

Reflections of the Convention

March 12, 2006

2 Corinthians 9: 6-11 (Amplified)

6[Remember] this: he who sows sparingly and grudgingly will also reap sparingly and grudgingly, and he who sows generously [^a]that blessings may come to someone] will also reap generously and with blessings.

7Let each one [give] as he has made up his own mind and purposed in his heart, not reluctantly or sorrowfully or under compulsion, for God loves (He [^b]takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, "prompt to do it") giver [whose heart is in his giving].^(A)

8And God is able to make all grace (every favor and [^c]earthly blessing) come to you in abundance, so that you may always and under all circumstances and whatever the need [^d]be self-sufficient [possessing enough to require no aid or support and furnished in abundance for every good work and charitable donation].

9As it is written, He [the benevolent person] scatters abroad; He gives to the poor; His deeds of justice and goodness and kindness and benevolence will go on and endure forever!^(B)

10And [God] Who provides seed for the sower and bread for eating will also provide and multiply your [resources for] sowing and increase the fruits of your righteousness [^e]which manifests itself in active goodness, kindness, and charity].^(C)

11Thus you will be enriched in all things and in every way, so that you can be generous, and [your generosity as it is] administered by us will bring forth thanksgiving to God.

We have just finished the Pastors/Missionaries Convention that we looked forward to with such great expectation. Not in the previous seventeen years of having these conventions at our church was there more excitement and anticipation before a Pastor's Convention.

There were at least a couple of reasons for our excitement.

1. For many years God has given us words of prophesy telling us that He was going to do a great work here in our church. The prophetic word has come forth on several occasions that God was going to take us to a new level of ministry. That Elim Church was going to grow and people were going to be drawn here from the north, south, east and west. That miracles were going to happen, etc. We've been talking about these things for years. And God has done great things through the years. We all know that.
2. The thing that was different about this year was that a man with a prophetic word, Pastor Ruiz, told us that God was about to do what He has been promising us that He would do. And he said that it was going to begin at the convention this year. That this year's convention was going to be special.

Well, if you were here at the convention, you know that Pastor Ruiz was right. This year's convention was special. God spoke to us in a very dramatic way. More people came to the convention this year than ever before. But that wasn't what made it so special. It was the word that was preached.

Several months ago, God impressed me to read and re-read the writings of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. As I read what Paul wrote so many centuries ago, God led me to the many verses where he tells us that if we have been born-again, we are not who we used to be.

Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Paul said, "When I met Jesus He transformed me! I am not the person that I was before I met Christ." The old me no longer exists. The old me was crucified with Christ."

That was not only true of the great Apostle Paul. That is also true of every person who has truly been born-again.

2 Cor. 5:17 (NKJV)

Therefore, if **anyone** is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

1 Cor. 6:19 (Living)

Haven't you yet learned that your body is the home of the Holy Spirit God gave you, and that he lives within you?

2 Cor. 4:7 (NKJV)

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

The earthen vessel is our flesh. The treasure is Christ who lives within us! The words to that chorus are absolutely true! We do have the life of God in us! Christ lives within us. That means we have His power and His ability within us. And He does His work through us. As a matter of fact, that is the only way He does His work; through each of us who are His body here on the earth.

Ephes. 5:30 (NKJV)

For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

Jesus said that just as the Father was doing His work through Him while He was on this earth, He was going to do His work through you and me when He went back to heaven. He said, "I'm going to live within you and I'm going to do My work through you. And if you have faith, you're going to experience some amazing things!

You and I are the Body of Christ in the earth today. He lives within each of us through the Holy Spirit and He is doing his work through us.

Jesus Christ is the head of the Church that He is building and He has put each of us in His body where He knows we will do the most good.

The Pastor's Convention was a beautiful example of His body here at Elim functioning like He intended it to function. It was amazing!

I was doing my part. Stacy was doing his part. Mark was doing his part. Barbara was doing her part. The cooks were doing their part. The servers were doing their part. The musicians were doing their part. The singers were doing their part. The greeters were doing their part. There were over two hundred of us each doing our part. As long as everyone was doing his part, things functioned like they should.

The only breakdown we had was with the clean up crew one night, because the man who had been called to head up that ministry could not be here because of a death in his family. He may not even realize how important his position is, but God knows and so does everyone else when that part of the body is not functioning like it should. And that is equally true of every single person that God has set in His body!

I have been preaching about these things for several weeks. It has been so strong in my spirit that I decided I had to preach about it last Sunday morning and evening and tell the pastors and missionaries about it.

The amazing thing about this convention was, what I have been preaching turned out to be the theme of convention. Mike Mille` and Randy Caldwell just took up where I left off and emphasized and re-emphasized the same truth along with several others. If you were here, you know that's what happened.

God showed up in a dramatic way! Wednesday night was one of the most awesome services that I have ever been in! It wasn't over until almost 11:00 o'clock. People didn't want to leave. It was wonderful!

God did what He said He was going to do.

There was another miracle offering! All the needs of the convention were taken care of. Several people put \$1,000 in that offering.

Now, what about the future? Are we going to see the other half of Brother's Ruiz's prophecy fulfilled?

We will if we allow God to do what He wants to do here through each of us.

The worship during the convention was awesome. Someone came to me and said, "Pastor that's the kind of worship that we need. That will draw people to our church!"

I agree! That's the kind of worship we need all the time. Not just for four days in March!

What was different about it? We sang the same songs we always sing. We had the same musicians we always have. We had the same backup singers, the same choir. What was different?

The thing that was different was, people in the congregation were participants in the worship and not spectators. They worshipped! They worshipped in spirit and in truth. They put their heart into it.

You must learn to worship! If you feel awkward lifting you hands, do it anyway! Do it because God's word says for you to. If you feel awkward clapping your hands, do it anyway because God's word says for you to!

One thing that was different during the convention was the praise dancers! They danced during the worship each night and danced during one of the choir songs and did a praise dance on Monday night that set the place on fire. I know it's hard for you ladies to get together and practice, but we need you to dance more often! It adds a new dimension to the worship! The youth praise dancers danced on Wednesday night. It was great. We need you to do it more often!

What I'm saying is....if we would have the same participation and level of energy every Sunday that we have during the convention, it would draw a lot of people to our church.

The music and the singing and the dancing and the specials were great during the convention. We need that every Sunday!

Some thing else we need if this church is going to reach that next level that God has promised is a spirit of giving like we saw on Wednesday night!

Pastor Mille` and Randy Caldwell both challenged us in a powerful way to become givers. We are stopping the flow of God's supernatural provision when we don't give. Mike Mille`s message on Wednesday morning challenged me to the core of my being.

I have always been a tither. I have given a tithe of my income to the church since I was child. If I mowed the neighbor's yard and got \$5 for it, I gave \$.50 to the church.

When I threw a paper route and made \$30 a month, I gave \$3.00 to the church. When I work at the Houston Chronicle when I was fourteen years old and made about \$30 a week, I gave \$3.00 to the church.

When I started teaching school after I graduated from college and made \$86.54 a week, I gave \$8.65 to the church. I have always been a tither.

Gradually, I became what I considered to be a giver. This past year, I not only gave my tithe but I gave somewhere in the neighborhood of \$7 to \$8 thousand dollars above and beyond my tithe to missions and other things.

But Mike Mille's message Wednesday morning challenged me to do more.

He talked about the awesome blessing we are cheating ourselves out of when do not give cheerfully and generously above and beyond our tithe. He talked about how his church has been able to give multiplied millions of dollars to missions because his people have learned to be cheerful givers. He talked about the hundreds of missionaries that they are helping to support and the thousands of children that they are feeding around the world. And he talked about the way the people of his church have been blessed!

It made me remember the words of the Apostle Paul that I read for my text today. Let me read it to you again.

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8And God is able to make all grace (every favor and [^cearthly blessing) come to you in abundance, so that you may always and under all circumstances and whatever the need [^dbe self-sufficient [possessing enough to require no aid or support and furnished in abundance for every good work and charitable donation].

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11Thus you will be enriched in all things and in every way, so that you can be generous, and [your generosity as it is] administered by us will bring forth thanksgiving to God.

That is an awesome promise from God! If it is not true then God is a liar. And that is unthinkable! If that is not true then the Bible is not true.

God said I love (I ^(B)take pleasure in, prize above other things, and am unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, "prompt to do it") giver [whose heart is in his giving].^(A)

8And I am able to make all grace (every favor and ^(C)earthly blessing) come to you in abundance, so that you may always and under all circumstances and whatever the need ^(D)be self-sufficient [possessing enough to require no aid or support and furnished in abundance for every good work and charitable donation].

I want to be a cheerful (joyous, "prompt to do it") giver [whose heart is in his giving].^(A)

I want to be a person that God can use to channel money through for His work! I want this church to be a church that God abundantly blesses so that we can be a blessing!

Here's the way that works. You must become cheerful givers! When you do, God will make every favor and earthly blessing come to you in abundance. You will be self-sufficient, possessing enough to require no aid or support and furnished in abundance for every good work and charitable donation.

And Elim Church will have all the money we need to do everything that we need to do.

I am praying that God will break the spirit of poverty off of every person in this church. I know that it has to begin with me.

Last Thursday morning, as I was thinking about these things, God told me to give my van to Pastor Eddie Cardenas from Belize. I asked my wife if she was in agreement with me and she said I thought about it when you said he drove all the way from Belize in an old van that was about to crater. She said, "I knew you were going to give him our van."

Pastor Mille` bummed a dollar off of everybody Wednesday and gave it to me and said, "Take your wife out to dinner." The amount was \$300. Another pastor put a hundred dollar bill in my pocket. I had \$400.

God told me to take that money and put two hundred dollars with it and give it to a preacher who had come to this convention without and money and needed \$600 to cover his expenses.

I am not telling you this to make you think I'm doing anything special. I am telling you this to let you know that I believe what God has spoken to us through his servants and I know without a doubt that I'm about to be blessed! I don't know how or when but God said if I would give cheerfully, He would bless me. I believe it!

Is this church about to rise to another level? Is this church about to experience phenomenal growth? Is this church about to experience an abundance of finances so that when a parking lot needs to be repaired or we need new carpet or there is some other type of need the money will be there to take care of it?

That what God wants! And it will happen if we continue in the same spirit of work and worship cheerful giving that we had during the convention!

Let's pray!

Give invitation!