

1 Corinthians 9:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

Analysis

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. Paul's climactic argument: Jesus Himself commanded that gospel preachers be supported by those who receive the gospel. The phrase "the Lord ordained" (Greek *diatassō*, διατάσσω, "appointed, decreed") indicates authoritative decree. Paul likely alludes to Luke 10:7 ("the laborer is worthy of his hire") and Matthew 10:10, where Jesus instructed missionaries to accept hospitality and provisions.

"Live of the gospel" means deriving sustenance from gospel ministry, not from secular work. This is divine ordinance, not human custom. God designed a system where spiritual service yields material support, reflecting covenantal reciprocity. Yet Paul will immediately refuse this right (v. 15), demonstrating that even dominical commands can be voluntarily surrendered for greater gospel advance. Paul obeys the spirit (ministers deserve support) while renouncing the letter (I won't take it) to remove obstacles and model Christlike sacrifice.

Historical Context

Jesus sent out the Twelve and the Seventy with instructions to accept food and lodging from those who received their message (Matt 10:5-15; Luke 10:1-12). This established a pattern: gospel workers depend on gospel recipients for material needs. The early church continued this practice (Acts 6:1-6; Phil 4:10-20; 3 John 5-8). Paul affirms the principle even while personally declining its benefit.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' own teaching (Luke 10:7) establish ministerial support as divine ordinance, not optional?
2. Why does Paul assert this command so strongly (v. 14) if he intends to refuse it (v. 15)?
3. How does "living of the gospel" protect ministers from worldly entanglements (2 Tim 2:4)?

Interlinear Text

οὕτως καὶ ὁ κύριος διέταξεν τοῖς τῷ εὐαγγελίου
so Even G3588 the Lord G2962 hath G3588 G3588 the gospel G2098

καταγγέλλουσιν ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ζῆν
that they which preach of G3588 the gospel G2098 should live G2198

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:10 (Parallel theme): Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

1 Corinthians 9:4 (Parallel theme): Have we not power to eat and to drink?

Galatians 6:6 (Parallel theme): Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

Luke 10:7 (Parallel theme): And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

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