

RESTORING A SCRIPTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUPPORT OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL

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INTRODUCTION

1. There is a widespread misunderstanding among members of the church concerning the support of men who preach the gospel.
2. In almost every congregation we find some brethren who are critical of or opposed to the amount of wages received by local and visiting evangelists.
3. This critical attitude brings about general unrest among the membership.
4. This critical attitude gives rise to mean and ugly accusations such as, "The preacher is riding on a gravy-train"; "He is milking the church dry" . . .
5. This attitude brings about an unhealthy attitude toward preachers and preaching the gospel.

I. SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

1. There are many positions in this life that have to do only with this world that carry grave responsibilities.
 - (1) The governor of this state has many heavy duties.
 - (2) The legislators have very weighty responsibilities.
 - (3) The president of this country has heavy and grave responsibilities.
2. All these responsibilities, grave as they are, are temporal, physical, and temporary.
3. None of these compare to the responsibility that is laid upon the shoulders of anyone who sets himself to the task of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.
4. The gospel of Christ is the greatest message this world has ever heard.
 - (1) It is so great Jesus said -- Mk. 16: 15 - 16; Matt. 28: 19 - 20.
 - (2) James said, "*receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls*" (James 1:21).
 - (3) The gospel of Christ has to do with that which is eternal -- your soul and mine (Matt. 16:26).
5. Knowing this truth, it is not hard to understand why Jesus Christ through the Word has taught us to support the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

II. THE CHURCH IS TO SUPPORT THE GOSPEL.

1. Church is "*the pillar and ground of the truth*" -- I Tim. 3:15.
2. The church must support:
 - (1) The defense of truth.
 - (2) Financially support the truth.
 - (3) Morally support the truth.
3. The church must hold up the hands of men who preach the truth.
 - (1) Just as Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands in the battle with Amalek (Ex. 17: 8 - 13).
 - (2) As one stands as a gospel preacher, he must rely upon those who are about him, the congregation, to uphold his hands while he is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - (3) It helps the preacher to tell him you are standing behind him, and agreeing with the preaching that is being done.

- (4) You may say, "The preacher knows that I am behind him" -- your wife may know that you love her, but it does not hurt to tell her that every once in a while.

III. THE GOD-GIVEN OBLIGATION OF THE CHURCH TO SUPPORT QUALIFIED MEN WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

1. A gospel preacher is entitled to be supported as a matter of right, and not as an object of charity -- I Cor. 9: 6 - 14; Gal. 6:6.
2. The gospel preacher is entitled to be supported because the laborer is worthy of his hire -- Luke 10:7; Matt. 10: 9 - 10; I Tim. 5: 17 - 18.
 - (1) Under consideration in these passages is a Laborer:
 - (1) Two kinds of labor -- Physical and Mental
 - (2) A laborer under consideration is one who spends his time teaching the word of God.
 - (3) It is affirmed of God that this laborer in the Word is worthy.
 - (4) That of which he is worthy is his hire.
 1. The word "hire" here in I Tim. 5:17 defined by *Thayer* means: "Dues paid for work; wages; hire".
3. Paul took wages of churches -- II Cor. 11:8
4. I Cor. 9: 1 - 14 teaches that the preacher is to be supported on the basis of service rendered.
 - (1) Paul affirmed the right of support for the preaching of the gospel and the right for the preacher to have a family -- I Cor. 9: 1 - 5.
 - (2) Paul affirmed the right of the preacher to refrain from doing manual labor for a livelihood as he gives himself wholly to preaching the gospel -- I Cor. 9:6.
 - (3) Three illustrations prove the laborer is worthy of his reward:
 1. The Soldier -- the duty of fighting for his country throws the burden of his support upon others (9:7).
 2. The Husbandman -- his labor is rewarded by the fruit (9:7).
 3. The Shepherd -- his labor is rewarded by the milk (9:7).
 - (4) The principle in these illustrations is that every occupation in common life yields support to the worker, and he does not have to go beyond it for daily sustenance.
 - (5) In like manner the preacher is entitled to adequate support without having to resort to secular work to supply his wants.
5. The teaching of the Law of Moses set forth the principle that the laborer is worthy of his reward -- I Cor. 9: 8 - 10; I Tim. 5:18.
6. That the preacher be supported was only fair (9:11).
7. The Levites were supported under the law (9:13).
 - (1) The Lord gave them a tenth in Israel for an inheritance for their service -- Numbers 18:21; 18:24.
 - (2) When the Israelites increased their tenth was greater, and the Levites also increased.
 - (3) Israel could not forsake the Levites (Deut. 12:19).
8. Paul says just as the Levites were supported under the Law, the Lord has ordained that preachers of the gospel be supported for their work in preaching the gospel -- I Cor. 9:14.