

Giving in the Age of Grace—Part One
“Grace Giving”

Introduction: Today we are beginning a new series (3 weeks) on the subject of Christian giving.

- To guests I want to say (without apology) that this is rare—don’t often preach it or emphasize money.
- Yet, it is in fact one of the great/important subjects of Scripture.
- Jesus spoke often of our resources and possessions

Text reveals three important truths about our resources

1. Treasures laid up on earth have finite value while treasures stored up in heaven have eternal value.
2. When we make Kingdom seeking and service our highest priority, God will ensure that our earthly needs are provided for (seek first the Kingdom).
3. The value we place on earthly treasure is a prime indication of the spiritual condition of our heart.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Luke 12:34 NKJV

The problem of familiarity

- “I know what you are gonna say about money!”
- It’s the same ole, same ole!
- (ILL) Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- Receiving lines in White House—niceties that no one listens to
- “I murdered my grandmother today.”
- Bolivian ambassador whispered in ear—“I’m sure she did something to deserve it.”

Please don’t tune this out! Important truth!

I. Why Discuss the Issue of Christian Giving?

Three Reasons

A. There has been so much confusion/perversion on this subject

1. Confusion—one says one thing another says another thing (tithing/no tithing is legalistic)

NOTE: Even commentators disagree!

2. Perversion: Seed faith/100-fold blessing—Avanzini, Murdock, TBN, PTL

B. **The financial condition of the church in America**

1. More than 40% of American churches cannot say their financial health is good or excellent.

NOTE: Most frequently cited source of congregational conflict was over money

2. Percent of household income given to church annually:

- 1968—2.45%
- 1978—2.14%
- 1988—2.05%
- 1998—2.14%
- 2008—2.21%

NOTE: During the Great Depression it was 3.6%

3. If all church members gave 10% an additional 13 billion would be available

C. **Doctrinal issues involved**

1. Tithing is an Old Testament teaching—does it have any relevance to the New Testament Churches?
2. Is there a way to apply it?
3. Was given to Israel—is it even relevant for us?
4. Tithe belongs to the age of the Law—we are in the age of Grace

Two Clarifications:

- ✓ A tithe=10% (in the Old Testament it was 1/10 of anything: cows, food, money)
- ✓ Do not take my word for it—this is too important! Study this out for yourself!

II. The Old Testament Model of Giving (4 Old Testament Examples)

A. **A man named Melchizedek (Genesis 14)**

1. Abraham coming back from war on behalf of Lot against Kedorlaomer (ked-OR-LA-OMER) and his alliance
2. He triumphed and came with spoils of war (slaves, soldiers, food stuffs)
3. Runs into Melchizedek (malek=king—zedak=righteousness)

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all. Genesis 14:18-20 NKJV

4. In Psalms 110/epistle of Hebrews—a picture or type of Christ
5. Gave him a tenth of all
6. It was VOLUNTARY—no one said do it!
7. Sign of personal submission—I know I didn't win the battle alone. I voluntarily surrender!

B. Leviticus 27

And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord. 31 If a man wants at all to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. 32 And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord. 33 He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed." 34 These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai. Leviticus 27:30-34 NKJV

1. Clearly part of the Law—Genesis 14 was not
2. Tithe encompassed all of man's material possessions
3. Passing cattle under the rod—1 of 10 tenth one always—no exchanges—if it's best, so be it!

"I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant". Ezekiel 20:37 NKJV

--Count sheep

4. 1/10 of all

C. Deuteronomy 14 (Moses' final words)

"You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. 23 And you shall eat before the Lord your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always. Deuteronomy 14:22-23 NKJV

NOTE: v. 23 *"that you may learn to fear the Lord God always"*

1. True purpose of tithe—not a legalistic regulation

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2. More than an Old Testament income tax
3. It was to teach His people to put Him first
4. When God is FIRST in our giving, He is first in every aspect of our life!

NOTE: Most Christians pay everything else first than give God the leftovers

NOTE: God not only watches what you give but when you give!

D. Malachi 3

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. 11 "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the Lord of hosts; 12 And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land," Says the Lord of hosts. Malachi 3:8-12 NKJV

Three things to notice:

1. A warning to God's people—robbing me
2. A challenge—put me to the test
3. A purpose revealed—food in my house

NOTE: You are robbing me to get more but wind up with less

E. Summing up the Old Testament tithe

1. Voluntary act to glorify God and recognize Him as Lord Almighty
2. Teach them to put God first
3. To ensure the work of God might be fully supplied

NOTE:

In relationship to GOD—tithe says HE is giver of all blessings

In relationship to US—tithe says we put God first

In relationship to GOD'S WORK—tithe says there will be enough to do His work

III. The New Testament Paradigm

NOTE: That is the Old Testament

A. 1 Corinthians 16

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 NKJV

1. Simple teaching
 - a. Giving should be regular—1st day of the week
 - b. Giving should be personal—each one of you
 - c. Giving should be proportionate—give as you have prospered
2. What does proportionate mean?
 - a. The more He blesses the more you give.
 - b. This is New Testament grace giving.
 - c. 10% is not the issue in the New Testament (some may give 20, 25, 30%)
3. Grace always exceeds the Law
4. So, is tithing irrelevant?

NOTE: Jews kept the Law strictly—tithing became Christian it carried over in the Christian giving—used to regular giving

5. In the Old Testament—tithing was a command
6. In the New Testament—tithing becomes the model

NOTE: What was a percentage now becomes under grace proportional.

B. 2 Corinthians 9

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 NKJV

1. Sow a little—receive little

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8 NKJV

Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. 2 Corinthians 9:10-11 NKJV

2. God, like in Malachi, promised to bless generous and cheerful giving
 - a. Blessings not always material
 - b. No guarantee that your life will be a bed of roses
3. But, if you give generously, you will never regret it!

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." Luke 6:38 NKJV

(Will explore later)

NOTE: How He does it is His business!

Conclusion:

1. Christian giving is grace giving. What *was* a command is *now* a model. What *was* a percentage is *now* a proportion. What *was* a promise is *still* a promise. Those who put God to the test will never be disappointed.
2. Two extremes regarding tithing we should avoid:
 - a. Giving a strict 10% and view the remaining 90% as ours.
 - b. Or, using the lack of a New Testament standard as an excuse to give little, while we hoard the rest.
3. There is no contradiction between the Old Testament and New Testament as long as we do not apply the teaching legalistically and put a burden around people's necks.

NOTE: God did not mean it to be a burden but a way for His blessing to flow through you!

4. The tithe remains the best and most accurate and most effective guide for Christian giving. (Larry Burkett—"As best I can tell, God never asked for less than 10% from anyone.")
5. The tithe is meant to be a blessing not a strict amount.
6. 90-Day Challenge—10%-11% or 12%--5th try 8 or 10%--Now give 1, 3, 5?

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! 11 Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will

not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. Malachi 3:10-12 NLT