

90. TITHING

Bible Reading: Malachi 3:8-12.

Aim: To give 10% of our income to God's work in a local church as a conviction and rule of life.

Introduction: Do we believe that all that we have is given to us by God?

'A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.' (John 3:27).

'Ye are **not your own**....For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' (I Corinthians 6:19,20).

'they which live should **not henceforth live unto themselves**, but **unto him** which died for them, and rose again.' (II Corinthians 5:15). Jesus said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Acts 20:35).

Christians who experience the love of Christ and the goodness of God giving us all good things richly to enjoy, will want to give to others to see the Gospel of Christ accepted by people all over the world.

Jesus Christ has left us with a work to do of winning, baptising and teaching all people for Christ. This is to be done by the sacrificial giving of God's people. We are to give of our time, our energies, our finances and all we can to further the salvation of sinners.

I. COMMANDS TO TITHE

1) '**all the tithe** of the land . . . is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord.' (Leviticus 27:30).

2) '**thou shalt truly tithe all the increase** of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.' (Deuteronomy 14:22).

3) '**Bring ye all the tithes** into the storehouse that there may be meat in **mine house**.' (Malachi 3:10).

4) 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for **ye pay tithe** of mint and anise and cummin,

and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: **these OUGHT YE TO HAVE DONE**, and not to leave the other undone.' (Matthew 23:23).

5) 'Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and

they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? **EVEN SO** hath the Lord ordained that **they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel**.' (I Corinthians 9:13,14).

Lesson: As Old Testament Levites lived off the tithes of the people, **EVEN SO** today should pastors

live off the tithes of God's people. Hence, tithing is also a New Testament principle. Grace will motivate us to give more than what the law required. Tithing was practised before the Law as seen

from Abram and Jacob who tithed before the law was given.

II. EXAMPLES OF TITHING

If these Godly believers gave a tenth of their income to God, then surely we should follow their example to advance the cause of Christ:

1) **Abraham** paid tithes to Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God:

'And he (Abram) gave him (Melchizedek) **tithes** of all.' (Genesis 14:20).

2) **Jacob** vowed a vow, saying: 'If God shall be with me....of all that thou shalt give me I **will surely give the tenth** unto thee.' (Genesis 28:20-22).

3) **People** in **Hezekiah's Revival** (II Chron 31:5-12) 'the **tithe** of all things brought they in abundantly (v.5). They also brought in the **tithe** of oxen & sheep (v.6). Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty, for the Lord hath blessed his people'. (v.10). 'brought in the **offerings** and **tithes** and the dedicated things faithfully.' (v.12).

4) **People** in **Nehemiah's Revival** (Nehemiah 13:10-12).

'I perceived that the portions of the **LEVITES had not been given them:**

for the **Levites** and the **singers**, that did the work were **fled everyone to his field** (v.10).

Then contended I with the rulers, and said, "**Why is the house of God forsaken?**" (v.11).

Then brought all Judah the **tithe** of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.' (v12).

Lesson: Because the Levites and singers had not been paid (due to people not tithing), the Levites had to return to work in their fields to earn a living. When Nehemiah asked 'Why is the house of God forsaken?' people repented and brought their tithes into the house of God. This is like churches today.

5) **Backsliders** in **Malachi's time** (Malachi 3:8-12).

'Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In **tithes** and **offerings**. (v.8) Ye are **cursed** with a **curse**: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation (v.9).'

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse (a local church), that there may be **meat in mine house** (that a local church has the funds to do God's work in sending out the Gospel effectively), and prove me now herewith saith the Lord of hosts if:

(1) I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it (v.10), and

(2) I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes (v.11), and

(3) All nations shall call you blessed (v.12).

This is spoken to Israel. It also applies to Christians serving God in a local church today.

6) The **Corinthian** and **Galatian churches** gave money in the Sunday collection as God had prospered them, so as to avoid a sudden gathering when Paul arrived. (I Corinthians 16:1,2).

7) The **Churches of Macedonia** gave beyond their power. (II Corinthians 8:1-9:15).

III. HOW ARE WE TO GIVE TO THE LORD?

1) **Systematically:** I Corinthians 16:1,2. Give tithes and offerings weekly.

'**Upon the first day of the week** (Sunday) let every one of you lay by him in store.'

2) **Individually:** I Corinthians 16:2 'Let **every one of you** lay by him in store.'

Not just the father, but the wife and children should tithe what they receive.

3) **Proportionally:** I Corinthians 16:2 'as God hath prospered him.' The tithe did not belong to the person but to God. Under grace, being motivated by love, we should give more than the tithe.

4) **Cheerfully:** II Corinthians 9:7 'not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a **cheerful giver**.'

We should count it a great privilege and joy to give something back to Christ who gave His all for us.

5) **Give as Christ gave:** II Corinthians 8:9 'though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.'

6) **Sacrificially:** (a) They gave out of their deep poverty (v.2). II Corinthians 8:2,3.

(b) They gave beyond their power (v.3).

(c) They first gave themselves to the Lord and unto us (v.5).

The widow gave 2 mites which was all her living. God measures gifts by how much we have left, not by how much we give. God sees the heart of the giver rather than the size of the gift. Let us give to Christ out of a loving heart.

7) **Secretly:** Matthew 6:1-4 'Do not your alms before men, to be seen of them.' (v.1).

8) **Persistently:** II Corinthians 8:10,12. Make a decision how much to give and stick to it. 'Now therefore perform the doing of it.' (v.11). Don't put off giving.

9) **Bountifully:** 'He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly;

and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.' II Corinthians 9:6.

10) **Purposefully:** 'Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give.' (II Cor. 9:7).

IV. WHY SHOULD WE GIVE TO GOD?

1) Because we love Christ. (II Corinthians 5:14-17).

2) It is important that God's work gets done, that souls get saved, that God's Word gets taught to people all over the world, that labourers are sent out, lives transformed, churches started. (Mark 16:15).

3) God promises to reward us openly if we give to Him secretly. (Matthew 6:1-4).

4) If we give to God, He gives more grace and blessings to us. (II Corinthians 8:1).

5) Giving to God brings joy to us. ('the abundance of their joy.' II Corinthians 8:2).

6) Giving beyond our power increases our faith as God provides supernaturally. (II Cor. 8:3).

7) Giving to other churches produces fellowship with those churches we give to. (II Cor. 8:4).

8) Giving proves the sincerity of our love. (II Corinthians 8:8,24).

9) We give to follow Christ's example of giving. (II Corinthians 8:9).

10) To produce an equality between rich and poor believers. (II Corinthians 8:14,15).

11) To show our earnest care for fellow believers. (II Corinthians 8:16) eg: Titus.

12) Our zeal in giving will provoke many others to give also. (II Corinthians 9:2).

13) If we sow (give) bountifully, we'll reap bountifully;

If we sow (give) sparingly, we'll reap sparingly. (II Corinthians 9:6).

14) Give not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. (II Corinthians 9:7).

15) 'God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all

things may abound to every good work.' (II Corinthians 9:8).

16) 'He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever.'

(II Cor 9:9). The results of giving will have an everlasting effect, testifying forever to our righteousness.

17) If we give, God will multiply our seed sown and will increase the fruits of our righteousness.

(II Corinthians 9:10). God will enable us to give more later and we will see more people saved.

18) God will enrich us in every thing to all bountifulness. (II Corinthians 9:11).

19) Giving will cause many people to thank and glorify God. (II Corinthians 9:11,12,13).

20) We will be the means of answering other people's prayers. (II Corinthians 9:14).

21) If we are stingy, God can blow on our wealth so that we lose it like as if we put our money into a bag with holes. (Haggai 1:6-11).

V. HOW A CHURCH SHOULD ALLOCATE ITS TITHES and OFFERINGS.

1) 'The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.' II Timothy 2:6. The husbandman is a farmer and Paul applies this to a pastor who pastors a church, preaches the Gospel, teaches the Bible and shepherds church members. If a pastor does these, he should be paid FIRST

before any other bills are paid. Why? Because:

a) 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.' (I Timothy 5:18; I Corinthians 9:9,10).

b) 'He that ploweth should plow in hope; and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.' (I Corinthians 9:10). This means that a preacher must be financially rewarded for his work, so that he doesn't give up hope of surviving in the ministry because of no pay.

c) 'The labourer is worthy of his reward.' (I Timothy 5:18).

d) 'Who goes a warfare any time at his own charges?' (I Corinthians 9:10). Soldiers don't have to

work at another job to pay for their tanks, guns and bullets. Their government pays them to go to war.

e) Every man who plants a vineyard is permitted to eat his own fruit. (I Corinthians 9:7).

f) Every man who shepherds & feeds a flock of animals is allowed to eat of the flock's milk. I Cor 9:7.

'He (Hezekiah) commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord.' II Chronicles 31:4. If we don't pay preachers properly, new preachers will find it harder to get started in the ministry. This results in fewer churches being started, more churches without pastors, more pastors dropping out to get other jobs, less people getting saved, and more wickedness in society. It is very important to adequately pay pastors.

2) A church must pay the rental on its meeting hall. Paul would have had to rent the School of Tyrannus for the two years that he taught in it daily. Acts 19:9.

3) A church must pay a printer to print 'STOP' tracts as a major priority so that its members can have tools to win people to Christ more easily. 'Multiply your seed sown.' II Corinthians 10:10.

4) A church should then prayerfully consider supporting some soul-winning missionary to start a church in its own city or state. 'In all Judea' (Acts 1:8). A church should have a strategy to train its members to become pastors who can plant churches in their main cities and outlying areas. They can then support each other to start more churches.

5) A church should use some funds to start or grow fundamental churches in other countries.

This may take the form of giving money to:

- Print foreign language STOP tracts;
- Ship or print *Answers* books overseas;
- Help pay pastors in poorer countries, especially church planting pastors.
- Start Bible colleges under a church's authority;
- Start and equip malaria clinics or medical clinics;
- Buy land and build churches on the overseas mission field.

6) A church should buy: a) Inexpensive Bibles to give away to new Christians;

b) Schofield Bibles to those who are serious; c) Mailbox Club lessons to train new Christians;

d) *Answers* books to train its people and to do outreach.

Conclusion: Start tithing this Sunday to your local soul winning church.