



Sermon Notes

March 2, 2008
Tim Strickland

Where Your Treasure Is... #7
To Tithe or not to Tithe
Various Passages

Leviticus 27:30 *"Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord.*

Numbers 18:21 *"To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service that they do, their service in the tent of meeting,*

2 Chron. 31:5-16 *As soon as the command was spread abroad, the people of Israel gave in abundance the firstfruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field. And they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything. [6] And the people of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah also brought in the tithe of cattle and sheep, and the tithe of the dedicated things that had been dedicated to the Lord their God, and laid them in heaps.*

Malachi 3:6-15 *Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. [9] You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. [10] Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.*

Matthew 23:23-24 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. [24] You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!"*

Introduction

Today: **"To Tithe or not to Tithe, that is the Question"**

- Message #7 in "Where Your Treasure Is", a series about God, money & you

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Q: What does it mean to tithe?

A: To tithe means to pay a tenth: Gr. apodekateuō - deka → ten

1. The First Tithes in the Bible

- Abraham to Melchizedek, "priest of the Most High God"
 - Genesis 14:17-20 (referenced in Hebrews 7:1-28)
- Jacob promises to tithe - Genesis 28:18-22

2. Tithes in the Law of Moses

- The tithe of the land is holy to the Lord
 - Leviticus 27:30-33
- The tithe is to be given to the Levites as their inheritance, for their service to the Lord
 - Numbers 18:21-24
- The Levites are to give a tithe of their tithe to support the priests
 - Numbers 18:25-32
- The tithe is to be brought to wherever the Lord directs for a joyful feast before the Lord
 - Deuteronomy 12:5-7, 10-11, 17-18, 14:22-27
- Every third year the tithe is to be brought to the towns and shared with the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow
 - Deuteronomy 14:28-29, 26:12-15
- Summary: Israel was required to pay a tithe to the Lord. It is possible that they gave three tithes in total, making up 23.33% of their income
 - A tithe for the Levites (10%)
 - A tithe for the national celebration (10%)
 - A tithe every three years for those in need (10/3=3.33%)
- In addition to the basic tithe, various freewill offerings were given

3. Tithes During Later Old Testament Times

- King Hezekiah led Israel to return to God and re-establish the tithe
 - 2 Chronicles 31:1-20
 - Emphasis is to provide for the Levites so, "that they might give themselves to the Law of the Lord"(4)
 - The people joyfully gave far more than was needed, "for the Lord has blessed his people"(10)
- Nehemiah re-establishes (and re-re-establishes) tithing after the exile
 - Nehemiah 10:35-39, 12:44, 13:10-14
- The prophet Malachi warns the people to stop robbing God
 - Malachi 3:6-15 – God challenges the people to test him!

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4. Tithes in the New Testament

The New Testament speaks a lot about giving, but only four passages refer specifically to tithing

- Matthew 23:23-24, Luke 11:42 – Woe to the Pharisees
- Luke 18:9-14 – Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector
 - It is possible to tithe with sinful self righteousness
- Hebrews 7:1-28 – Referring to Abraham and Melchizedek

5. Is Tithing for us Today?

- a. The controversy: Old Covenant & New Covenant, Law & Grace
 - Some believe that tithing was for the Old Covenant/Law and freewill giving is for the New Covenant/Grace. In this view, Requiring New Testament Christians to tithe is legalistic
- b. I believe tithing is for today for the following Biblical reasons:
 - The tithing principle is taught throughout the Bible
 - Specific details of the law may no longer apply but the principles are eternal
 - Tithing began before the Law of Moses
 - Similarities to the Sabbath/Lord's Day
 - The same logic would cause us to disregard many other significant principles taught in the Old Testament Law
 - The new covenant is far greater than the old, so why would the greater covenant result in lesser giving? (2 Cor. 3:7-9)
- c. I believe tithing is for today for the following practical reasons:
 - We need to fund Christian ministry locally and globally
 - Tithing teaches us how to give to God (last week's notes #3)
 - First ▪ Generously ▪ Joyfully & Sacrificially
 - Freely & Cheerfully ▪ Systematically
- d. It is my conviction that tithes should be given to your local church
 - Malachi 3:10 *Bring the full tithes into the storehouse*
 - The need for strong local churches ▪ Accountability & wisdom

6. But I Can't Afford to Tithe...

- a. You can't afford not to...
- b. Relatively poor, ancient Israelites were able to afford it
- c. Tithing is a step of faith, trusting God to make 90% of your income cover 100% of your expenses
- d. My family's tithing testimony
- e. Making tithing your starting line for giving, not your finish line

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Our Response

1. Make tithing the starting point for your giving.
2. Let God's grace in your life flow out into generous giving.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 ⁶*The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.*

Questions for Application

1. When was the last time you heard a sermon about tithing? What were you taught about tithing growing up?
2. Have you experienced God's blessings in your life through tithing?
3. Read 2 Chronicles 31:1-20. Note the purpose of re-establishing the tithe. Note the joy with which the people gave. Note the abundance of giving, and the abundance of blessing. Discuss what it would be like if people gave like this today.
4. Personal: Are you giving a tithe to the Lord? What is stopping you? (There are many excuses!) What do you need to do about it?
5. Pray together for strength from the Lord to make Him the greatest treasure in your life. Pray privately to the Lord about your giving to Him. Pray that God would work in your heart to make you a cheerful, joyful giver as you give Him the tithe.

Questions, Comments? - inthebeginning@look.ca

If you have questions or comments about today's message, please drop me an email to the address above. Thanks,
Tim



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