

The Labourer Is Worthy of His Hire

by George Verwer

The biblical principle of sharing in the work of the kingdom is essential for missionary service, and it is not biblical to feel guilty about receiving support from churches and prayer partners.

Duration: 1:03:48

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:7

Topics: "Financial Stewardship", "Missionary Support"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the financial challenges and expectations faced by missionaries, particularly in the context of the organization OM (Operation Mobilization). He emphasizes the importance of individuals taking initiative and not solely relying on prayer for financial support. The speaker also highlights the concept of one person's surplus helping those in need, and how this principle applies within the OM community. He mentions the need for balance in personal finances and the potential pitfalls of overemphasizing a simple lifestyle while trying to evangelize the world. Additionally, the speaker mentions specific projects, such as Project Africa, and encourages individuals to share information about these initiatives and allow the Holy Spirit to guide others in their support.

Transcript

1 Corinthians chapter 9, starting at verse 7, verses 7 through verse 14. Very important biblical principle we're dealing with tonight. How many of you are fairly sure in your mind, you're not positive, but you're fairly sure God is leading you into longer term missionary service? Not just, you know, raise your hand.

That's amazing. Now I can tell you this message tonight is for your sake, not for mine. Because if you are talking and thinking about longer term missionary service, on the practical level, your greatest problem will probably be in the area of support.

Last night before I went to sleep, I was reading, it was quite late, an article from the Wycliffe Bible Translators. And this article pointed out the agony that many of their long term people have in finding the necessary support to survive. And they're known as the, you know, one of the outstanding, 50 year old outstanding mission organization with enormous linkings with the church, especially in the United States, but also England and Australia and other countries.

This article so ministered to me biblical basis of how a worker is to be supported in the work of God. Let's try to get this from the word of God tonight. And we'll have a foundation stone for the rest of our life.

I put some copies out yesterday of Peter Maiden's book on the subject of giving. If you're fortunate to get one of these, do share it with other people or let's read starting verse seven, following your own language through verse 14. I'm reading from the new American standard, 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 not the law also say these things? For it is written in the law of Moses, he 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 plowman ought to plow in hope and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the cross. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you? If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, the unique calling of the Apostle Paul, did not use this right, but we endure all things that we may cause no hindrance to the cause or 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 with the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. May God give us understanding from his holy word. Most of your pastors receive a salary.

This is not necessarily the lack of faith. It actually is quite biblical. Some mission societies pay their missionaries a proper salary.

And in O.M., for many years we have been trying to bring things into balance by saying, though we don't feel led in that direction, we certainly do not condemn other groups that have that particular method of getting the money out to the worker. At this point, we need a good message on the birth and the growth of what is called the faith mission society, but we don't have the time to do all that we'd like to do tonight. And this is something that within O.M. we have wrestled with for many years.

I believe that our general council this year, we came into the greatest honesty and reality in the area of money that I have known, at least in the last 20 years. Because at times, due to our own failures and the criticism we received when we failed, we have reacted in pride and got into the dangerous form of extremism in certain cases. And among many of us in O.M., it was almost wrong.

We felt a twinge of our conscience if we even talked about money, though there has never been any policy against that. Our conservative policy, of course, forbade us to get into fundraising and it still does. And if you read our literature carefully, you will see that we believe in information but without solicitation.

Because of other complexities, it actually became information except money, without solicitation. Now in a number of O.M. countries, that changed quite a few years ago because different countries took advantage of different freedoms they had as an individual country. And there's been increasing disunity on this subject over the past few years.

So after much agony of heart, I made this cassette tape called the Financial Crisis Tape, the most widely listened to tape I have ever produced. And O.M. has come into a great new freedom in this area. And it is biblical because the New Testament and the Old Testament talks about money.

We are not talking about any kind of high-pressure, gimmick-ridden fundraising. We're not talking about that. But we're talking about the need for you to be able to share with your prayer partners and your church what actually O.M. believes and expects of you in the area of finance.

And of course, the foundation for this is found in this scripture. You are in the work of the kingdom. If I didn't believe that God had raised up this fellowship with all of our need and with all of our weaknesses, I would excuse myself and I'd get out of here tonight with or without a ticket.

You know, if you're not convinced that God is in this and that there is, spiritually speaking, a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day leading us, then, you know, I wouldn't want to get in one of those trucks and head on to, you know, eastern Bangladesh villages. O.M. now has a close association and linking with over 1,000 local churches. Many of these pastors and churches believe in this work more than I do.

They don't know as much as I do. They believe this is the work of the kingdom. How many of you have been sent out in a definite way by your own local church? Would you raise your hand? Raise your hand.

Please hold it up high. That's way over 50 percent. We didn't send you.

We didn't even know who you were a few months ago. We were praying that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth labor, but the Lord of the Harvest, and this is clear in many passages and acts, has chosen to use his church to send forth the labors on the human level. Of those who did not raise their hand at that moment, how many of you sense that you are sent forward by other people who have prayed for you and committed you to the Lord, even though they may not have been an organized local church? Would you raise your hand? That's another great number of people.

Now, we won't get into what the rest of you are doing here, but this is where God has mightily used his fellowship of OM to take people who don't have a very good church relationship, but they love Jesus. They want to grow in their faith. They want to serve the Lord.

They may not understand yet church truth, and yet it has often been through OM that those people later on have become more church-centered than the people who came to us from the churches in the first place. A couple of years ago, Jonathan McCroskey wrote a leaflet about, with the help of other leaders, about OM's financial policy. In our traditional conservative way, we said any church that asks us for this can receive it.

Then we had a great debate and a lot of prayer, and we said, now we're going to send it to the churches anyway. This year, we had another debate and more prayer, and now you can enclose it and send the leaflet to every prayer partner that you have. That will be the new revised edition.

It's not a big change, but for the likes of us, it's quite a radical step. The Word of God teaches that you working in the kingdom should receive what you need materially to do that work. Simple ABC biblical principle.

You don't have to feel guilty that people in your church are giving their hard-earned money so that you can go to India. You shouldn't be feeling guilty about that. And we often have difficulty when we think of a dear old-age pensioner who's sacrificing and giving to you.

He doesn't have a cassette recorder. She doesn't have a typewriter. She doesn't have a lovely colored Indian shoulder bag.

She may not have a car. She may not have some other things that you have. And when you visit her house, she hasn't painted it for several years because she's given you all the money that she was going to use to buy the paint.

And you find out she's fasting every third day so that she can send other missionary support money. And you find out she doesn't have any more Christian magazines because the subscription costs too much. Then you find out she doesn't go to church on Sunday because she can't afford the bus fare.

She's given it all to you. I dare to say the average Joe ever could walk out of there feeling fairly guilty about the whole thing. Now, I can assure you most of our prayer partners are not like that.

When I fast, I think of my poor prayer partners. And when I blow some money on a nice big pizza, I think about one of my overweight businessman friends. Just a matter of keeping the balance.

It is difficult, isn't it? There's a little memo out on the table, if you can ever find it. It's one of the more dull-colored ones, in which I share about the problem of overemphasizing simple lifestyle while trying to evangelize the whole world, 4.7 billion souls with two ships and 400 vehicles. Now, in myself, I love the simple lifestyle kick, really.

I just love to save money. I have a miserly root, just love to squeeze pennies and even watch them dance. One of my great victories last week, when I was walking the dog in the park, picking up tins and bottles and checking what was around, I found a tin or a can, we're even in England calling them cans now.

Terrible, really, what's happening. I found an unopened can of Coca-Cola. I brought it home, checked it for radioactive activity, put it in the fridge.

And on the journey from England, I had the joy of opening that free, miraculously provided Coca-Cola. I mean, there's a joy in this, in being simple and seeing money saved for the glory of God. I haven't bought any shoes for 28 years.

I get vibrations walking in shoes that don't fit. And I collect old shoes that people don't want. I even wore two different shoes once, that always helps in the evangelism.

You know, the fact of the matter is, if we're going to evangelize the world, we're not careful. Simple lifestyle becomes a subtle tangent. We certainly would never have gotten two ships.

We would have never printed and published three to 400 million pieces. I shouldn't say printed and published. A lot of it was printed and published by others.

We just distributed it. That's why we've written this leaflet on releasing finance through prayer, because it's going to take money to evangelize the world. And if you're going to be a long-term missionary, you're going to have to learn to handle this problem.

Now, some of you may work with a society that pays you a salary. One of the reasons OM is changing its policy a little bit is so that when people leave OM, they can live with what they receive in the way of teaching when they're on OM. Because most people, and we've had 25 or more years to watch them, if they want to be career missionaries, they leave the present OM emphasis in order to get into another mission society, because most mission societies will not have what OM has been teaching the last 20 years.

But here's what has happened over these 20 years. Many people who felt in agreement with what we have taught have used that as a determining factor that they are not to be long-term missionaries, but they are to go and take up a secular job. I wish I had time to speak, because especially here in Europe, there is enormous pressure not to be a so-called full-time Christian worker.

Countries like Germany, you're going to get very little encouragement to be a full-time Christian worker, especially with an interdenominational, you know, OM type thing. And in the past 20 or 30 years in Britain, the general message coming to the young people is get a career, get a good job, then the Lord can lead you later on, if you prove yourself, and if it be his will, then maybe, perhaps, he can lead you into full-time. So what do we see on the mission field, especially up until, say, 15 or 20 years ago? More and more and more Americans, and less and less and less Europeans.

This, we believe, is one of the reasons God brought OM into birth 25 years ago, this very month here in Europe. To work with the Church in Europe and to help the Church in Europe continue to be a mighty missionary force for God on a worldwide level. That is a cardinal goal and principle of OM in Europe.

We have seen many, many answers to prayer in European churches. And there is not a single European mission society that doesn't have an XOM or more, sometimes a dozen or two, laboring in their missionary force today as a full-time worker. But there would be many, many more if we were more biblical in our approach to money.

And we would not feel guilty about doing deputation work for BMMF mission society or some other missionary group. And we would not think only in these extremes. What are the extremes? Over here, extreme, very off-putting fundraising.

That's one extreme. Other extreme, the conspiracy of silence, total silence. I only talk to God about money, not to man.

We have seen in OM that both of these extremes are ugly. We have discovered that sometimes this silence extreme leads to a more subtle kind of pride than even this funny fundraising extreme. And in OM we have seen some very ugly pride at times.

People almost boasting that their money came in and they are waving their yellow receipt slips. What about the young person on the same team who didn't get any yellow receipt slips that month? Is he praying less? Has he got less faith? It's as simple as that. When we pray in the area of healing, we see some people healed.

Others are not healed. I was watching Jonathan McCroskey as he got into his van out the window. Every time I see him, all on his own tonight, get into the van.

It takes quite a time. It's quite an event. And seeing him drive away, I tell you, it speaks deeply, deeply to my heart in a way that I cannot easily express.

I had the joy of coordinating the medical rescue operation when Jonathan had his accident. We mobilized immediately tens of thousands of people to pray, but then we acted. We didn't just pray.

We know God could have raised Jonathan up right from the back of that vehicle where he was crushed or from that hospital bed in Spain. Everything within us as Christians tells us we must pray and then we must act. A top doctor was taking care of him, but through various contacts I had in other countries, I got to a

better top specialist in Barcelona and we flew him at considerable expense immediately to the hospital where Jonathan was and we continued to pray.

He could have died. Then after consultation with those doctors, we got the best Swiss air rescue service we had ever heard about. We had already been in touch with Switzerland.

In fact, I was in touch with about 10 different countries. And Jonathan was flown in a special air ambulance from that location in Spain to one of the best spinal cord hospitals in Europe, which just happened to be a few blocks from his home in Brussels. That's quite an amazing fact.

Not just prayer. Prayer and obedience. Prayer and common sense.

We've always said this in OM, but we found it difficult to put it together in certain ways and we still will. We'll still have to grow and learn. We have not arrived.

Now you're going home to your churches. What are you going to do back there? Will it be the conspiracy of silence? Will you be able to be open with people about what God is leading you to do in your life? You have been accepted into the work of God. For the last 12 months or two years, we have been processing applications, preparing for this particular week right here, right now.

For two years we've been working on this. Many have not come this far. Some have gone home from here.

Most of you now have been accepted into the Operation Mobilization family for the next couple of years. We are doing a work that is on the mind and the heart of God and that is commanded in the word of God to go and evangelize the world. You are the oxen that is spoken about in this passage and we don't want to put a muzzle, some kind of brace on you so that you cannot do that work.

You are the laborer that's worthy of your wages. Historically, that puts us in a very challenging situation. Biblical response should be we go to our churches, we share how God has led us, and we believe and pray with them together and seek their confirmation on what we are doing.

This is complex because I don't believe we necessarily need a full-scale missionary commendation for someone to come on a one-year spiritual training program. This is what makes the first couple of years in O.M. a little bit complex in some of this. Some of you are financing yourself.

There's nothing wrong with that. Other people have seen money come in from their parents or from some other source. Many of these things we have as our goals.

Of course, it takes time because many churches don't have a missionary vision. Because of the nature of the missionary situation today, the false ideas, the traditions, the lack of vision, we at times have to go and convince people that world missionary work is worth their investment in the first place. That should not have to be.

It should not have to be that the likes of us have to help convince the church of the task of world mission. But the truth is, that is where the situation is in many places today. That's why sometimes it is difficult to explain and describe the ministry of Operation Mobility.

There are many sides to the O.M. personality. O.M. was partly born as a protest movement, crying for renewal and revival among God's people. That was as important as evangelism in those early days of

O.M. And from those earliest days, we were selling copies of Why Revival Tarries and giving out Herald of His Coming and distributing Calvary Road, that there may come revival and vision to the church of Jesus Christ.

Our first burden wasn't to get them to send us to the mission field. Our first burden was that the fire of God may come down upon the church. Our first burden was that the fire of God may come down upon the church.

And that they would send workers with all the great mission societies to complete the task that was in front of them. Satan, of course, counterattacks in many, many different ways. I believe every spiritual movement has blind spots.

For many, many years, I beseeched God to show O.M., to show me my blind spots as I seem to have an ability to see them in other people, at least I thought I did. And I am, God is merciful. He uses us with our blind spots.

And He's patient with us. He doesn't say, now, when you get everything in perfect order, then I'm going to use you. This treasure is in earth and vessel.

O.M., from its earliest days to this days, had areas of immaturity and areas of spiritual blindness, practical blindness, that God has slowly, slowly helped us with. Isn't it interesting how we can see the blindness the other group had? Sometimes in O.M., we have spoken negatively and despairingly of other groups, of the practices we felt they had, which we didn't feel were the best. Praise God for people who have not been afraid to challenge us concerning some of our blind spots.

Including quite a few of you who are here, who have been here in this conference. And O.M., I can assure you in the months and years to come, is committed to greater honesty, greater integrity, and to a more biblical position concerning money and concerning our relationship and submission to the local church, wherever we may be coming. And if your own home church doesn't feel that you should be coming on O.M., then we feel one of our leaders must go there and pray together and talk this thing out.

Not a matter of you sneaking out the back window and showing up in the O.M. van in Lahore. Not a matter of you selling your car and draining your bank account, and by that purpose bypass the church and come into O.M. through the chimney. Because it's not firstly the money we want to see the church is giving to support you and world missions.

It's the prayer. It's the fellowship. It's also the fact that when you return to your country, O.M. does not have the structure to care for you.

It must be your church who welcomes you back and helps you get on your feet in your own hometown, in your own community. We cannot possibly do that. Right now O.M. doesn't have the manpower even to type out the receipt slips for the gifts that we're receiving.

I know on the I.C.T., International Coordinating Team, one of the married women who already has several jobs is also right now typing up receipt slips and she has two children and is her husband's secretary and is working part-time as my secretary as my secretary is on leave. But she's been going the extra mile into the office to type up receipts. You see the key in sending out the workers is the local church, but the key to receiving the workers back, including some who may be casualties, is also the local church with all their roots and the God-given structure that they have.

Now in O.M. we're in so many different countries and just the differences between Germany and England and some of these things are very, very great. Some of our German young people come from little evangelical fellowships, which are just a part of the big Lutheran church in their city. And some of these people, until they came in touch with O.M. and we gave them some information, never understood anything about personal financial support.

They just give their money to the organization and let the organization divide it up among the workers. Our O.M. system was far more linked to the way things have been done because of certain movements of faith in Great Britain and then in America. When we gave the German churches some information and when we told them on the telephone in person to person the basic rules of the game, because it's dangerous to use cricket rules in a baseball game or football rules in a basketball game, then many more of them started to send the money in designated to the particular individuals and oh how they were praising God that finally the Lord saw their need for personal support.

The worker is worthy of his hired. The Bible does not go into the great details that some of our mission societies do on this issue. Of all the people I admire, I guess in my Christian life, one of them is Billy Graham.

I never met him. I was saved through his preaching. I followed his life all of my Christian life.

He receives a salary. I think it's about 20 grand, 20,000, somewhere around there. Not Deutschmark, dollars.

\$2.83 on today's Deutschmark market. But right now, many school teachers in the United States receive a salary near that. And he did that for a number of reasons, because he easily could have received 10 times that much money, and some of these famous people do.

I am convinced, and I always have been, this isn't me. God works in different ways through different fellowships and different groups. And if that means all of us get a second chance, Billy Graham is worthy of that salary at God's instance.

In fact, there's an interesting verse that has given me no end of difficulty in my particular position. Let those who minister in the Word of God receive double honor. What does that mean? We blow the trumpet twice as loud for preachers? It seems to mean that the demands of their ministry, maybe hospitality, maybe other things, means that they should have a little extra money so that they can do what God wants them to do.

You read that passage. And then also turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 8. 2 Corinthians chapter 8. This whole chapter is concerning the collection for the poor at Jerusalem. It gives the example of Macedonia.

2 Corinthians chapter 8. Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God, which has been given the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction, their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of your liberality. That's about money. That's about giving.

Look at verse 3. Look at verse 3. For I testify that according to their ability and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the king. This not as we had expected. But they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

Consequently, we urge Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well. Now, I'm becoming very aware of the time, as I often do. There's so much I want to say.

We discover in this passage that one man's extra helps the person who does not have. This is why in OM we have our goal, everybody aiming for full support. But when it comes to the practice, once we're out in the battlefield of OM, one man's shortage of funds is the other man's opportunity to share.

Now, this sometimes is difficult to work out. And in OM we have abused this, because at times we presume that somebody else was helping out our field, when in fact that someone else was expecting us to help his field, though neither had the money and the bills, therefore did not get paid. We don't believe that it's right that even as we sit here tonight, there are so many overdue bills that we have failed to pay.

And we believe we should mobilize special prayer, and today, tomorrow again is the night of prayer, half-night of prayer. But we don't believe we should just pray. That's why last December we wrote an honest letter about the generator crisis concerning the bill.

How can we expect our prayer partners to pray intelligently for the ship if we don't share with them projects so huge as a quarter of a million dollar generator? That was the most honest letter in the history of OM. And for England, we even explained why the ship was still stuck in Europe. We had to tell them something.

And so we humbled ourselves, and we admitted in the letter that we had financial problems. And the number of people that wrote to me, every single letter, and I had dozens and dozens and dozens of letters, every single letter was positive. I heard some criticism from within OM.

People said, ah, he's hinting for money. First of all, we could debate, is it a sin to hint for money? But I'll tell you the sin in OM. We have overreacted.

Whenever we have been accused of hinting for money in our super spirituality, we have overreacted and panned to the table. We're not hinting. We don't believe in hinting.

OM doesn't hint for money. God forbid. But the truth of the matter is, if you want to be as some people, OM has always hinted.

Who decides what a hint is? When I announced in 1964 to the Christian public in our prayer letter, completely out of the blue, that we were praying about an ocean-going ship for world evangelism, would you say that's a small hint, or a big hint, or a wet hint, or what? OM has always communicated quite clearly on many issues. We did go all over the world preaching on Luke 14.33. Except you forsake all that you have, you can't be my disciple. That can lead to some pretty heavy fundraising.

And there are all those glorious early stories of OMers selling their possessions, and living on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and traveling in vehicles miraculously supplied with petrol from above. But here was the problem. People like George Burwell had a lot of freedom.

Preachers have a lot of freedom. But the average OMer who is not a great verbal communicator, he found himself gripped by these rules and by these regulations in a way in which he could never really share honestly his financial agony, and what the movement was expecting of him if he was to go out to India or anywhere else. I know this message tonight doesn't give a lot of easy answers.

But I believe it can deliver us on some false ideas. And it can let you know, as you go back home, it's not just prayer. At present still, we pray and ask that people would take at least some initiative before we start sharing too many details.

There is, however, a financial explanation sheet that you can give to people. It'll be some months before we have the new sheet. When people ask, you can share them about projects like Project Africa.

And if you want to see some of the best put-together information on any project in the history of OM, then you can talk to Mr. Information himself. They'll wrote on for Project Africa. And he has a new picture brochure that communicates very clearly that something big is happening in Africa, and we're looking for a few tens of thousands of people who want to get involved, and we're not talking about fingerprints.

And I hope you find some people who really want to support you and will count it a privilege to support you in this great work. How do you do that? You give them the information. You tell them the truth.

And then you let the Holy Spirit direct them in what they should do. You don't put the pressure on. You give the facts and let the Holy Spirit.

If people read some of this literature, and the Holy Spirit is speaking to them, they may ask you, do you need any support? And how many of you would like someone to ask you that question back in your home town? Raise your hand. You're sort of hoping someone is going to ask that question. There's nothing wrong with that.

This is the work of God. We long to see God's people involved together with us for World Evangelism. And many count it a privilege to know.

People wrote me after that generator letter, and they said, thank you for feeling free to share that with us. It makes us feel more a part of what you're actually doing. That's what people wrote to me.

This famous financial crisis tape went out to dozens and dozens of counselors and advisors, including some very conservative people representing this particular extreme. I receive letters every day as a result of that tape. Every single letter has been positive.

Some have given a few warnings. Even a man, very conservative, said that for myself, I feel I should operate over here, but I have changed my view in terms of how I think the work of God, like O.M., should go forward. That's what he told me.

A very conservative man wrote to me. I never, I never understood Operation Mobile. I never knew there was any kind of emergency like that.

And he gave a positive response, and a check for a hundred pounds to encourage the postage. Amazing letters. I'd love to print a book with these letters.

I think one of the missionary organizations would print a book with these letters. Men like Roy Hesschen. He wrote, he said, you've answered all your questions in your own tape.

God bless you. And a lot of other interesting responses. And I believe in the next five years, O.M. goes slowly.

We will create a practice and a policy that will make it five times easier to shift out of O.M. after a couple of years into an existing dynamic missionary organization. And by the time you make that shift, you'll have your communication, your prayer letter, your financial foundation, at least to some degree, where the next step will be a possible, and the result will be more committed missionaries on the field with all these groups. I am absolutely convinced that that is going to happen.

O.M. will continue to be probably relatively conservative and careful. We won't be taking offerings in our meetings. We won't be asking for money in our letters.

But we will come out of this repressive fog that we have been in and speak honestly about the real life and death and important spiritual issues, which includes finance. We're praying as you go back to your church that your first goals will be spiritual, to bless people's lives, to win souls for Christ, to worship with your church, to spread the vision, but that when this area of finance comes up, you will not feel awkward or think that to talk about it is unspiritual or represents a serious lack of faith on your part, naughty little faith missionaries. I believe we're going to see some real breakthroughs, even though it may take a number of years.

You get this scripture in your heart. Even 60 years from now, you go home for retirement, some of you about 60 years from now, you hobble back from Pakistan, you've left your wife out there, buried from some kind of disease, and you go back home and you arrive at the door of your church, you won't feel guilty because they're going to have to care for you if they're a biblical church. That is their privilege according to the scripture.

You have labored all of your life in Pakistan. You're probably only going to live another six months, at least they can afford that. We never have to again feel guilty about receiving funds from God's people and from God's church if we know we are workers in God's work, for the laborer is worthy of his salary, of his material needs.

We are not beggars, we are kings and priests. How privileged this church is to take care of a few elderly kings and priests. By the way, I know one dear elderly multimillionaire saint in Florida right now.

He's running around looking for retired missionaries like a hound for rabbits. He's got empty houses. He's there bringing the old crock beaten down missionaries.

I want to fill every house with old beaten up missionaries and he's not getting them, he's not getting them. These old coots like Homer Payne don't want to go to any retirement center. He retired from Operation Mobilization, went back to Canada, become president of a bible school with teeny boppers.

Let me tell you, if you learn how to preach, and we hope you will, as long as you've got a voice, you can preach, you'll never be unemployed. Not if the church is the way it is. All month I've been listening to 80 plus year old Vance Hadman preaching away and he always stays in motels so somebody must be paying the bill.

So God has many, many different ways of working and I hope you're willing to be part of his program. Even if it means, as some people put it, living off other people's money. Something that affects the pride zone in all this.

We're taught to be rugged individuals in our culture, right? We don't want anybody taking care of us. You're not going to take care of me. Who do you think you are? I can take care of myself.

And many, many, many people, they refuse to ever go into an old people's home and have somebody take care of them. Old people, 80 years of age, peddling bicycles, taking care of themselves. Big signs, keep your hands off me, down with old people's homes.

There's something, something humbling. I know I've had it thousands of times. When you stand at the door of a church, a little old lady comes up to you and she looks at you and she reaches into her purse.

Why don't you get yourself something to eat, sonny? But I tell you, if that's what it takes to humble a naturally proud, obnoxious character like me, then hallelujah, I'll take all that I can get. Let's pray, let's pray. Getting out of control.

Father, we thank you for your holy word. We thank you that you have been so patient with us over the years. We thank you that you have humbled us.

And you have taken us one step further in our understanding of your church and missions and the task that lies ahead of us. Father, some of us feel like we could fly out of this room. We feel that somehow we've been set free from some spiritual blindness, some shackles that has hindered us from being open and honest and loving and biblical.

Keep us from extremes in either direction. Enable us to go forth as honest, humble servants of yours. Pray in Jesus' name, amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/17/SID17488.mp3>

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