

"BEING A BLESSING"

Acts 20:35

My approach to ministry is based on my past: I had men of God who would not help me/invest in my ministry. So I deliberately act differently; My approach is "How can I be a blessing to others?"

Acts 20:35 *I showed you in all things that you should work as I did and help the weak. I taught you to remember the words Jesus said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*"

I. THE UGLINESS OF HUMAN NATURE

A. We need to see the essence of sin – b/c sin changed the human race

1. **Sin is self enthroned – selfishness:** *Genesis 3:6 The woman saw that the tree was beautiful, that its fruit was good to eat, and that it would make her wise. So she took some of its fruit and ate it...*

a. *A way of looking at life: It's all about me! What can I get?*

2. As soon as sin entered – it changed human relationships

a. Cain resented his brother: He was angry that God accepted him; So he attacked!

B. The sin nature (flesh) continues to work in the hearts of disciples/men of God

1. **Selfishness refuses to give to others:** *My time/\$/knowledge...is for ME!*

a. *Job: Learn for yourself b. Pastors: resented questions. Bible: How did you do that?*

2. **Selfishness views others as competitors:**

a. *Mark 9:34 ...they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest.*

1. If your brothers are competitors: *You will refuse to help them; Outreach/follow-up*

2. If you brothers are competitors: *You will try and pull them down*

a. Speak bad about them b. Work against them

C. This is destructive

1. It causes conflict 2. It keeps people from helping in spiritual things 3. It limits ministry

II. GIVING HEARTS

A. Paul gives his approach to life and ministry: **Giving!** *Acts 20:35 I showed you in all things that you should work as I did and help the weak. I taught you to remember the words Jesus said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*"

1. Weak: There are things that people don't know – things they aren't good at; weakness!

a. *Not an intelligence issue/worth issue – they just don't know (for whatever reason)*

2. Their weakness limits their effectiveness: *Affects their fruitfulness/preaching/people skills*

3. Their weakness torments them: *I can't...they lose sleep/intimidated...*

4. Their weakness affects other people: *People not saved/not helped...*

B. So Paul says I work to be a blessing: **V35** *work as I did and help the weak...*

1. How can I help you/be a blessing? Time? \$? Encouragement? Instruction?

a. Discipleship: A sincere desire to help another man fulfil his destiny b. Preaching/people skills

III. THE BLESSING OF GIVING

A. There is a powerful promise here: **Giving brings blessing!** *Acts 20:35 I taught you to remember the words Jesus said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*"

1. **Q: How could giving be more blessed than receiving?**

a. **Giving pleases God:** We are like him when we give – b/c God is a giver!

1. God blesses us as we give out to others: Matthew 13:12 For whoever has, to him more will be given

a. *More knowledge-wisdom. More revelation. More money...*

1. *The principle of flow: More jars/pouring out – more is released*

b. **Giving helps others:** Meets a need/supplies wisdom for a crisis/future labors

1. Tabitha: People impacted by her generosity 2. Barnabas: Encourager – people blessed & inspired

a. Disciples find their destiny b. Become more effective c. Able to bless more people/more saved

c. **Giving brings satisfaction:** You get satisfaction as others succeed/are blessed/help others