What Is Faith Promise Giving?

Text: II Corinthians 8:1-12; II Corinthians 9:6-11

Our heart's desire is that we would see this world as God sees it and get the Gospel to the
uttermost parts of the earth. The mission is given: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The work is far from complete and we can say with this ancient witness, "And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room" (Luke 14:22).

The Bible says, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Romans 10:14, 15a). It is the sending that we are pre-occupied with in a missions conference. Our goal for these many years has been God's plan, which is incorporating the faith promise giving plan to fund the task of fulfilling the Great Commission. As our church grows and we attain new members, I have to remind myself that not everybody in our church comprehends the faith promise concept of giving. And for those of us who have used this plan for years, we need the annual reminder of how we support our missions. What is the faith promise giving plan?

1. IT STARTS WITH A TITHE.

"Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by
year" (Deuteronomy 14:22). "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10). The Jews were required to bring one tenth of their increase to the Lord for the funding of the ministry. Even in the New Testament, a percentage was an understood demarcation to be used as a starting point with which we figure our amount given. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Corinthians 16:2). We see this in the phrase "…lay by him in store, as God hath prospered…." Some have argued that we should not enjoin a New Testament principle with an Old Testament command. When my objectors are confronted with the fact that

New Testament grace exceeds and goes beyond the law, the complaints have a tendency to subside.

"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9, 10). We see God honors the act of giving percentage wise by overflowing our budget, as He uses words like "filled" and "bursting out." We see the phrase from Malachi, "…open you the windows of heaven…" also used in Genesis 7:11, "…the windows of heaven were opened" (Genesis 7:11). One of the few times that unusual phrase is mentioned has to do with God's blessing upon the one who gives. Think of it, God will "flood" you with His blessing when you give!

2. IT CONTINUES WITH A CHALLENGE.

God said, "…and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing…" (Malachi 3:10). The Hebrew word for "prove" is *bachan* which means to test, to investigate, to scrutinize, examine, prove, tempt, "בחן:" try (trial). So the Lord is making the challenge to test Him, yes, even scrutinize Him and see if He will not bless us when we give. If I may say, with what seems close to being irreverent, God seems to be saying, "I dare you to give me a try in this matter of giving!" God is the initiator in all that is good. God's Word says, "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). We can give because He first gave to us!

3. IT CULMINATES WITH A COMMITMENT.

God said of the Macedonians, "For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves" (II Corinthians 8:3). These precious saints actually gave beyond their human feasibility. How do we do this? The answer is "by faith." The Bible says, "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7). It comes down to this: we give our tithe, i.e., one tenth of our gross income to God and then we pray with a commitment prayer similar to this: "Lord, I am impressed to give you (a said amount) beyond my tithe as a faith gift. If you provide it, I shall give it unto you." You are pleasing God by choosing the faith life and you are obeying God when He provides your abundance over and beyond. The Bible says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). This plan will work for oil company executives and it will work for waitresses in restaurants. It will work for cowboys and it will work for computer technicians. It will work for doctors and it will work for

nurses. It will work with employers and it will work with employees. God's Word always works; it is we who do not always apply the true riches of His Word.

Here is an abbreviated form of Oswald J. Smith's (father of modern missions movement)
testimony on faith promise giving: "I shall never forget how God taught me to give. (The Lord said) 'I know you have nothing in your pocket and nothing in the bank.' 'Well, then,' I said, relieved, 'that settles it. I have nothing to give and I can't give anything.' It was then the Lord spoke to my heart. I shall never forget it. 'I am not asking you for what you have,' He said. "You are not asking me for what I have, Lord?' I replied. 'Then what are You asking?' 'I am asking you for a faith offering. How much can you trust Me for?' 'Oh, Lord,' I exclaimed, 'that's different. How much can I trust You for?' Of course, I knew nothing about a faith offering. But I knew the Lord was speaking. I had trusted God for a certain amount and He had met it."

Dr. Smith went on to explain how that he increased his giving every year. He continued by saying, "From that day to this I have been increasing the amount and sending it to the Bank of Heaven year by year. If I had waited until I had it, I never would have given it because I never would have received it. I gave a faith offering and God honored it. That was the first time, I say,
that I had ever given what I call a faith offering. The Apostle Paul often took up faith promise
offerings. He asked a church to promise a certain amount, and gave them a year to pay it. As the year drew to a close, he sent someone to remind the church of their faith promise before he arrived (see II Corinthians 9). A faith promise offering is a scriptural offering; it is a Pauline offering, and God blesses it. Have you only given cash offerings? It requires little faith to give cash offering. If I have a dollar in my pocket, all I have to do is take it out and put it in the plate. I don't have to ask God for it. I don't have to trust Him for any definite amount. I just have it and give it. But it is entirely different with a faith promise offering. I have to pray and ask God how much He would have me give, then trust Him for it. Month by month I must go to Him in prayer and ask Him for the amount promised. I must wait upon Him until it comes in. What a blessing such dependence brings!

"For well over a quarter of a century now, that is the kind of offering I have taken for missions. More comes in than the amount promised! I am not talking about pledges. A pledge offering is between you and a church, between you and a missionary society. A faith promise offering is between

you and God. No official will ever call on you to collect it. No one will ever send you a letter about it. If you are unable to pay it, all you have to do is to tell God about it. Give Him your reason. If He accepts it, you are free. This, my friend, is the greatest investment you can make. You should make money for Him, use what you need to live on and give as much as you can for the work of evangelization. Put your money where it will accomplish the most for God. Put it into the getting out of the Gospel. Put it into the souls of men. Use it for those who have never heard the message. Make a faith promise offering unto Him, then trust Him to help you meet it. Unmeasurable blessing will be yours."

-Pastor Pope-