



Message **Transcript**

Paying Your Pastor

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Well, thank you so much for choosing to worship with us today. Thanks for coming in on a cold, snowy day. How many want to hear the word of God this morning? Amen. That's right.

That's why we're here, to worship the Lord, to seek his face, and to hear directly from him. So let's go before him and let's hear what he would have to say to us. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we've gathered in your presence. We've celebrated you.

We've worshiped your name. Lord, we've sought you in prayer. And now, Lord, we pray specifically that as your living and active word is preached, that you would have your way with each and every one of us. Lord, not only that we hear what you say, but that we put into practice the very things that you show us. And, Lord, I, too, I just pray for your help.

I pray you'd fill me afresh with your holy spirit so that I could deliver your word accurately and faithfully to your people. And so, Lord, we're ready. We're ready to hear what you have to say, because you are the almighty one. And it's in your name that we pray, the mighty and matchless name of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ, and

all God's people who are ready to hear his word and put it into practice very loudly.
Agreed with me by saying, amen.

Amen. I want to encourage you. Open your bibles up to first corinthians, chapter nine. First corinthians, chapter nine. As we continue our series in stronger, let me set up one corinthians, chapter nine.

So Paul has been answering questions that they've had about marriage and divorce and all these different things. And then last week, we took a look at the questions that he's answered about their liberties in Christ, that they've been set free to serve Christ. What does that mean? And he specifically addressed food sacrifice to idols, where we don't deal with food sacrifice to idols so much in our culture, but we deal with questions all the time as to, as a Christian, can I participate in this? Can I not?

And we talked about where the gospel is the center of all of our decisions to glorify Christ. And basically what Paul was saying is, while he had the freedom to do whatever he wanted to do, if it ever got in the way of hindering gospel proclamation, he

would never exercise that right. And that's what he was talking about. And so today, what he's going to do in chapter nine is take a look as an example from his own life. He's going to model to the corinthians exactly what he was talking about.

And in the first 14 verses that we're looking at today, he's talking about a right that he has as an apostle, as a man sent by God to pastor that church, to be paid by that church for what he did. Then he's going to spend time in verses 15 through 18 to say, but I never took advantage of that. And in the rest of the chapter saying, but I never take advantage of any of that to share the good news of Jesus Christ. And so today, what we're gonna take a look at is what, what Paul's rights were and what his rights were as a man of God, as an apostle, as a pastor to that church, to ask to be paid from that church. Now, I'm in a little bit of an awkward position.

Cause I'm talking about paying your pastor, and I happen to be a pastor, so it makes it hard. But I tell you what, when we go through God's word, I don't skip over. This would have been one I would have skipped over and we would have gone past. But I think if it's in God's word, it's important for us as a congregation. Would you agree?

Just out of curiosity, by show of hands, how many have ever heard a sermon on how to pay their pastor? Okay, very limited. I mean, that's kind of been our case going along. So we'll bring you up to speed on what God's word has to say. It's important that we understand this.

And let me just go ahead and read those 1st 14 verses of one corinthians, chapter nine, and then we'll take a look and unpack them together. And you'll also see today how this has implication for you. Paul says, am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?

Are you not my work in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defense to those who examine me is, do we not have a right to eat and drink? Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?

Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense, who plants a vineyard

and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I or does the law not also say these things? For it is written in the law of Moses, you shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing. God is not concerned about oxen, is he?

Or is he speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake. It was written because the ploughman ought to plow in hope and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we received material things from you? If others share the right over you, do we not more?

Nevertheless, we did not use this right. But we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. So in here, Paul is going to lay out four reasons why he has a right to be paid by the corinthian church, why he has the right to ask to be taken care of by them.

And the first reason he gives is this. He says, pay your pastor because he was sent by God to help you grow in Christ. Pay your pastor because he was sent by God to help you to grow in Christ. Notice what he says. He's going to talk about his liberties.

He says, am I free? The answer is, of course I am. I'm free in Christ to serve Christ any way that he would have me serve him. Am I free? Then he asks this question, am I an apostle?

Well, what's an apostle? An apostle, very simply, is one who is sent by God. That's what it means to be an apostle. Now, you'll hear pastors teach, and they'll talk, and they'll talk about capital a apostle, like a big time apostle, or a lowercase letter a apostle, like one. That's not one that you'd read about in the Bible.

And here's what they're talking about. In order to be a New Testament apostle, two things needed to be true of you. Number one, you needed to see the resurrected Christ personally. I mean, you needed to have a personal encounter with the physical resurrected Jesus Christ. Jesus appointed his apostles.

They had all seen him post resurrection, except for Judas Iscariot, who wasn't an apostle, who was an apostate, left him. But everyone else had seen the resurrected Jesus Christ. Here's what the corinthian church thought about Paul who are you? You've never seen Jesus. You never saw him at all.

As a matter of fact, you didn't even serve him. But we know from the book of acts in acts, chapter nine, that when Paul was on his way to persecute christians in Damascus, what happened? He saw a great light and he had a vision of the Lord. And he personally saw the resurrected Christ and asked the question, who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus Christ, whom you are persecuting.

So Paul considers himself the least of the apostles because during Jesus earthly ministry and post resurrection, Paul wasn't around. But he is an apostle because, a number one, he had seen the resurrected Christ. That's how you become a big letter a, apostle. You need to see the resurrected Christ. Number two is this.

You need to be directly sent by him. Jesus needs to directly tell you, go there and do this. Okay? That's what makes a big letter a apostle. See the Lord Jesus Christ and be sent directly by him.

Now, there are other apostles in the New Testament. There still is the gift of apostleship, or apostolic gifting. And that simply means somebody who hasn't directly seen the Lord Jesus Christ in all of his glory and a physical manifestation of him. But they know they've been directly sent by God to go do a service to which God has called them to do. That's an apostolic gifting.

And Paul is saying this, I have a right to be paid. Here's why he said, because God is the one who sent me to you. He's talking to the Corinthians and saying, any of you who are saved here, you either a, got saved because I followed God's leading and led you to Christ, or b, as a result of my ministry in the church. Subsequent to that, you've been led to Christ by somebody that I originally led to Christ. In other words, my ministry is being authenticated in you.

And this is what he goes on to say, are you not my work in the Lord? Notice what

he says. If to others, I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. In other words, even if other churches say he's not really an apostle, he never saw the resurrected Christ during his earthly ministry. You could for sure say that because there's fruit being born in the church as a result of the work that God has done through me, and therefore I would have a right to be remunerated by you because I have followed the Lord's leading in order to serve you.

Does that have a value. I mean, that's what Paul's saying. And a seal of apostleship, a seal in the New Testament is just something that shows an authentication, an authentication of the authenticity. So oftentimes a letter was given by the king and it had a seal on it. It showed that what was inside that letter was actually authentic.

Ephesians 1:13 says, we've been marked or sealed with the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing our deposit in heaven. We've been sealed, showing that what's inside is true and genuine, that we belong to Christ. And Paul says, you're the seal of my apostleship. I mean, you're the evidence that I am an apostle. Now, let's talk a little bit about calling.

We're going to talk more about it next week. But Paul was convinced that he had been called by God to go to Corinth to do the work which God had called him to do. So let's talk about calling, okay? There's two things that make up a calling, okay? Number one is this.

It's a personal understanding between the man of God and the Lord that he has been called to a specific work in the kingdom to which he can do nothing else. He's bound by this calling, doing what he's doing. It's not an option. Like, well, I was thinking about being a coach or an attorney or a pastor, I guess. I think pastor is a good option.

No calling means there is no way that I can do anything else and find satisfaction. Okay. When I was wrestling with the call to ministry, when I knew the Lord had called me into ministry, I was really having a hard time with it, because I was in my young twenties. There were a lot of things I wanted to do with my life, and I can just attest to you, being a pastor was really not on my radar. Preaching the word of God was not something I dreamt of from the time I was a kid.

It was something that I knew God was doing in my heart. And much like Jonah, I was trying to get away from it. And I thought I was being wrong, only to find out later. As I have read many wonderful saints in church history, like Charles Spurgeon, who taught his students, if you think you're called to preach, go run from it and try to find something else to do. And if you can find anything else to do with your life and find satisfaction, you are not called to preach.

And that gave me a lot of confidence, but I didn't have that information at the time. And I remember as a 23 year old kid meeting with a pastor that was 40 years older than me, and I was sitting down with him because I was going to discuss some of these things that were going on in my heart, but I was nervous because I knew if I shared with him what God was doing, he was going to tell me, you have to be a pastor. And that felt legalistic to me, and I didn't want to be a pastor. And I remember sitting down with him at a breakfast table, and he said the same words that Charles Spurgeon had said. He said, Jeff, don't worry about it.

He goes, if you can do anything else with your life, if you want to be a coach, go coach, go do it. Just go run and do it. And if you can do anything else with your life and

you're satisfied, fight on the inside. He goes, you're not called anyway. And I knew in that moment, I'm like, I have to preach because it ain't going away, and it's never gone away.

And a true calling is like that. And here's what I would say. If you don't have that, don't go into ministry, period. Okay? If there's not that I have to, or else you're not called of God to do it.

Ministry is not one of those jobs that you just get to sit around and say, maybe I will, maybe I won't. It seems good. Now, I've gone to three different seminaries, and I've had conversations with many young guys, and I've had conversations like this at every seminary I've been at such like this. As I hear people's story, I'm like, then what are you doing here? Cause that's kind of the way I talk to people.

And they said, well, my granddaddy was a pastor and my daddy was a pastor, and I think it'd be good if I'm a pastor. And I said, why would you ever want to do that? I'm like, if I didn't know that I was called by the Lord to do this very work, there's no way I'd be in this school. There's no way I'd be doing any of this stuff. I'd be doing

what I want to do with my life.

I'm here cause this is where the Lord has me. Like, what are you doing? That's calling. And what it doesn't mean is this. It doesn't mean that the man of God couldn't do something else.

Okay, let me tell you what a calling is not. Well, I really stunk at business, and I stink as a coach. I'm horrible academically, and I can't be a teacher, and I can't be anything else. So I guess I'll go into ministry. That's not what God's looking for, right?

God doesn't look for people who have failed every other place and just say, hey, let's go do this. No, but God, by his grace, for some reason, puts his hand on certain people to do kingdom work in a way that they know between them and God. That's all I can do. Right? That's a calling.

Now here's how you know if the calling is authentic, if the body of Christ affirms the gifting that you hear from the Lord. So, for instance, somebody that would say, I

know I'm called to be an evangelist, but they've never led anybody to the Lord.

Probably not called by God. Somebody that's called to preach. But when you hear a person preach, you think to yourself, I don't even know if his dog would want to listen to him.

Probably not. A calling from the Lord. I mean, if you're called of God in a certain service, chances are 100% of the time that there's going to be fruit bore through the calling to which God has called you. And here's what Paul is saying. I've been called by God.

I've been sent to you. I've led many of you to Christ. I'm growing many of you in Christ. I know I'm only here because of Christ. He's the one that sent me to you.

He's the one that brought me here. You know what? I think I'm worthy of being remunerated, because the eternal value that I'm bringing you is far more important than the remuneration or money that you could give to me. Right? And when it comes to church, that's why you should pay your pastor.

I mean, think about it. How much is your salvation worth? How much is having somebody expound the word of God worth? How much is having somebody walk alongside of you to do the right things for Christ so that one day when you stand before him, you're prepared for that. That's exactly what Paul is saying to this group of people.

He was sent by God to lead you and or help you grow in Christ, and he's worthy of being paid because of that. Number two goes along, he says this. He says he has the same rights and liberties that you have as a believer in Christ. Pay your pastor because he has the same rights and liberties that you have as a believer in Christ. I mean, sometimes we have this different opinion.

Like, well, we understand why we work and get paid, but he's a pastor. I mean, he only works, like, half a day on a Sunday. I mean, what would he do? Why should we ever pay him, right? We have these different standards and beliefs.

I mean, just think about it for a second. Get a number in your head as to how much you think I should get paid. Okay. You got the number in your head. There's as many different numbers in this room as there are people, right?

And there's some people that are more on this continuum. Like, if we pay them anything at all, I mean, just enough to eat, and that's fine. And then you got people all the way on this side, they'd be like, no, he should be paid more than anybody in the church. And I like you. Right.

But the point is, it doesn't say exactly how to pay. It just says that we should, and that we should care for the one who's bringing us God's word and growing us in the faith and who's walking alongside of us. Right? Notice what he says. He says, my defense to those who examine me is this.

Now, why is he making a defense? Think about the church in Corinth for a second. I mean, think of, you sat in the church in Corinth, and you've been led to Christ, or your mom or dad have been led to Christ, and there's fruit being born in the church. The apostle Paul is your pastor. What would you think of that?

Because I meet most christians in our generation. I can't wait to meet the apostle Paul in heaven. He's so awesome. I can't wait to meet the apostle Paul in heaven. He's awesome.

You know what the corinthian church thought of the apostle Paul? I mean, flip over to your next book in your bible. Second Corinthians, chapter ten, which is really the fourth letter he wrote. It's really fourth Corinthians, but two Corinthians in our Bible. And here's what they say about Paul in two Corinthians 10:10.

For they say, this is what the corinthian church says about Paul. His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible. Here's what the church thought of Paul. Yeah, when he's away and he writes letters, he's kind of a good writer. He seems to know some things about God.

But here's what we think about him. When you meet him in person, he's not that impressive to look at certainly not a good speaker. My pastor is not a good speaker.

He's not impressive. That's what the corinthian church was saying about Paul.

So when I hear people talk about their pastor and say, well, he's not that impressive. He's not a good speaker. I'm like, he's in pretty good company, right? That's how the corinthian church felt about the apostle Paul. Moreover, they never paid the apostle Paul.

He's going to talk about later in this chapter how he never exercised his rights to collect from them. But notice what he says in second corinthians, that same book we were just in. Two Corinthians, chapter eleven, verse eight. He says, I robbed other churches by taking wages from them to serve you. Now, can you imagine what it's going to be like on judgment day for the church in Corinth?

They got to stand before God to give an account for how they treated their pastor, and here's what they got. We didn't pay him. We didn't really like him. He wrote some good letters, but we found his speech contemptible. We didn't like looking at him, and we never paid him a dog gone thing.

That's what the church in Corinth is going to. That's their testimony to Paul. Right. That's why he's writing, saying, for those who are examining me, here's what I would say. He goes, do we not have the right to eat and drink?

In other words, do we not have the right for our physical needs to be met? Since I'm sowing spiritual needs in your life, and I get that, pastor salaries can be different. Like if we were in a third world country or in some country where the annual salary of most people in the church was \$500 a year. All right, that was the annual salary. And maybe the church budget is, you know, 5000 for the year.

I mean, maybe a way to remunerate a pastor is by letting them eat and drink and have food. Maybe you bring them crops so that they can sustain what they're doing. In other words, what would that look, look like to be generous in our kind of congregation? What would it look like for us to be generous? In other words, a congregation always wants to be generous to their pastor because they have the same physical needs you do.

Paul's also going to go on to say, do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the lord and Cephas? In other words, Peter was married not only did you take care of Peter? You took care of him and his wife? He goes, would I not have a right to get married and you take care of me and my wife? I think there's a biblical precedent here that says if you're gonna take care of a pastor, make sure you take care of his family, make sure you take care of his wife, make sure you take care of his kids.

A pastor shouldn't have to do his service in such a way where his wife and kids suffer for the sake of taking care of you. It should be generous from the church back to the pastor so that he and his wife and or his family, if they would have, that could be taken care of. And Paul's like, this is how it always happened. I mean, this is how it happened with the other apostles. This is how it happened with Peter's.

And what about the Lord's brothers? The Lord's brothers? Who are they? Well, do you know Jesus had brothers and sisters? I mean, Jesus was at least the oldest of seven kids that we know about.

If you want to write this verse down, it's in Matthew, chapter 13. Matthew, chapter 13 and verse 35. I think it's also Mark, six four. I'll read the Matthew passage. Matthew, chapter 13:35.

When they were questioning Jesus in his hometown, they said, is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother Mary? So that's Joseph and Mary. That's how we know it's Jesus, right? And his brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas.

So he at least had four brothers and his sisters, are they not with us? Where then does he get all these things? I mean, two of his brothers, James and Jude, wrote a New Testament epistle. They apparently were married and were taken care of when they went around preaching the gospel. And Paul's saying, I'm an apostle.

I've seen the Lord Jesus Christ. I've been called to you, hey, remunerate me. I have a right to do that. He's going to go on to say, I'm not going to take ownership of that right, but I would have a right to remunerate that from you because I have the same rights and liberties as a Christian that you do. Right.

And isn't it interesting when it comes to Paul? Paul and Corinth, Jesus in his hometown? It goes on where Jesus talks about in this verse, where he's talking to Nazareth. When they took offense at Jesus, he said, a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own household. Right?

In other words, just because you're sent by God, wherever you're sent from doesn't mean that you're held in the same highest esteem there. I remember when I was a youth pastor in Dallas, it was one of my first jobs I ever had. And I remember one of my sisters was down there with me one time, and all the kids were coming up to her and like, oh, are you Pastor Jeff's sister? Are you Pastor Jeff's sister? Oh, are you Pastor Jeff's sister?

And later, when we were alone, she kind of doubled over. She's like, they call you Pastor Jeff? That's hilarious. And I'm like, well, it's kind of what I do. I mean, I'm a pastor, but not in my family and not in my hometown.

The hardest place for me to preach anywhere in the world. Do you know where it is? Do you know where it is? It's in Peoria, Illinois. Do you know why?

Because no matter where I preach in Peoria, Illinois, which is my hometown, when they put a pulpit up like this and I walk to the front to present the word, I know in my heart that every major sin I've ever sinned in my life is within about a 15 miles radius of wherever that pulpit is. And everybody in that town doesn't know me as Pastor Jeff. They know me as what Pastor Jeff was before he came to Christ and how Pastor Jeff used to live. And they don't know me as Pastor Jeff. As a matter of fact, I remember preaching in my hometown one time about ten years ago, and a friend I went to high school with, who I hadn't talked to in years, walked up with his fiance, and he said to me, dude, who the heck are you?

And what happened to you? And I said, man, Jesus got a hold of my life. He goes, you are not the same guy I played baseball with in high school. I'm like, no, I'm different, right? It's hard.

And this is what Paul is saying to Corinth. He's like, listen, I've been called by God not because of what you think about me. I've been called by God because of what God thinks about me. And I'm doing his work, and there's fruit in my life. And so I would have a right to be paid by you in a generous way so that I could take care of my needs.

And if I were married, I would have the right to get married, and that you would take care of me and my wife, and if we had kids, that you would take care of me and my wife and my kids. It's honorable for churches to take care of their pastors in a generous way. Now, I'll say this again at the end of the message, but you might want to hear it now in case you think I'm like, just, you know, trying to get a raise, I'm not. Our church has always been generous from the get go, okay? I'm not teaching you this as a rebuke or a corrective.

I'm teaching you the word of God, of how we can be generous to the people in ministry that serve us. Right? And this is what Paul's teaching the Corinthians have a generous spirit to those who are helping you. Now, think about this. I mean, some people think, well, what are you talking about?

I mean, if that man of God had a brain in his head, he would have chosen a profession that he knew could have made him more money. I mean, if he's that dumb to choose ministry, why should we be the ones to pay him? We work real jobs. You ever heard stuff like that? Here's what I would say in response.

That man of God didn't choose to come serve you. God chose for him to come serve you. And the reason he's here is because he loves God and he loves you, and he's pouring his whole life out into you. And so he's saying he's worthy of being remunerated in a way that would show that God is at work in him. Right?

And we say weird things as Christians sometimes, you know. I mean, I know when I was in Dallas seminary, I was in a Bible study one time with Howard Hendricks and ten other guys, and we went for a whole semester long, and there were only two times that we got in arguments with each other. Once was when we talked about repentance and confession of sin, and we were dealing with sin that caused stir. And the other one was when we talked about money. We just talked about money.

And Howard Hendricks was talking about money. And what he said was, when he goes out to speak, he said, I don't ask to be paid, and I don't take my books with me and put them on display because people know where a bookstore is. He goes, I'm not going to market me. I'm going to proclaim Jesus. And we all looked at him, we pushed back on him.

Easy for you to say, professor. I mean, Mister Promise keeper, speaker, Mister Guy that's written all the books. Everybody knows who you are. You're certainly taken care of. He's like, no, no, no.

My wife and I made the decision when we were your age in seminary, that that's the way that we would work. We just wouldn't take a salary from anybody. And you need to make the decision now how you're going to handle it. And I remember making the decision that day, then I'll do the same thing. That's what I'll do.

And even when we started our itinerant ministry, we never went out to raise support because I told the Lord, I said, lord, if this is what you want me to do, then you're going to raise support for me to do it. And if we run out of support, I'll quit, and

that'll be my sign to get out. And we've never run out of money, and there's many of times I wish we would have so I could have done something else. But we never asked for money. We never sat down and told people they needed to give.

We never said, hey, how much can you afford per month? We never did that stuff. I'm not saying it's wrong to do that. I'm just saying we did it, and we went and preached. We just trust, lord, you're gonna provide what we need.

It even got to the point where people would call and ask, hey, what's your honorarium? And I would say, I don't have one, but if you would be willing, when I get done speaking, if you just put a box in the back and tell anybody that would want to give to me and put the name of our ministry on the screen that they could give on the way out, that would be fantastic. But I'm not asking for money. And God has always taken care of us. The only time I started to ask for money is when it interfered with the actual preaching of the gospel.

So I would get calls from time to time. I remember one time I had a faith night. They called me to preach before a hockey game, and I said, well, tell me about the

event. What are you doing? And they said, well, we're going to have fun and games.

We got all these arcade stuff, we got all this stuff, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I'm like, well, why do you need a speaker? Because we always have a speaker. I'm like, well, when's the speaker going to speak after all the fun and before the hockey game? And I said, I've done these before.

It doesn't work because all these kids are going to have a rip roaring, awesome time eating all this food, getting jacked up on all this candy. And then you're going to say, okay, no more fun. Sit down. Jeff's here to speak. And I said, it's not going to go well.

And I said, you really don't want me to come preach the gospel. You just want to do something for an event. So here's the deal. If you'll make the event about me proclaiming the gospel, I'll come do it for free. Otherwise, I'll charge you \$2,000 for 20 minutes and like, two grand for 20 minutes.

I said, it's a steal. I said, because if I have to leave my wife and kids at home to come down and do something which I know doesn't go along with what I do, I want to be paid for it. I want to be able to do something for them. I said, so you call me and let me know. Free to preach the gospel, \$2,000 for 20 minutes to do your little speech.

And surprisingly, they never called back. That's why I charge. But the gospel is free, and Paul's not taking rights of getting paid, and he's not telling the corinthian people, you owe me. He's teaching them how to be generous to the man of God that they're supporting because it's beneficial to them and it reaps rewards to them when they're a generous church toward the people that God sends to them. Right?

That's what he's saying. And he says he has every right. He has the same rights that you do. I mean, have you ever heard christians say something like this? You know, christians will do an event, it costs a ton of money.

Like, maybe we'll do a front range crusade, and it costs 3.8 million, and 500 churches are a part of it, and they all gather together and we raise \$3.8 million to preach the gospel once or twice, and then we find out it's not going very well. And

while we're raising the money, nobody's really coming. And then somebody pipes up in a prayer meeting and they'll say something like this, but, yeah, but if only one person gets saved, it's totally worth it. You ever heard something like that? If only one person gets saved, it's totally worth it.

Worth 3.8 million. Now, here's the deal. We can't put a price tag on our salvation. My salvation is worth way more than 3.8 million. I mean, my salvation is worth way more than a billion.

If I had a choice of a billion dollars or being saved by Jesus, I'm going with saved by Jesus. Right? You can't put a price tag on that. But I've never heard Christians say the opposite of that. I've never heard a Christian say in a church, hey, you know what?

Every salvation is worth 3.8 million. And if Pastor Jeff just leads one to Christ this year, he's so worth that. Never heard somebody talk like that. Why? Because we have funny ways of viewing money, and instead of being generous to the things of God, we tend to be calculated about what we think we should give as a bare minimum just to keep what we have, right?

That's what Paul's addressing here. Let me give you a third reason. Paul's going to talk about why you should pay your pastor. He's going to say a pastor should be paid because he needs to stay focused and grow in his calling. He needs to stay focused and grow in his calling.

He says, or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working? In other words, Paul is going to go on and talk about to the corinthian church that they robbed other churches like we read about in order to take care of them. He's like, we made tents. He goes, we did everything we could so that not one of you could say that we were here to take money from you, that there's nobody here that could say the only reason he's doing that job is because he's getting paid. No, he's like, we did whatever we could so that we could present the gospel free of charge, so you can hear about the Lord Jesus Christ.

And here's what we preached. We preached that you're dead in your trespasses and sins. We preached that hell is your future. And yet Jesus Christ stood in the way he came to this world. He died on the cross for all your sins.

He got up out of the grave and he wants to give all of you life, and he wants to indwell you with his holy spirit right now, and you can be saved from your sin right now. And if he's in you, I want to teach you how to grow in that so you can experience full freedom in Christ. That's what I came to do, and I didn't want to rob you. He goes, but I'm just asking you, do Barnabas and I, are we the only two that have to work to do this? I mean, how come you're paying everybody else and not us?

And notice what he says about staying in his calling. Verse seven. Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense, who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it, or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock. He's going to use three different examples. A soldier, a vine dresser, and a shepherd.

And what's he going to say? He goes, think about a soldier. He goes, when soldiers go off to serve, are soldiers expected to get a part time job on the side so that they can serve? I mean, recently I started watching the series band of brothers again. I haven't seen it in a number of years, and I was watching it recently and thinking about these great men that served our country so that we could have the freedoms that we

have and how they fought and what they did and the odds that they had.

It was kind of interesting because I was looking at them like, if we would have sent millennials over there, they would have never fought because they would have been like, dude, I can't even find any Internet access. How are we going to fight? But that's a whole other story. But anyway, these guys that went over and they did what they did, what you don't see is them getting a part time job in a coffee shop at night so that they can afford to buy a gun and ammunition to go fight. They were given everything that they needed so that they could devote wholehearted service to what they were doing.

How about a vine dresser? Same type of thing. What's a vine dresser do? It cares for it, nurtures it, makes sure the soil's good. It makes sure there's enough nutrients in water.

It makes sure it gets enough sunlight. It makes sure it's positioned properly. Why? So that the vine can produce fruit. And when it does, there's an expectation that I can eat off of it or sell it and get what I've.

What I'm selling. The fruit that I'm selling, I can get remunerated for it. Or considered a shepherd, you know, tending to the sheep. I mean, he can expect that while he's tending the sheep and caring for them, making sure one doesn't go off a cliff, and making sure the other one that fall down got back up. He can be assured that he can still take the milk from the sheep so that he can use that and be nourished by his job.

And then he goes on to say in verse nine, he goes, I'm not speaking of these things according to human judgment, am I? Does not the law also say these things? He goes, I'm not talking just about human examples. I'm using this example to say why a pastor should be paid, right? He uses three examples.

That soldier. Why? Because being a man of God and serving the Lord in ministry is a war. There's a battle. There's a battle that comes against that man, that comes against that man's wife, that comes against that man's family.

For why? For standing in the gap and saying, for the sake of the gospel, I'm going to make sure I'm proclaiming it faithfully, making sure our flock is taken care of, praying fervently, and it's a battle. And every time you step forward in your calling, every time you step up to do something more for the Lord, there's always a battle to that. Every elder, when we interview elders and we're vetting elders and we bring elders together, we tell every single elder, before you come on as an elder, you need to know this. You are going to step up your game in such a way that the bullseye on you is going to be bigger and you're going to get hit.

And I don't know whether it's going to affect your health, your marriage, your family, or potentially all the above. Maybe your finances, maybe your job, but hang on, it's coming. And 100% of the time it's happened, 100% of the time when you stop, we're in a battle here, right? A pastor that is faithful in serving the Lord and praying and faithful in serving the Lord and studying his word, and faithful in the Lord and proclaiming and shepherding and doing all that. It's very difficult to get tied up into other things and just show up on the weekend and do that.

He should be able to labor in his calling to become more effective and better at doing that. You say, well, Pastor Jeff, I know some bivocational pastors and they're

awesome. I'm gonna tell you this. Bivocational pastors in heaven are gonna be rewarded incredibly. And sometimes you're bivocational because you have to be, because your congregation can't afford to take care of you.

But there are other bivocational pastors whose churches could afford to be generous to them who aren't generous to them. And I think that's a disgrace. I think it's a disgrace to the Lord. It's not honoring what the lord's sending to you. Take the vineyard, what's the vineyard guy do?

He's taking care of all that in hopes to get the fruit. What's the shepherd do? He's taking care of all the sheep. Here's the truth about all three of these callings. You can't leave them alone.

A soldier on the field can't say, hey, I'm going to take off a week. I'm just going to go for a swim and watch some movies. I'll be back on the front lines in a while. Somebody taking care of a vine can't just say, I'm done cultivating. I'm done putting sunlight on this thing.

It'll take care of itself. It'll die. Sheep can't even live about an hour without anybody taking care of them, right? I mean, and so you ask me, what is it? It's a constant focus.

I mean, ask my wife after the service what it's like to be married to me and ask her this question, hey, when does Jeff turn off? When is it in his life where he stops thinking about the church or stops caring when there's a problem in the church or stops rejoicing when somebody's doing well? Just ask her. Ask her what it's like for us on a vacation. Even if we go on an when does Jeff totally shut off here will be your answer.

Never. Why? Because it's my calling. I can't get away from it. So even when other people are preaching here, I'm praying for them and I'm thinking about them, and I'm praying for you because I can't get away from it because it's a calling.

And here's what Paul's saying. Pastors should be able to grow in their calling. They should be able to grow and be more faithful in their calling, because if they are, it will only benefit you. And then finally, he gives this reason. The fourth reason why you

should pay your pastor is because this, he knows that scripture teaches this practice, and Jesus Christ himself commanded it.

I mean, this practice is taught in scripture, and Jesus Christ actually commanded that you pay the men of God. Notice what it says in verse nine before it says, does not the law say these things? In other words, doesn't scripture teach this? Notice this. Deuteronomy 25 four.

For it is written in the law of Moses, you shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing. God is not concerned about oxen, is he? In other words, you animal lovers. It doesn't mean God doesn't like animals. But God didn't put that scripture in deuteronomy 25 four because he's so in love with ox.

And oxen, he put it in because when oxen would thresh and there would be a harvest, he was saying, you don't muzzle the oxen. Let the thing eat. He's doing his work, so let him eat so he can keep doing his work. Feed him. Notice what he says or is he just speaking altogether for our sake?

He said, yeah, for our sake. It was written because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher ought to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. A pastor ought to preach in hopes and serve in hopes of being remunerated, because he's sowing spiritual seed into God's people. And there's nothing wrong with that. Scripture teaches that you say, well, how much should we pay our pastor?

Here's what the Bible says. In one Timothy, chapter five and verse 17, it tells you how one Timothy 5:17 says this. The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. Now, before you go to the place, hey, we'll honor you twice. We'll give you two gold stars.

Hey, we'll give you two thumbs up. Think about it like this. From time to time, I have people out to my house to fix things, because I can't fix anything. And so if I have a plumber out to my house to fix my garbage disposal, and he comes out and he puts the garbage disposal in, and he does all the plumbing work, and he puts it back together and he leaves, I don't look at him and say, nice job. Oh, you want double honor.

Hey, great. You're in for good news. Double honor today. Two thumbs up. No, I remunerate him.

He expects to. To be paid, right? That's what he's talking about here. Double honor is being paid, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching the word. Why?

Because it's through the word of God that you grow in your faith. It's through the word of God that you become who God wants you to be. And there's nothing wrong with paying your pastor. Now, again, you're gonna ask, how much? How much?

Here's what God would say. Second Corinthians, chapter nine, the book over from the one that we're studying, and verse seven. Two Corinthians, nine and seven would tell you how it says this. Each man must do just as he purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. In other words, here's how you should give generously.

Here's how you should give cause you want to. In other words, nobody here has to. God would say, you're not under compulsion. I'm teaching you the word that would say, this is what you should do. But I'm telling you, you shouldn't be under any compulsion from me.

You should be under compulsion from the Holy Spirit that it's the right thing to do. Right. Why? Because God loves a cheerful giver. It's the reason we clap for our offering here.

Cause God loves it when we cheer. Now, here's the truth. You say, well, how does it benefit me? And just so you know, in case you're new to church, I don't get paid based upon your offering. Just so you know, our elders sit down and they're painstaking about how they come up with decisions, and they work with accountants, and they work with all sorts of tax returns.

I think about 50,000 of them, to kind of see, hey, what's a range for a pastor that

has a church this size, and what are the ranges? And how should we do this? And I'm not part of any of the discussion, and they choose what they want to do to pay me. I would tell you they tend to err on the generous side, and I'm grateful for that. So it's not like I'm asking for a raise.

So if you give more, I'm not getting paid more. Just so you know, what I'm saying is, generous churches. God blesses generous churches. I had a chance to talk to Kent Shaw, who's now on our staff, and I was asking him about all the churches who are part of our fellowship, and saying, hey, is there a correlation between generosity in a church and fruitfulness? He said, 100%.

He said, our most generous churches, and our church happened to be one of them. Still happens to be one of them. Our most generous churches are our most fruitful churches. Is there any mistake? Why?

Because God loves a cheerful giver. Let me give you three things that generosity does, okay? Generosity. The experience. When we're generous, we can experience multiplied opportunity.

Multiplied opportunity. The more generous you are, the more God gives us opportunity. Now, in a couple weeks, you'll hear me stand up here and talk about all sorts of opportunity. There's not one here that won't be excited about. I promise you, you'll be thrilled that we're going to go all around the world and plant churches, and we're in a position to start doing that.

It'll pump you up. But it doesn't happen because we say, yeah, let's do it. It happens when we're generous to the things of God, and then we get to go do that. You know what it also does? Number two, it builds our faith.

I mean, when we're generous to the things of God, and then we see that God is actually generous back to us. It builds our faith. When we collectively are generous to the things of God, and collectively, God comes through and does things we couldn't have imagined, it builds our faith. So he gives us more opportunities. He builds our faith.

Let me tell you a third thing it does. It encourages the pastor and those on staff and their families to continue in their service because they feel very grateful serving you. Generosity is a great thing. It moves the heart of God. Why?

Because God was so generous to us. He sent his only begotten son, who was perfect in every way, though he was rich, became poor, and died in our place so that we who were poor could receive the fullness of the gospel. God's heart is generosity. So when we're generous, it actually moves God's heart, right? And this is what he's saying in first corinthians, chapter nine, in verse eleven.

He says it like this. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? Here's what he's trying to make the argument of. If God cares about oxen that can harvest and eat during the harvesting season, and God cares about spiritual things, what's more important, an ox or a pastor? I mean, what's more important, spiritual things or monetary things?

In other words, here's what Paul would say if he were here. You couldn't pay me

too much for what I'm pouring into you. I'm pouring into you the eternal things of God. What price tag do you wanna put on that? And some people are like, well, you can pay a pastor too much.

I don't really think so. And here's why I don't think so. Because pastors know more than anybody that they have to give an account for everything in their life, and they will be held to high judgment by Almighty God, the same way you will, for every way they spend every cent and every word that they say. And the Bible says that God will judge his teachers even harder, right? I mean, don't be calculated.

He said, be generous. He goes on to say this. He goes, if we share this right over you, do we not? If others have this right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel.

He goes, we'll do nothing that causes hindrance to the gospel. Even though we have this right, we're not going to take this right. So just so you know, for me, because I'm not sitting here, you know, edging in for a raise. I mean, when Kim and I moved out

here. I mean, we made the decision in March of 2009 to come out here.

We moved our whole family here in August. We started the church in November. I didn't take a paycheck till the following April. We paid other people before we paid me. We paid buildings before we paid me.

We paid for all of our equipment before we paid me. We raised money on the outside to have enough money so that we could live while the church would flourish. That's always been my heart. So I'm not standing here today saying, pay me more. I'm worth it.

I'm teaching you the word of God that says, be generous to your pastor because it's a blessing to him and it's a blessing to you. Verse 13 says, do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple? And those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? In other words, all through the Old Testament, the Levites and the priests, when they served altar, I mean, they were given some of the portion for the food. They were given some of the remuneration so they could take care of their families.

I mean, they were always taken care of. Those who serve the Lord were always taken care of. And Paul is saying, hey, I'm an apostle too. I have a right to be taken care of by you. And notice this final one is, if it doesn't get any stronger, so then also the Lord verse 14 directed those who proclaimed the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

What does Jesus want? Jesus wants those who proclaim the gospel, who have been called, who have an authentic calling in their life to get paid by the gospel. Why? Because it keeps their focus. I mean, from the time I've gone into ministry, I've had people come up to me from amway and every other sales, health company, whatever, wanting to get me on their team, because they know that if I start selling and can sell the whole church, they can be wealthy just by the people I put under me.

But here's why I don't do that. Because I don't want to come to you and say, I love Jesus and let's talk about the gospel. And, oh, by the way, could you use some more toilet paper in your house this week? Right, because I don't want to mix up my message as to what I'm doing. I want to be wholeheartedly devoted to the gospel of

Jesus Christ.

And let me tell you this, even while our elders are generous and while we as a staff try to be generous to all of our staff, in the way we pay, even if they weren't, let me tell you something. I'm here until Jesus calls me away. I'm not here to get paid. I'm here to proclaim the good news that Jesus Christ is Lord for your life's sake, and that you can have hope in him and in him alone, and that he can fill you to the full. And that's what the Lord requires.

The Lord wants us to be those kind of people. And because Jesus commands it and because we can expect it, here's what I would say to you again. Let me finish the message by saying that not a rebuke, not a corrective, not a you better, or else this is thank you for being that kind of church. Thank you for being the kind of people that give generously. And if you're here today and say, well, I don't know that I've ever been that generous here at their church, I got great news for you.

We're gonna have awesome opportunity coming up in a couple weeks. I'm gonna stand up here, I'm gonna share with you some of the things that God's doing in our

church and ways that you're gonna be able to get involved. And you can always grow in your generosity. That's what God wants. And here's why we want to be generous, because there's nobody, nobody, nobody like our God.

And the more generous we are to him, the more we move his heart. The more we move his heart, the more he does. The more he does, the more it builds our faith, and the more we want to be part of the work of God that he's going to use us to do all around the world. Amen. Isn't that true?

This is why Paul says, this is my rights. And you're going to see next week how he's like. But I didn't take any of those rites for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ, because it's because of him and him alone that we have life. Amen. Would you stand with me as we pray and close with this chorus?

Jesus, we just want you to know that you are the generous one, that when we're generous, all we're doing is modeling what you've already done for us, that we have everything we need in you. And so, Lord, we give you praise and glory and honor as we sing to you that there is no one like you. In Jesus name, amen.

