

The Blessing Of Stewardship – 1Corinthians 9:16-18

Bible Study ~ 2/15/17

Grace Church of Lockeford

The context of these verses is very important. Paul is responding to an accusation that he is only in the gospel ministry because he wants to make money. He demonstrates that it is well within the minister's rights to be paid for their services, but he also demonstrates that, while he could have, he chose not to exercise this right while in Corinth (though he did elsewhere). Paul's concern is that the gospel be unhindered. For those in Corinth (possibly due to an abundance of extortion from false teachers) it could have been a hindrance had Paul opted to live off the resources received from those to whom he ministered. In these verses, Paul explains how he views his ministry and why he works. **He first presents that...**

1. Gospel Stewardship Is Inescapable v. 16

When we think about the story of Paul's conversion, it is obvious that he didn't begin preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ solely by his own choice. Paul's point in this verse is that he experienced the special calling of God to preach the gospel. Because that is true, he cannot boast in himself. He essentially has no choice but to preach the gospel.

"Preach the Gospel" is the Greek word – εὐαγγελίζω euaggelizō and it means *proclaim the good news. To bring the good news concerning Jesus' divine resurrection.* Paul says that necessity is laid on him. The idea of this word is that he is absolutely required to preach the gospel because woe is coming if he doesn't! The words Paul uses here paint a picture like a tube of toothpaste. When you squeeze a tube of toothpaste there is a hole in one end and the design is that the pressure you apply forces the toothpaste out of the tube. Paul is saying that he is under pressure to preach the gospel, and if he doesn't there is pain! If you push against a pressure, it brings pain and distress. Paul is pressured by the Holy Spirit to witness and he is in agony when he does not! More than that, because this is a stewardship committed to him, there will be an evaluation of that stewardship.

These verses bring to mind *Jeremiah 20:9 "Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name." But His word was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not."* The witnessing that we have been called to by the Holy Spirit should be like this. We cannot hold it back! We must preach the gospel of Jesus Christ! Paul says, "I can't boast in my preaching because I have no choice!" Gospel stewardship is inescapable. **He goes on to declare that...**

2. Gospel Stewardship Is Not Monetarily Motivated vv. 17-18a

What Paul is referring to here in v. 17 can be a little confusing without the context. In context, Paul's topic is those who travel around as teachers but whose intention is to make their living off the message they preach. When Paul was in Corinth that is not what he did. Instead, he worked as a tentmaker (*Acts 18:1-3*). If Paul was preaching the gospel by his own choice, he could boast. If he was like these false teachers who teach what people want to hear and make a living off that, he could boast in his achievements! He could live off the feel good message he peddles and that would be his reward. This word "reward" is significant. It is the Greek word μισθός misthos and it means *reward; wages; pay. It is a payment for worthy acts understood as a tangible wage.* If Paul wanted to make money off preaching the gospel then it would have to be his own gospel.

But Paul is not like that! He just said in v. 16 that he preaches the gospel because he has no choice! He preaches the gospel against his will! Now, Paul is not saying he doesn't want to preach. His point is that he is not like the false teachers who tickle ears to make money. Paul has been entrusted with the gospel. It has been placed into his care and he is a steward of it. "Stewardship" is the Greek word οἰκονομία oikonomia which means *administration; stewardship. Task – a specific piece of administrative work required to be done as a duty.* The preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ is a duty that has been

entrusted to Paul. It is his task. Since it was not something he entered by choice, he is not in it to get rich. What is his reward? What are his wages? **That is what he gets into in the rest of v. 18 where we learn that...**

3. Gospel Stewardship Is Driven By Responsibility v. 18b

Paul's reward is the exact opposite of that sought by the false teachers. His reward is the ability to present the gospel of Jesus Christ for free! Paul lays out the good news of the death burial and resurrection of Christ at no cost to those who hear. Paul states that his reward is to freely give the gospel!

He does this that he might not abuse his authority in Christ. "Abuse" is the Greek word καταχράομαι *katachraomai* which means to *make full use of. To use (fully) – to make use of; using something to its greatest degree or extent.* Paul doesn't want to take his authority to the extreme. What authority? In context, the authority to demand they care for his physical needs as he preaches the gospel. He does this because he doesn't want there to be any barriers to people trusting Christ.

Paul is not laboring for monetary wealth. He is not preaching for fame or fortune. Paul preaches the gospel to see souls saved through faith in Christ! Paul's reward will come later. He alludes to this in *2Timothy 4:8* "**Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.**"

The blessing of the stewardship committed to us is that we do not have to worry about our needs in this life. God has promised to care for us. We are simply called to be faithful in preaching the gospel. When we do, our reward in heaven will be great.

CHALLENGE: Preach the gospel of Jesus Christ without ulterior motive.

V. 16

Preach the Gospel – εὐαγγελίζω *euaggelizō* *proclaim the good news. To convey the Gospel – to bring the good news concerning the now present instantiation of Jesus' divine resurrection.*

Boast of – καύχημα *kauchēma* *boast; (reason for) boasting. Reason for boasting – a motive or grounds for being satisfied with your (or another's) achievements.*

Necessity – ἀνάγκη *anagkē* *distress; necessity; pressure. Necessity – the state of being absolutely required.*

Is laid – ἐπίκειμαι *epikeimai* *press upon; press around. To be in force (lay upon) – to be exerting force or influence (over something); conceived of imposing or putting something onto someone.*

Woe – οὐαὶ οὐαὶ *woe. Horror (interjection) – an interjection of grief or of denunciation.*

V. 17

I do – πράσσω *prassō* *practice; do. To perform (do) – to do or carry out an action; often conveying an idea of moral rightness or wrongness in the action.*

Willingly – ἐκὼν *hekōn* *willingly; voluntarily. Voluntary – done by choice (not forced or compelled).*

Reward – μισθός *misthos* *reward; wages; pay. Recompense (wage) – a payment for worthy acts or retribution for wrongdoing; understood as a tangible wage.*

Against my will – ἄκων *akōn* *unwilling. Unwilling – not done by choice (forced or compelled).*

Entrusted – πιστεύω *pisteuō* *believe. To be entrusted (state) – to be or become the recipient of something placed into one's care.*

Stewardship – οἰκονομία *oikonomia* *administration; stewardship. Task – a specific piece of administrative work required to be done as a duty.*

V. 18

Present – τίθημι *tithēmi* *put; place; lay. To make (change) – to give certain properties to something.*

Without charge – ἀδῶπανος *adapanos* *free of charge. Costless – without cost or payment.*

Abuse – καταχράομαι *katachraomai* *make full use of. To use (fully) – to make use of; probably using something to its greatest degree or extent.* Paul doesn't want to take his authority to the extreme. What authority? In context, the authority to demand they care for his physical needs as he preaches the gospel.

Authority – ἐξουσία *exousia* *power; authority. Right (authority) – a privilege (of a social or legal nature) reserved exclusively to a particular person or group.*