

The Pilfering Pastor
2 Corinthians 11:7-15

Why do we pay pastors today to preach the Word of God? Is it wrong for pastors to be wealthy? How can I know that what I'm giving is going to a worthy cause?

MONEY is a normal component of **MINISTRY**.

The problem is that pastors, men who are called by God to focus on a few things in the life of the church, seem to be susceptible to a couple of temptations in their work...women and wealth.

We are a non-profit organization which means we are not in business to make money. We are not a government which means we have to live within the limits of what people contribute. We can't print money.

2 Corinthians 11:7-15 — *7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. 9 And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. 11 And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! 12 And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.*

And here's what his accusers were saying about him because of it...he's a second rate teacher; his message obviously isn't worth anything; nobody would pay him to share this message; he's not really even an apostle; he doesn't really care for the believers in Corinth.

Philippians 4:15-18 — *15 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. 16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. 18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.*

2 Corinthians 8:2 — *2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.*

1 Corinthians 9:12 — *12 If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.*

How we handle money that is a normal component of ministry today should...

1. Support the **SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL**. 2 Corinthians 11:7-11

He did what he did when it came to finances because he wanted to be an encouragement to them. He would serve them but he wouldn't be obliged to change his message to suit their beliefs. Nor would he be a burden to them.

The truth of Christ had changed Paul and when you embrace and accept the truth of Jesus, it will change you. It will even change the way you think about money and ministry.

2. Separate us from **SERVANTS OF SATAN**. 2 Corinthians 11:12-15

The reason Paul wouldn't accept any support from the Corinthians is because he didn't want there to be any confusion between the kind of servant of the Gospel he is and the kind of servant these other guys were.

They boasted in their own accomplishments. They preached for money. They took advantage of their followers. And their end will match their actions, just like Satan.

Support those who spread the Gospel for the good of others and the glory of God.

Let's talk about the pilfering pastor...

1. Why would Paul suggest that he had made a mistake in humbling himself so the Corinthians could be exalted (v.7)?
2. What did Paul mean when he wrote that he preached God's gospel free of charge (v.7)?
3. How did Paul rob other churches (v.8)?
4. What did the support that Paul received from other churches enable him to do (v.8)?
5. Why did Paul not want to be a burden to the Corinthians (v.9)?
6. Why would the Corinthians think that Paul didn't love them (v.11)?
7. How does Paul's practice of not accepting support from the Corinthians undermine those who were so critical of him (v.12)?
8. How can you distinguish between a true messenger of Christ and a false messenger of Christ (v.13)?
9. What will be the end of these false apostles (v.15)?
10. How do you think money should be handled in ministry today?