

Acts 20:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Analysis

I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive—Paul cites an unrecorded saying of Jesus (not in the Gospels) to model generous labor. **So labouring** refers to Paul's tentmaking (v.34), supporting himself and companions rather than burdening churches. **Ye ought to support the weak** makes labor's purpose not self-enrichment but enabling generosity to needy believers. **More blessed to give than to receive** inverts natural selfishness—joy comes from giving, not getting. This Jesus-saying became foundational for Christian generosity and work ethic.

Historical Context

Concludes Paul's defense of his ministry methods to Ephesian elders. He worked as tentmaker (Acts 18:3) to fund gospel ministry and model self-sacrifice. This saying of Jesus was preserved in oral tradition before being recorded by Luke here. Paul uses similar language in 1 Thessalonians 5:14 ('support the weak') and his own generosity theology in 2 Corinthians 8-9.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does your work enable generosity toward others versus merely sustaining personal lifestyle?
2. In what areas of life have you experienced the truth that giving brings more blessing than receiving?

Interlinear Text

πάντα	ὑπέδειξα	ὑμῖν	ὅτι	οὕτως	κοπιῶντας	δεῖ
all things	I have shewed	you	how	so	labouring	ye ought
G3956	G5263	G5213	G3754	G3779	G2872	G1163
ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι	τῶν	ἀσθενούντων	μνημονεύειν	τε	τῶν	
to support		the weak	to remember	and		
G482	G3588	G770	G3421	G5037	G3588	
λόγων	τοῦ	κυρίου	Ἰησοῦ	ὅτι	αὐτὸς	εἶπεν
the words		of the Lord	Jesus	how		he said
G3056	G3588	G2962	G2424	G3754	G846	G2036
ἐστὶν	διδόναι	μᾶλλον	ἢ	λαμβάνειν		
It is	to give	more	than	to receive		
G2076	G1325	G3123	G2228	G2983		

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 13:16 (Parallel theme): But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Proverbs 19:17 (References Lord): He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

Matthew 10:8 (Parallel theme): Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

2 Corinthians 8:9 (References Jesus): For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 (Parallel theme): Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

Romans 15:1 (Parallel theme): We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Hebrews 13:3 (Parallel theme): Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

Acts 20:27 (Parallel theme): For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Isaiah 35:3 (Parallel theme): Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

Isaiah 32:8 (Parallel theme): But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand.