

Always - all - in everything

Nearly reproducing the play on the word *all* in the Greek.

Sufficiency (ἀντάρκειαν)

Only here and 1Ti 6:6. The kindred adjective ἀνταρκῆς A.V., *content*, occurs Phi 4:11 (see note). The word properly means *self-sufficiency*, and is one of those which show Paul's acquaintance with Stoicism, and the influence of its vocabulary upon his own. It expressed the Stoic conception of the wise man as being sufficient in himself, wanting nothing and possessing everything. Here, not in the sense of sufficiency of worldly goods, but of that moral quality, bound up with self-consecration and faith, which renders the *new self* in Christ independent of external circumstances.

2Co 9:9 -

He hath dispersed abroad (ἐσκόρπισεν)

As in sowing, 2Co 9:6. Psa 112:9. Almost literally after the Hebrew and Septuagint.

2Co 9:10 -

Ministereth (ἐπιχορηγῶν)

Rev., *supplieth*. See on *add*, 2Pe 1:5.

Both minister bread, etc.

Construe *bread* with *supplieth*, as Rev., *supplieth seed to the sow and bread for food*.

Minister and multiply (χορηγήσαι καὶ πληθύναι)

The correct reading is the future, *χορηγήσει καὶ πληθυνεῖ shall supply and multiply*.

The fruits (τὰ γενήματα)

Lit., *what has been begotten or born*. Used of men, Mat 3:7, A.V., *generation*, Rev., *offspring*. Elsewhere of *fruits*, as *fruit of the vine*, Mar 14:25.

2Co 9:11 -

Liberality (ἀπλοτήτα)

Better *singleness* or *simplicity* of heart. See on Rom 12:8.

2Co 9:12 -

Service (λειτουργία)

Also rendered *ministry* or *ministration* (A.V. and Rev.), as Luk 1:23; Heb 8:6; Heb 9:21. See on Luk 1:23. The word is used of this same contribution, Rom 15:7.

Supplieth (ἔστιν προσαναπληροῦσα)

Lit., *fills up by adding to*. Only here and 2Co 11:9. *Supplementing* what the saints lack. Through many thanksgivings. The need of the poor is filled, like an empty vessel, to the brim, and the supply overflows in the thanksgiving which it calls out. Thus christian beneficence does a double work, in giving relief and in generating thankfulness.

2Co 9:13 -

Experiment of this ministration (δοκιμῆς τῆς διακονίας ταύτης).

Commentators differ as to the interpretation; the difference hinging on the question whether the *trial* (experiment) applies to the service itself, or to those who render it: hence either “the proving of you by this ministration,” as Rev., or *the tried character of this ministration*. *Δοκιμή* may mean, either *the process of proving* or *the state of being approved, approvedness*. The difference is immaterial.

Your professed subjection (ὑποταγῆς ὁμολογιασῶν)

A vicious hendiadys. Lit., as Rev., *the obedience of your confession*; that is, the obedience which results from your christian confession. Ὁμολογία is once rendered in A.V. *confession*, 1Ti 6:13; and elsewhere *profession*. Both renderings occur in 1Ti 6:12, 1Ti 6:13. Rev., in every case, *confession*. A similar variation occurs in the rendering of ὁμολογέω, though in all but five of the twenty-three instances *confess* is used. Rev. retains *profess* in Mat 7:23; Tit 1:16, and changes to *confess* in 1Ti 6:12. In Mat 14:7, *promised* (A.V. and Rev., see note), and in Heb 13:15, *giving thanks*; Rev., which make *confession*. Etymologically, *confession* is the literal rendering of ὁμολογία, which is from ὁμόν *together*, λέγω *to say*; *con together, fateor to say*. The fundamental idea is that of *saying the same thing as another*; while *profess* (*pro forth, fateor to say*) is *to declare openly*. Hence, to *profess* Christ is to declare Him publicly as our Lord: to *confess* Christ is to declare agreement with all that He says. When Christ *confesses* His followers before the world, He makes a declaration in agreement with what is in His heart concerning them. Similarly, when He *declares* to the wicked “I never knew you” (“then will I *profess*, ὁμολογήσω”), a similar agreement between His thought and His declaration is implied. The two ideas run into each other, and the Rev. is right in the few cases in which it retains *profess*, since *confess* would be ambiguous. See, for example, Tit 1:16.

Liberal distribution (ἀπλότητις κοινωνίας)

Rev., correctly, *liberality of your contribution*. Κοινωνία *communion* includes the idea of communication of material things, and hence sometimes means *that which is communicated*. See on Act 2:42; so Rom 15:26; Heb 13:16. Compare the similar use of κοινωνέω, Rom 12:13, *distributing*; Phi 4:15, *communicated*.

BENEVOLENCE STUDY

by Pastor R. Douglas Meadows

LESSON # 6

I. THE POOR IS WITH US ALWAYS

A. John 12:1-8

1. An extravagant action was performed upon Jesus, vs. 1-3.
2. Criticism by Judas under the guise of being benevolent, vs. 4-6.
3. Jesus' rebuke of their condemnation, vs. 7-8.
~ "they" because of Matt. 26:8, "But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation"
4. Thoughts:
 - a. Benevolence for the poor may be used as a distraction for other causes.
 - b. Benevolence for the poor may be used as a hindrance from doing other good.
 - c. There will be no shortage of those who are poor.

B. Matt. 26:11 (*parallel passage of John 12*)

MATTHEW HENRY

You have the poor always with you. Note,

1. There are some opportunities of doing and getting good which are constant, and which we must give constant attendance to the improvement of. Bibles we have always with us, sabbaths always with us, and so *the poor, we have always with us.* Note, those who have a heart to do good, never need complain for want of opportunity. The poor never ceased even out of the land of Israel, Deu 15:11. We cannot but see some in this world, who call for our charitable assistance, who are as God's receivers, some poor members of Christ, to whom he will have kindness shown as to himself.

C. Mark 14:7 (*parallel passage of John 12*)

~ opportunity will always avail itself to be benevolent

II. GIVING ALMS

A. Defined – Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words

Alms - eleemosyna – connected with *elleemon*, merciful, signifies (a) mercy, pity, particularly in giving alms, Matt. 6:1-4. (b) the benefaction itself, the alms (the effect for the cause), Lk. 11:41, etc.

-- Webster's Dictionary

B. Matt. 6:1-4

1. It is assumed that alms are to be done.
2. Alms are not to be done for outward show.
3. There is an award attached to properly giving alms.

C. Acts 10:2

D. Acts 24:17

III. POSITIVE THOUGHTS ON BENEVOLENCE

A. Gal. 2:9-10

1. Peter, James, and John acknowledged Paul and Barnabas, and their ministry to the Gentiles.
2. One thing recommended was for them to remember the poor.

“should remember” – mnamoneuomen- 1PP PRES SUBJ – mnamoneuo – mimnasko – to remember, recollect, call to mind; to be mindful of, to fix thoughts upon

3. I would surmise:
 - a. To remember is to have more than a thought toward.
 - b. It would be to have a knowledge of their circumstances.
 - c. It would be to understand the proper recourse for assisting such.
 - d. It would be to actively participate in benevolent relief.

B. Further...

1. Prov. 14:21 (cf. Ps. 41:1; Heb. 13:16)
2. Prov. 14:31
3. Prov. 22:9
4. Prov. 29:7
5. Prov. 11:24-26

JOHN GILL COMMENTARY

Joh 12:8 - For the poor always ye have with you,.... And so would not want opportunities of showing a regard to them, which Christ always recommended; nor does he here in the least discourage an industrious and affectionate concern for them: the words seem to be a sort of prophecy, that there would be always poor persons in the churches of Christ, to be taken care of and provided for; See Gill on [Mat 26:11](#); and yet the Jews suppose cases, in which the collectors of alms may have no poor to distribute to, and direct what they shall do in such cases.

Mat 26:11 - For ye have the poor always with you,.... This is said in answer to the objection of the disciples, that the ointment might have been sold, and the money given to the poor. Christ seems to have respect to [Deu 15:11](#), and which, agreeably to the sense of the Jews, refers to the times of the Messiah: for they say (h),

"there is no difference between this world (this present time) and the times of the Messiah, but the subduing of kingdoms only; as it is said, [Deu 15:11](#), "for the poor shall never cease out of the land": the gloss on it is, from hence it may be concluded, that therefore, לעולם יש עניים, "for ever there will be poverty, and riches"."

Our Lord's words also show, that there will be always poor persons in the world; that there will be always such with his people, and in his churches; for God has chosen, and he calls such by his grace; so

that men may always have opportunities of showing kindness and respect to such objects: in Mark it is added, "and whensoever ye will ye may do them good", Mar 14:7; by relieving their wants, and distributing to their necessities:

Mat 6:1 - Take heed that ye do not your alms before men,.... Some copies read, "take heed that ye do not your righteousness", &c. which is a very good reading: but then, by "righteousness", is not meant righteousness, as comprehending all other righteous acts, as particularly alms, prayer, and fasting, hereafter mentioned; but alms only; nothing being more common with the Jews than to call alms צדקה, "righteousness": and whatever word Matthew made use of, there is no doubt to be made of it, but this was the word Christ used. Now alms was so called, because it is a righteous action, which ought to be performed; and to withhold from the poor what is meet, is to deal unrighteously: hence we read of the "mammon of unrighteousness"; by which is meant, not money unrighteously got, but that which is unrighteously kept from the poor: also it might be so called, because the Jews very much placed their justifying righteousness before God in the performance of it: let us first see how, according to them, it was to be done, and then what confidence they placed in it, and how much they made use of it. The account Maimonides (f) gives is as follows, who observes: that "we are bound to take heed to the commandment of alms more than all the affirmative commands; because alms is a sign of a "righteous" man, the seed of Abraham our father; as it is said, in Gen 18:19. Nor is the throne of Israel established, nor can the law of truth stand, but by alms; as it is said, Pro 16:19. Nor shall Israel be redeemed, but by alms, according to Isa 1:27. There are (says he) eight degrees in giving alms, the one above another; the highest, than which there is none higher, is this; when one relieves an Israelite, and gives him a gift, or lends to him, or takes him into partnership, or finds him work, so that he strengthens his hands before he stands in need of asking; and of this it is said, and "thou shalt relieve him, a stranger and a sojourner, that he may live with thee": which is as much as to say, relieve him before he falls, and is brought to necessity. The next to this is, when a man gives alms to the poor, and he knows not to whom he gives; nor does the poor man know of whom he receives; for, behold, this is doing it for the sake of it; as the chamber of secrets, which was in the sanctuary, into which righteous men privately put, and the poor children of good men were privately supported: and the next to this is, when a man puts into the alms chest: and a man does not put into the alms chest except he knows that the governor is faithful and wise, and knows how to manage as should be; such an one as R. Chananiah ben Tradion. The next to this is, when the giver knows to whom he gives, but the poor man does not know from whom he receives; as the great ones of the wise men, who used to go secretly, and cast their money at the doors of the poor; and this is right to do, and a good method it is when the governors of alms do not dispose aright. The next to this is, when the poor man knows of whom he takes, but does not know the giver; as the great men among the wise men, who used to bind up their money in linen cloths, and put them behind them, and the poor came and took them, that they might not be ashamed. The next to this is, when a man puts it into his hands before he asks. The next to this is, when he gives to him after he has asked. The next to this is, when he gives to him less than is proper, with a pleasant countenance. The next to this is, when he gives with grief."

Gal 2:10 - Only they would that we should remember the poor,.... Not in a spiritual sense, as some have thought, though these the apostle was greatly mindful of; but properly and literally the poor as to the things of this world; and may design the poor in general, everywhere, in the several churches where they should be called to minister, and particularly the poor saints at Jerusalem; who were become such, either through the frequent calamities of the nation, and a dearth or scarcity of provisions among them, and which affected the whole country; or rather through the persecutions of their countrymen, who plundered them of their goods for professing the name of Christ; or it may be through their having given up all their substance into one common stock and fund, as they did at first, and which was now exhausted, and that in a great measure by assisting out of it the preachers who first spread the Gospel among the Gentiles; so that it was but just that they should make some return unto them, and especially for the spiritual favours they received from them, as the Gospel, and the ministers of it, which first went

out of Jerusalem: the "remembering" of them not only intends giving them actual assistance according to their abilities, which was very small, but mentioning their case to the several Gentile churches, and stirring them up to a liberal contribution: the same which I also was forward to do; as abundantly appears from his epistles to the churches, and especially from his two epistles to the Corinthians. Now since the apostles at Jerusalem desired nothing else but this, and said not a word concerning the observance of the rites and ceremonies of the law, and neither found fault with, nor added to the Gospel the apostle communicated to them, it was a clear case that there was an entire agreement between them, in principle and practice, and that he did not receive his Gospel from them.

BARNE'S NOTES

Mat 6:1 -

Take heed that ye do not your alms - The word "alms" here denotes liberality to the poor and needy. In the margin, as in the best editions of the Greek it is "righteousness;" either referring to almsgiving as eminently a righteous act, or more probably including all that is specified in this and the following verses - almsgiving, prayer, fasting, Mat. 6:2-18. Our Saviour here does not positively command his disciples to aid the poor, but supposes that they would do it of course, and gives them directions how to do it. It is the nature of religion to help those who are really needy; and a real Christian does not wait to be "commanded" to do it, but only asks for the opportunity. See Gal 2:10; Jam 1:27; Luk 19:8.

Acts 10:2 -

Much alms - Large and liberal charity. This is always an effect of piety. See Jam 1:27; Psa 41:1.

Jas 1:27 -

Pure religion - On the word here rendered "religion" (θρησκεία *thrēskeia*), see the notes at Col 2:18. It is used here evidently in the sense of piety, or as we commonly employ the word religion. The object of the apostle is to describe what enters essentially into religion; what it will do when it is properly and fairly developed. The phrase "pure religion" means that which is genuine and sincere, or which is free from any improper mixture. And undefiled before God and the Father - That which God sees to be pure and undefiled. Rosenmuller supposes that there is a metaphor here taken from pearls or gems, which should be pure, or without stain.

Is this - That is, this enters into it; or this is religion such as God approves. The apostle does not say that this is the whole of religion, or that there is nothing else essential to it; but his general design clearly is, to show that religion will lead to a holy life, and he mentions this as a specimen, or an instance of what it will lead us to do. The things which he specifies here are in fact two:

- (1) That pure religion will lead to a life of practical benevolence; and,
- (2) That it will keep us unspotted from the world. If these things are found, they show that there is true piety. If they are not, there is none.

To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction - To go to see, to look after, to be ready to aid them. This is an instance or specimen of what true religion will do, showing that it will lead to a life of practical benevolence. It may be remarked in respect to this:

- (1) That this has always been regarded as an essential thing in true religion; because
 - (a) it is thus an imitation of God, who is "a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows in his holy habitation," Psa 68:5; and who has always revealed himself as their friend, Deu 10:18; Deu 14:29; Psa 10:14; Psa 82:3; Isa 1:17; Jer 7:7; Jer 49:11; Hos 14:3.
 - (b) Religion is represented as leading its friends to do this, or this is required everywhere of those who claim to be religious, Isa 1:17; Deu 24:17; Deu 14:29; Exo 22:22; Job 29:11-13.

- (2) Where this disposition to be the real friend of the widow and the orphan exists, there will also exist other corresponding things which go to make up the religious character. This will not stand alone. It will show what the heart is, and prove that it will ever be ready to do good. If a man, from proper motives, is the real friend of the widow and the fatherless, he will be the friend of every good word and work, and we may rely on him in any and every way in doing good.

Psa 41:1 <To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.> Blessed *is* he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

Acts 24:17 -

Alms - Charities; the gift of the churches.

To my nation - Not to all the nation, but to the poor saints or Christians who were in Judea, and who were suffering much by persecutions and trials.

Gal 2:10 -

Only they would that we should remember the poor - That is, as I suppose, the poor Christians in Judea. It can hardly be supposed that it would be necessary to make this an express stipulation in regard to the converts from among the Gentiles, and it would not have been very pertinent to the case before them to have done so. The object was, to bind together the Christians from among the pagan and from among the Jews, and to prevent alienation and unkind feeling. It might have been alleged that Paul was disposed to forget his own countrymen altogether; that he regarded himself as so entirely the apostle of the Gentiles that he would become wholly alienated from those who were his "kinsmen according to the flesh," and thus it might be apprehended that unpleasant feelings would be engendered among those who had been converted from among the Jews. Now nothing could be better adapted to allay this than for him to pledge himself to feel a deep interest in the poor saints among the Jewish converts; to remember them in his prayers; and to endeavor to secure contributions for their needs. Thus he would show that he was not alienated from his countrymen; and thus the whole church would be united in the closest bonds. It is probable that the Christians in Judea were at that time suffering the ills of poverty arising either from some public persecution, or from the fact that they were subject to the displeasure of their countrymen. All who know the special feelings of the Jews at that time in regard to Christians, must see at once that many of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth would be subjected to great inconveniences on account of their attachment to him. Many a wife might be disowned by her husband; many a child disinherited by a parent; many a man might be thrown out of employment by the fact that others would not countenance him; and hence, many of the Christians would be poor. It became, therefore, an object of special importance to provide for them; and hence, this is so often referred to in the New Testament. In addition to this, the church in Judea was afflicted with famine; compare Act 11:30; Rom 15:25-27; 1Co 16:1-2; 2Co 8:1-7.

The same which I also was forward to do - See the passages just referred to. Paul interested himself much in the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and in this way he furnished the fullest evidence that he was not alienated from them, but that he felt the deepest interest in those who were his kindred. One of the proper ways of securing union in the church is to have the poor with them and depending on them for support; and hence, every church has some poor persons as one of the bonds of union. The best way to unite all Christians, and to prevent alienation, and jealousy, and strife, is to have a great common object of charity, in which all are interested and to which all may contribute. Such a common object for all Christians is a sinful world. All who bear the Christian name may unite in promoting its salvation, and nothing would promote union in the now divided and distracted church of Christ like a deep and common interest in the salvation of all mankind.

JAMIESON, FAUCET, AND BROWN COMMENTARY

Matt. 6:1

Take heed that ye do not your alms — But the true reading seems clearly to be “your righteousness.” The external authority for both readings is pretty nearly equal; but internal evidence is decidedly in favor of “righteousness.” The subject of the second verse being “almsgiving” that word - so like the other in *Greek* - might easily be substituted for it by the copyist: whereas the opposite would not be so likely. But it is still more in favor of “righteousness,” that if we so read the first verse, it then becomes a general heading for this whole section of the discourse, inculcating unostentatiousness in *all* deeds of righteousness - Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting being, in that case, but selected examples of this righteousness; whereas, if we read, “Do not your *alms*,” etc., this first verse will have no reference but to that one point. By “righteousness,” in this case, we are to understand that same righteousness of the kingdom of heaven, whose leading features - in opposition to traditional perversions of it - it is the great object of this discourse to open up: that righteousness of which the Lord says, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mat 5:20). To “do” this righteousness, was an old and well-understood expression. Thus, “Blessed is he that doeth righteousness at all times” (Psa 106:3). It refers to the *actings* of righteousness in the life - the outgoings of the gracious nature - of which our Lord afterwards said to His disciples, “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples” (Joh 15:8).

BENEVOLENCE STUDY

by Pastor R. Douglas Meadows

LESSON # 7

What follows is a listing of both positive and negative applications.

I. JUDAS' SUPPOSED CONCERN FOR THE POOR John 12:4-6

- A. There was an identification and admission that there are those who are poor.
- B. There was an express concern for the poor which was not rebuked.
- C. Judas was "church treasurer" and thus, was speaking on behalf of the church.
~ implied is the responsibility of the church toward the poor

II. THE CHURCH'S ACTIVITY Acts 11:27-30

- A. Hard times were coming which would place hardship upon the believers.
- B. The church at Antioch recognized the need and the necessity to assist.
- C. They actively participated in helping other believers.

"relief" – diakonian – ACC S – diakonia – service, waiting, attendance; relief, aid

- 1. The focus was upon the "brethren which dwelt in Judea."
- 2. Obviously an offering was received to supply this need.
- 3. It was a freewill offering and "according to his ability."
- 4. The gift was sent by the hands of faithful couriers.
- 5. The money was given to the Elders who distributed it to the poor.

III. THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY Heb. 6:10; I Tim. 5:9-11a, 16

A. Hebrews 6:10

- 1. The recipients of this letter "ministered to the saints." [served ~ diakonasantes]
- 2. They continued that ministry of serving.
~ by implication the matter of benevolence is considered here
- 3. It was called a "work and labour of love."
- 4. It was done for the Lord's sake. "which ye have shewed toward his name"

B. I Timothy 5:9-11a, 16 ~ instructions re: widows

- 1. A widow may be "taken in" by the church for assistance but there were still limitations or requirements, (vss. 9-10).
- 2. Two things of the several items listed are:
 - a. "if she have lodged strangers"
 - b. "if she have relieved the afflicted"

* *Both of these indicate benevolent activity.*

3. The church was **not** to receive every person applying for aid, (vs. 9a, 11a).
4. In fact, if there are family members, it is primary their responsibility to relieve them, (vs. 16).
5. The church has a responsibility to relieve “widows indeed,” (vs. 16).

“relieve” – eparkesa – 3PS 1AOR SUBJ – eparkeo – *pr.* to ward off; to assist, relieve, succor

6. Acts 6:1-6 ~ the ordaining of deacons
 - a. to *serve tables*

“serve” – diakonien – PRES INFIN – diakoneo – to wait, attend upon, serve; to minister to, relieve, assist

“tables” – trapezais – DAT PL – trapeze – a table, an eating-table

- b. problem ~ the neglect in the *daily ministration*

“ministration” – diakonia – DAT S – diakonia – serving, service, waiting, attendance; relief, aid

- c. thoughts:

- 1) there is a recognition that the church had a responsibility and obligation to the widows
 - 2) deacons were appointed to fulfill that ministry of benevolence
 - 3) the primary duty of the preacher is not to handle every benevolence

IV. PAUL’S VIEW Acts 20:33-35

- A. Paul speaks to the Ephesian elders, commending them to their service, addresses his own testimony among them.
- B. He did not serve the Lord for monetary reward, (vs. 33).
- C. He willingly worked to supply his own needs, (vs.34).
- D. He was an example to them in working and in benevolence, (vs. 35).
 1. Workers have the opportunity and availability for benevolence.
 2. There are those who are “weak” and need assistance.
 3. Those who are able should “support” those who are unable.

“support” – antilambanesthai – PRES INFIN – antilambanomai – to aid, assist, help

4. A motivation for doing so is the word of Christ, (vs. 35c).
 - ~ it is a blessing to give

V. THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN Matt. 15:21-28 [Mark 7:24-30]

- A. Here is a woman with a great physical need but she is denied.
- B. Jesus declares there is a primary focus which supersedes her needs, (vs. 26).
- C. Her zeal, faith and insight gives her opportunity to receive, (vss. 27-28).

VI. INSTRUCTION II Thess. 3:10-12 cf. I Thess. 4:11-12

A. II Thessalonians 3:10-12

1. What we find in this text is a *command* not a suggestion.
2. Laziness was not to be rewarded, (vs. 10b).
~ even when it came to basic necessities such as food
3. The problematic people were fellow church members. “walk among you”

“disorderly” – ataktos – ADV – ataktos – *pr. used of soldiers, disorderly; met. irregular in conduct, disorderly*

“working not at all”

“busybodies” – periergazomenous - ACC PL M PRES PART – periergazomai –to do a thing with excessive or superfluous care; to be a busy-body

B. I Thessalonians 4:11-12

1. Paul is exhorting the believer to proper Christian living, (vs. 1ff).
2. One thing is to “work with your own hands” as has been commanded.
3. Good honest labor is a proper way to testify to those “without” i.e. in the world.
4. Working provides necessities but also the wants. “ye may have lack of nothing”

VII. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY I Tim. 5:8

A. Family members are the primary caregivers.

1. Specifically, those of his own household.
2. Also, toward other family members.

B. Proper provision is a testimony to his faith and to *the faith*.

VIII. GIVING SHOULD BE ROOTED IN LOVE I Co. 13:3

JOHN GILL COMMENTARY

2Th 3:10 - For even when we were with you,.... At Thessalonica in person, and first preached the Gospel to them,

we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat; the Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, "when I was with you, I commanded you"; using the above words, which were a sort of a proverb with the Jews, and is frequently used by them, דאי לא אכיל, or לעי לא נגיס, "that if a man would not work, he should not eat" (q). And again (r),

"he that labours on the evening of the sabbath (or on weekdays), he shall eat on the sabbath day; and he who does not labour on the evening of the sabbath, from whence shall he eat (or what right and authority has he to eat) on the sabbath day?"

Not he that could not work through weakness, bodily diseases, or old age, the necessities of such are to be distributed to, and they are to be taken care of, and provided with the necessaries of life by the officers of the church; but those that can work, and will not, ought to starve, for any assistance that should be given them by the members of the church, or the officers of it.

(q) Bereshit Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 13. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 4. & Midrash Koholet, fol. 65. 4. (r) T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 1.

2Th 3:11 - For we hear that there are some,.... This is the reason of the order or command given in 2Th 3:6 for withdrawing from disorderly persons. When the apostle was with them, he observed that there were idle persons among them, and therefore gave orders then, that if they would not work, they should not eat; and in his former epistle, having intelligence that there were still such persons among them, he exhorts them to their duty, and puts the church upon admonishing them; and still information is given him, that there were some such persons yet among them; for as the apostle had the care of all the churches upon him, so he kept a correspondence with them, and by one means or another, by sending messengers to them, or by receiving letters from those he corresponded with, he learned the state of them; and his information was generally good, and what might be depended upon; see 1Co 1:11 as it was in this case relating to some persons: which walk among you disorderly; and who they were, and which also explains 2Th 3:6, are immediately observed: working not at all; at their callings, trades, and businesses in which they were brought up, but lived an idle and lazy life: and this was walking disorderly indeed, even contrary to the order of things before the fall, when man was in a state of innocence; for before sin entered into the world, Adam was put into the garden of Eden to keep and dress it; man was created an active creature, and made for work and business; and to live without, is contrary to the order of creation, as well as to the order of civil societies, and of religious ones, or churches, and even what irrational creatures do not.

But are busy bodies; though they work not at all at their own business, yet are very busy in other men's matters, and have the affairs of kingdoms, and cities, and towns, and neighbourhoods, and churches, and families, upon their hands; which they thrust themselves into, and intermeddle with, though they have no business at all with them: these wander from house to house, and curiously inquire into personal and family affairs, are tattlers, full of prate and talk, and, like the Athenians, spend all their time in telling or hearing new things; and they also speak things which they should not; they carry tales from one to another, and privately whisper things to the disadvantage of their fellow creatures and Christians, and backbite and slander them. These are the pests of nations and neighbourhoods, the plagues of churches, and the scandal of human nature; see 1Ti 5:13.

1Ti 5:8 - But if any provide not for his own,.... Not only for his wife and children, but for his parents, when grown old, and cannot help themselves:

and specially for those of his own house; that is, who are of the same household of faith with him; see Gal 6:10, and so the Syriac version renders it, "and especially those who are the children of the house of faith"; for though the tie of nature obliges him to take care of them, yet that of grace makes the obligation still more strong and binding; and he must act both the inhuman and the unchristian part, that does not take care of his pious parents: wherefore it follows,

he hath denied the faith; the doctrine of faith, though not in words, yet in works; and is to be considered in the same light, and to be dealt with as an apostate from the Christian religion.

And is worse than an infidel; for the very Heathens are taught and directed by the light of nature to take care of their poor and aged parents. The daughter of Cimon gave her ancient father the breast, and suckled him when in prison. Aeneas snatched his aged father out of the burning of Troy, and brought

him out of the destruction of that city on his back; yea, these are worse than the brute creatures, and may be truly said to be without natural affections; such should go to the storks and learn of them, of whom it is reported, that the younger ones will feed the old ones, when they cannot feed themselves; and when weary, and not able to fly, will carry them on their backs. The Jews (w) have a rule or canon, which obliged men to take care of their families, which runs thus:

"as a man is bound to provide for his wife, so he is bound to provide for his sons and daughters, the little ones, until they are six years old; and from thenceforward he gives them food till they are grown up, according to the order of the wise men; if he will not, they reprove him, and make him ashamed, and oblige him; yea, if he will not, they publish him in the congregation, and say such an one is cruel, and will not provide for his children; and lo, he is worse than an unclean fowl, which feeds her young."

(w) Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 12. sect. 14.

BARNE'S NOTES

2Th 3:10 -

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you - It would seem from this that the evil of which the apostle here complains had begun to operate even when he was with them. There were those who were disposed to be idle, and who needed the solemn command of an apostle to induce them to labor.

That if any would not work, neither should he eat - That is, at the public expense. They should not be supported by the church. This was a maxim among the Jews (see Wetstein, in loc.), and the same sentiment may be found in Homer, Demosthenes, and Pythagoras; see Grotius, in loc. The maxim is founded in obvious justice, and is in accordance with the great law under which our Creator has placed us; Gen 3:19. That law, in the circumstances, was benevolent, and it should be our aim to carry it out in reference to ourselves and to others. The law here laid down by the apostle extends to all who are able to work for a living, and who will not do it, and binds us not to contribute to their support if they will not labor for it. It should be regarded as extending:

- (1) To the members of a church - who, though poor, should not be supported by their brethren, unless they are willing to work in any way they can for their own maintenance.
- (2) To those who beg from door to door, who should never be assisted unless they are willing to do all they can do for their own support. No one can be justified in assisting a lazy man. In no possible circumstances are we to contribute to foster indolence. A man might as properly help to maintain open vice.

2Th 3:11 -

For we hear - It is not known in what way this was made known to Paul, whether by Timothy, or by some other one. He had no doubt of its truth, and he seems to have been prepared to believe it the more readily from what he saw when he was among them.

Which walk disorderly - See the notes, 2Th 3:6.

But are busy-bodies - Compare the 1Ti 5:13 note; 1Pe 4:15 note. That is, they meddled with the affairs of others - a thing which they who have nothing of their own to busy themselves about will be very likely to do. The apostle had seen that there was a tendency to his when he was in Thessalonica, and hence he had commanded them to "do their own business;" 1Th 4:11. The injunction, it seems, had availed little, for there is no class of persons who will heed good counsel so little as those who have a propensity to intermeddle with the affairs of others. One of the indispensable things to check this is, that each one should have enough to do himself; and one of the most pestiferous of all persons is he who has nothing to do but to look after the affairs of his neighbors. In times of affliction and want, we should be ready to lend our aid. At other times, we should feel that he can manage his own affairs as well as we can do it for him; or if he cannot, it is his business, not ours. The Greek word used occurs only here, and in 1Ti 5:13; compare the notes on Phi 2:4.

1Ti 5:8 -

But if any provide not for his own - The apostle was speaking 1Ti 5:4 particularly of the duty of children toward a widowed mother. In enforcing that duty, he gives the subject, as he often does in similar cases, a general direction, and says that all ought to provide for those who were dependent on them, and that if they did not do this, they had a less impressive sense of the obligations of duty than even the pagan had. On the duty here referred to, compare Rom 12:17 note; 2Co 8:21 note. The meaning is, that the person referred to is to think beforehand (*προνοεῖ* *pronoei*) of the probable needs of his own family, and make arrangements to meet them. God thus provides for our needs; that is, he sees beforehand what we shall need, and makes arrangements for those needs by long preparation. The food that we eat, and the raiment that we wear, he foresaw that we should need, and the arrangement for the supply was made years since, and to meet these needs he has been carrying forward the plans of his providence in the seasons; in the growth of animals; in the formation of fruit; in the bountiful harvest. So, according to our measure, we are to anticipate what will be the probable needs of our families, and to make arrangements to meet them. The words "his own," refer to those who are naturally dependent on him, whether living in his own immediate family or not. There may be many distant relatives naturally dependent on our aid, besides those who live in our own house.

And specially for those of his own house - Margin, "kindred." The word "house," or "household," better expresses the sense than the word "kindred." The meaning is, those who live in his own family. They would naturally have higher claims on him than those who did not. They would commonly be his nearer relatives, and the fact, from whatever cause, that they constituted his own family, would lay the foundation for a strong claim upon him. He who neglected his own immediate family would be more guilty than he who neglected a more remote relative.

He hath denied the faith - By his conduct, perhaps, not openly. He may be still a professor of religion and do this; but he will show that he is imbued with none of the spirit of religion, and is a stranger to its real nature. The meaning is, that he would, by such an act, have practically renounced Christianity, since it enjoins this duty on all. We may hence learn that it is possible to deny the faith by conduct as well as by words; and that a neglect of doing our duty is as real a denial of Christianity as it would be openly to renounce it. Peter denied his Lord in one way, and thousands do the same thing in another. He did it in words; they by neglecting their duty to their families, or their duty in their closets, or their duty in attempting to send salvation to their fellow-men, or by an openly irreligious life. A neglect of any duty is so far a denial of the faith.

And is worse than an infidel - The word here does not mean an infidel, technically so called, or one who openly professes to disbelieve Christianity, but anyone who does not believe; that is, anyone who is not a sincere Christian. The word, therefore, would include the pagan, and it is to them, doubtless, that the apostle particularly refers. They acknowledged the obligation to provide for their relatives. This was one of the great laws of nature written on their hearts, and a law which they felt bound to obey. Few things were inculcated more constantly by pagan moralists than this duty. Gellacius, in Tacitus, says, "Nature dictates that to every one, his own children and relatives should be most dear." Cicero says, "Every man should take care of his own family" - *suos quisque debet tueri*; see Rosenmuller, in loc., and also numerous examples of the same kind quoted from Apuleius, Cicero, Plutarch, Homer, Terence, Virgil, and Servius, in Pricaeus, in loc. The doctrine here is:

- (1) That a Christian ought not to be inferior to an unbeliever in respect to any virtue;
- (2) That in all that constitutes true virtue he ought to surpass him;
- (3) That the duties which are taught by nature ought to be regarded as the more sacred and obligatory from the fact that God has given us a better religion; and,
- (4) That a Christian ought never to give occasion to an enemy of the gospel to point to a man of the world and say, "there is one who surpasses you in any virtue."

JAMIESON, FAUCET, AND BROWN COMMENTARY

2Th 3:10 -

For even — Translate, "For *also*." We not only set you the example, but gave a positive "command."

commanded — *Greek* imperfect, “We were commanding”; we kept charge of you.

would not work — *Greek*, “*is unwilling to work.*” Bengel makes this to be the argument: not that such a one is to have his food withdrawn from him by others; but he proves from the necessity of *eating* the necessity of *working*; using this pleasantry, Let him who will not work *show himself an angel*, that is, do without food as the angels do (but since he cannot do without food, then he ought to be not unwilling to work). It seems to me simpler to take it as a punishment of the idle. Paul often quotes good adages current among the people, stamping them with inspired approval. In the *Hebrew*, “Bereshith Rabba,” the same saying is found; and in the book *Zeror*, “He who will not work before the sabbath, must not eat on the sabbath.”

2Th 3:11 -

busy bodies — In the *Greek* the similarity of sound marks the antithesis, “Doing none of their own business, yet overdoing in the business of others.” Busy about everyone’s business but their own. “Nature abhors a vacuum”; so if not doing one’s own business, one is apt to meddle with his neighbor’s business. Idleness is the parent of busybodies (1Ti 5:13). Contrast 1Th 4:11.

1Ti 5:8 -

But — reverting to 1Ti 5:4, “If any (a general proposition; therefore including in its application *the widow’s children or grandchildren*) provide not for his own (relations in general), and especially for those of his own house (in particular), he hath (practically) denied the faith.” Faith without love and its works is dead; “for the subject matter of faith is not mere opinion, but the grace and truth of God, to which he that believes gives up his spirit, as he that loves gives up his heart” [Mack]. If in any case a duty of love is plain, it is in relation to one’s own relatives; to fail in so plain an obligation is a plain proof of want of love, and therefore of want of faith. “Faith does not set aside natural duties, but strengthens them” [Bengel].

worse than an infidel — because even an infidel (or unbeliever) is taught by nature to provide for his own relatives, and generally recognizes the duty; the Christian who does not so, is worse (Mat 5:46, Mat 5:47). He has less excuse with his greater light than the infidel who may break the laws of nature.

BENEVOLENCE STUDY

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LESSON # 8

I. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- A. John the Baptist's response involves benevolence to others. "what shall we do?"
cf. Lk. 3:10-14
- B. There is some inference in the Rich Young Ruler, Matt. 19:16-22. esp. vs. 21
[Mark 10:17-22]
- C. Lesson on giving to those who cannot repay, Lk. 14:12-14.
1. Jesus is addressing the Pharisees and lawyers who were self-serving, (vs. 7).
 2. Apparently His host (vss. 1, 12a) had a problem with reciprocal giving, (text).
 3. Giving to those who cannot repay provokes a blessing, (vs. 14a).
 4. The strong implication is the reward is an eternal one, vs. 14b.
- D. There is some inference in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Lk. 10:29-37.
~ we should be a neighbor to all men, especially to those in need, even if it means a cost to our own selves
- E. Romans 15:25-26
~ Paul is the messenger from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia who will take an offering from those churches to aid the poor *saints* at Jerusalem
- "minister" – diakonon – NOM S M PRES PART – diakoneo – to wait, attend upon, serve; to minister to, relieve, assist
- "contribution" – koinonian – ACC S – koinonia – fellowship, partnership; participation; aid, relief; contribution in aid
- F. Acts 3:1-7 esp. vs. 6
~ Peter and John didn't even have a denari between them? Were they flat broke?
1. Did they not have any money at all, or any money they could give for *this* cause?
"silver and gold have I none"
 2. They aren't saying they wouldn't give it if they had it.
 3. In fact, what they did have, they gave. "but such as I have"
- G. Some refer to: Acts 2:44-45 & Acts 4:34-37
~ this was "share and share alike" in a communal sense
- NOTE: this practice did not continue
- H. Heb. 13:2 re: angels
- "to entertain strangers" – tas philoxenias – GEN S – philoxenia – kindness to strangers, hospitality (philos & xenos – strange, foreign)
Interlinear: of hospitality

“have entertained” angels – xenisantes – NOM PL M 1AOR ACT PART – xenizo – to receive as a guest, entertain; to lodge

II. REFLECTIONS

- A. We can assist but cannot alleviate.
~ “The poor you have with you always” (Matt. 26:11; Mk. 14:7; Jn. 12:8).
- B. Is assistance encouragement to continue in negative destructive behavior?
cf. Lk. 15:11-24 esp. vs. 16
- C. Should we enable someone?
- D. Questions:
 - 1. What if the person is taking advantage?
 - 2. What if they are deceitful about their circumstances? Manipulative?
 - 3. If we give indiscriminately, won't we run out of resources?
- E. Is “the poor” the same as “poor judgment?”
- F. “We can only help those whom we know how to help.”
- G. “We must give by revelation and not by reason.”

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LESSON # 9

I. SUMMARY PRINCIPLES

The Presence of the Poor

- A. “For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good:”
Mk. 14:7a.
- B. There will be perpetual opportunity to serve God by helping the poor, Deut. 15:11.
- C. Two types of poor: Christian and Non-Christian
 1. Christian ~ Christians do encounter severe needs and other Christians are to help.
~ in fact, to help is an evidence of genuine faith
 2. Non-Christian ~ our obligation to love extends to our neighbor (all men).
See, Matt. 5:46-48; Lk. 10:25-37.
 3. Thus, we consider the *Golden Rule* concept.

The Christian Response

- A. The Christian attitude should reflect mercy.
- B. Especially seen (Lev. 25:35) is the command to be benevolent. “thou shalt relieve him”
- C. Judas was “church treasurer” and thus, was speaking on behalf of the church, (Jn. 12:4-6).
~ implied is the responsibility of the church toward the poor
- D. Therefore, in the case of request for goods or money, whether proper or not, (Matt. 5:42):
 1. We are commanded to give.
 2. We are not to reject or ridicule.
- E. Why should we do so?
 1. As Christians our conduct is to be rooted in love.
~ genuine love will result in action
 2. There is an obligation which a Christian has toward the brethren, even to the surrender of his own life.
~ if we are commanded the extreme, we ought to be willing to do the less
 - a. this includes the general needs of life, i.e. food, shelter, clothing, etc.
 - b. the qualifier is a “need” not a wish, want, or desire
- F. As an example: the gift from Antioch, (Acts 11:27-30):
 1. The focus was upon the “brethren which dwelt in Judea.”
 2. It was a freewill offering and “according to his ability.”
 3. The money was given to the elders who distributed it to the poor.
- G. Those who are able should “support” those who are unable, (Acts 20:33-35).
~ a motivation for doing so is the word of Christ, (vs. 35c) / it is a blessing to give

H. Thoughts from II Co. 9:5-13:

1. General considerations:

- a. This involves meeting the needs of the saints, vs. 1a, 12a.
- b. The exhortation is to the brethren to give assistance, vs. 5.
- c. There is a *sowing and reaping principle*, vs. 6. cf. Gal. 6:7
- d. There is a promise attached to being benevolent, vss. 7-11.
- e. Benevolence not only meets the needs of others, God is glorified, vs. 12b.
- f. Benevolence demonstrates our relationship to God, vs. 13.

2. A few details:

- a. Relationship demands a greater responsibility. “saints...brethren”
- d. *Any manner* of giving has its own corresponding reaping. cf. Matt. 7:2
- e. A person is to give as his heart tells him. “purposeth”
- f. Whatever you give, do so with a joyous heart. “cheerful”
- g. God is able to bless the giver beyond financial reward. “every good work”

3. Considerations

- a. the saints are sometimes in need.
- b. the brethren can only help when there is knowledge of the need.
- c. giving when God leads, plus, with the proper heart, ensures God’s blessings.
~ inferred in this would be sufficient resource and not a draining of funds
- d. when God is thanked, He is glorified; when He is glorified, He is worshiped.
- e. God gives to His people, but He will often use His children to do so, (vs. 12a).

I. Appropriate and adequate action must occur if the need is to be supplied by those who have a desire to help.

1. Appropriate ~ Matt. 7:9-10
2. Adequate ~ Jas. 2:16b

J. To not help when help truly ought to be given, is to harden a heart against the Spirit of God and in opposition to the love of God, and demonstrates a lack of God’s love in him. ~ *our problem arises in determining the proper time to help*

Limitations on Giving

- A. With all this in mind, an arbitrary response is not always what is best for the “enemy” person.
- B. The church was **not** to receive every person applying for aid, (I Tim. 5:9-11 re: widows).
 1. It is primary their responsibility of family members to relieve them, (vs. 16).
 2. The church has a responsibility to relieve “widows indeed,” (vs. 16).
- C. The Syrophenician woman’s great physical need was initially denied, (Matt. 15:21-28).
- D. Laziness was not to be rewarded, (II Thess. 3:10b).
~ even when it came to basic necessities such as food

Motivation for Giving

- A. Giving should be rooted in love, I Co. 13:3.

BENEVOLENCE STUDY

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LESSON # 10

I. THOUGHTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Every Christian should have a heart for the poor and with compassion give assistance.
~ the best method is to do so through the church, Eph. 3:21
- B. While the main benefactor is the Christian, the church also carries a responsibility.
- C. The prime motivation behind benevolence is love.
 - 1. Without love, benevolence profits us nothing, I Co. 13:3.
 - 2. All benevolence should benefit the recipient:
 - a. not enable them along sin's pathway
 - b. not encourage them to continue in sinful behavior
 - c. not hinder them from the desperation which provokes a life change
 - d. not reward them for laziness, slothful behavior, and/or wasteful spending
 - e. sometimes the right thing will hurt, be a limitation, or a denial
 - f. therefore:
 - 1) will manifest the love of Jesus
 - 2) will derive from compassion and empathy
 - 3) will proceed by spiritual enlightenment and awareness
 - 3) will give when giving is the best response
 - 4) will deny when proper
 - 5) will be accompanied with spiritual guidance
- D. "We can only help those whom we know how to help."
- E. "We must give by revelation and not by reason."
- F. All benevolence must be appropriate to the request, and, if possible, adequate to supply the need.
- G. It is understood that there are various ways and means in administering benevolence.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Encouragement to individuals to be benevolent is extended.
- B. The church should also be benevolent.
- C. All basic facts regarding the person and circumstance should be assessed and evaluated.
- D. Prayer is to be offered and spiritual guidance should be sought.
- E. Upon the revelation that benevolence is to be extended: