

**TRUTH B-P CHURCH**  
**Adult Sunday School**

**BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP**

**LESSON EIGHT: GIVING ALMS**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

As stewards of God, we must always remember that all our resources are provided by God and therefore, belong solely to Him alone. We are merely caretakers and God is still the ultimate Owner. We are accountable to Him for the resources He has put under our care. It is important how we use these resources for the glory of His holy Name.

One of the ways of using our resources is the giving of alms. Almsgiving is biblical as the Lord Jesus taught His disciple in His sermon on the mount (see Matthew 6:1-4). However, the practice of almsgiving must be done with the right purpose and attitude. One of the dangers in giving alms is compromising the true gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and turning it into a social gospel.

This lesson is to help us understand what almsgiving is and to ensure both purpose and attitude in almsgiving be done according to the Bible and to the glory of God.

**II. DEFINITION OF ALMSGIVING**

Giving alms refers to acts of charitable giving directed toward the poor, needy, afflicted, helpless, widows, orphans, strangers, and those in distress. The word “alms” is closely connected with mercy and compassion. It is more than casual generosity. It is intentional giving to relieve suffering.

Almsgiving may include the followings: 1) Giving food to the hungry, 2) Helping the poor financially, 3) Supporting widows and orphans, 4) Assisting sick or disabled persons, 5) Providing shelter or clothing, 6) Helping victims of tragedy or disaster, and 7) Supporting those unable to care for themselves.

The above is the general definition of almsgiving which unbelievers can also participate in. However, when it comes to almsgiving by a Christian, it must be done toward God’s will and purpose. In other words, God must be in the picture when almsgiving is practiced. Otherwise, it will be meaningless and no difference from the godless practice by the world.

Almsgiving reflects God’s compassionate character. Throughout Scripture, God demonstrates concern for the vulnerable. He defends the oppressed and commands His people to care for them. Giving alms is therefore not optional kindness alone, it is part of righteous living.

**III. BIBLICAL TEACHING ON ALMSGIVING**

**A. Old Testament**

The Old Testament repeatedly reveals God’s concern for widows, orphans, strangers, and the needy (see Deuteronomy 24:19-21). Farmers in Israel were instructed not to harvest every corner of their fields. Part of the crops was to remain available for the poor and strangers (Exodus 23:11; Leviticus 19:10). This demonstrated both generosity and dignity. The needy were allowed opportunity to gather food rather than being treated as worthless. This principle teaches believers not to consume everything selfishly. Wise stewardship leaves room for generosity. This demonstrates that generosity toward the needy is not separate from spirituality.

## **B. New Testament**

The central passage for biblical almsgiving in the New Testament is by the Lord Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:1-4. "<sup>1</sup> Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. <sup>2</sup> Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. <sup>3</sup> But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: <sup>4</sup> That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."

### **1. Seeking God's Approval, Not Man's**

In this passage, the Lord Jesus warned His disciples not to perform righteous acts merely to gain men's admiration. Some people gave alms in order to pursue after recognition, applause, reputation, and admiration. The Lord strongly condemned such hypocrisy. He taught that when believers give alms, they should not seek attention or personal glory. Instead, their giving should be done humbly and sincerely before God.

The Lord used vivid language when He said not to sound a trumpet before giving. This picture describes people who made known their generosity for attention. The hypocrites of Christ's day desired human applause more than divine approval. The expression of giving in secret emphasizes humility and sincerity. The focus is not secrecy for secrecy's sake, but purity of motive. The heavenly Father who sees in secret notices every sincere act of mercy. Many acts of mercy go unnoticed by society.

A believer may quietly pay someone's medical bill, buy groceries for a struggling family, or assist an elderly person without public recognition. Though others may never know, God sees every act of sincere compassion. This truth encourages believers to continue doing good even when there is no earthly praise.

### **2. Being Compassionate as God is Compassionate**

The Lord did not say, "If thou doest thy alms." He said, "When thou doest alms." This indicates that helping the needy should be a normal practice among God's people. Mercy is not reserved for a select few believers. Compassion should characterize every follower of Christ. A person may give large sums yet receive no reward from God because the motive is pride and not compassion.

Another person may give quietly and sacrificially with pure love. God evaluates the heart. Many acts that appear spiritual outwardly may actually be driven by vanity. Some people publicize every charitable act through speeches, social media, or self-promotion. They desire recognition more than righteousness. Jesus warned that human applause may become the only reward such people receive.

Biblical almsgiving is not about elevating oneself above others. Those who give must remember that they too depend entirely upon God's mercy. Pride destroys the beauty of generosity. True compassion gives without humiliating the recipient.

### **3. Ultimate Focus of Almsgiving: True Gospel of Jesus Christ**

In the process of almsgiving, always plan intentionally how the true gospel of Jesus Christ can be shared either through verbal sharing or giving of a gospel tract to those who are audio-impaired. It is not merely a Christian who does almsgiving to help the needy ones. That alone is promoting the social gospel.

Time must be set aside for the full gospel of Jesus Christ to be shared. Physical needs are only temporal. The need to know the Saviour and where to find true forgiveness of sins is more important than the physical needs. Such must be in the mind of every believer when they do alms. Otherwise, the physical needs may overshadow the spiritual needs and as a result, it becomes a social gospel which is a gospel that will never save.

People need the Lord. And they need His forgiveness of sins more than food on the table and clothes on their back. Because of sin, sinners are condemned and the wrath of God is burning against them. Without Christ's saving gospel, even if all their physical needs are met adequately and comfortably, they will still end up in hell. Let the true gospel of Jesus Christ be the ultimate focus of almsgiving.

## **IV. SUMMARY**

Almsgiving is biblical and must be done with the right purpose and attitude. While doing alms, let the true gospel of Jesus Christ be the ultimate focus since all souls without Christ will still end up in hell. May our almsgiving bring glory to the Name of Christ and the extension of God's kingdom. Amen.