



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – February 8, 2009

## Heart to Heart...

Let me speak to us about our giving. I am not speaking of 'guilting' people into giving or raking people over the coals because they don't give. I am speaking of a relationship, a sound spiritual, loving relationship that is revealed in our giving.

Jesus said, ***"Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure – pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."*** (Luke 6:38) Did you hear Jesus? What is your standard of measure? Do you give to get? That's what many try to stress but Jesus wasn't teaching that. To give in order to get is being a taker!!! A giver is one who allows the Lord to have first place in their life, knowing He is the owner of all. Our response because we trust and believe Him to be this way, is our giving. One of the first things the people of God did, when their sins were cleansed through faith in the resurrected Christ, was to give (Acts 2:43-44). Giving is a natural faith response of God's people. The brethren of Macedonia were in a great deal of affliction and deep poverty, but they still gave (II Corinthians 8). They did it by first giving themselves to the Lord (8:5) then by giving to help the poor saints in Jerusalem. How could one be poorer than deep poverty and still give? It depends on your trusting relationship with the Lord. We are speaking of difficult economic times today for many, but we aren't in any kind of poverty! Just look at what we still possess. You can't separate love from giving. You can give without loving but you can't love without giving. The difference is the attitude toward the Lord and giving oneself into His trusting care. The Lord supplied the needs!! That's a promise for the faithful.

Brethren have taken on an attitude they cannot give unless they have something and in most cases, something left over. That's backward and reveals one's spiritual insight is lacking. From the early days of God's people, God instructed them to give first from the produce of their hands. Not second, not leftovers or spur of the moment whatever I think of. Jesus said give first. Let's observe the farmer. He plants before he harvests! He has to give first and the rest is up to the blessing of the Lord. We give out of love from a heart of thanks. We should never give to receive. We should be a giver, not a taker! The saved people of God always looks to give! Listen carefully to God's promise: ***"Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."*** (II Corinthians 9:6) God is a need supplier!

The people of God were always givers first! God is the One who can and will provide all things. Listen to Him speak: ***"Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,' so we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?'"*** (Hebrews 13:5-6) Let me ask each of us, what is your standard of measure? How do you determine what you give? What makes you not think about giving? To answer those questions will reveal everything in our relationship and understanding of the Lord. Think about it!!!

Brent