

Just Give Part 3: "The Tithe" (2-18-2018)

This series: "Just Give" An act of surrender, that enables us to become Generous Givers, who learn to Steward well all we have been giving by our Father the King!

Week 1 – We are called to be Generous Givers like our Father the Ultimate Giver

Week 2 – We are not the lords of our life, God is the King, all we have come from him. Therefore, we are called to Steward what he has given us with faithfulness & wisdom, always with a view towards eternity.

This Week: "The Tithe"

The tithe is a biblical principle, and relational response.

1. Pre-law – Cain & Abel (Gen 4) , Abram & Melchizedek (Gen 14) , Jacob's ladder @ Bethel (Gen 28)

Genesis 4:2-7 (ESV)

(2) . . . Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. (3) In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, (4) and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, (5) but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. (6) The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? (7) If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

Note: Our giving to God – first & best! This is the concept of the First Fruits.

- Cain gave "in the course of time"
- Abel gave the first born and of their fat portions
- God warns – don't compare, do what's right, for sin is crouching at your door. This is between you & him!

Abram, coming off a victory of setting his family & neighbors free, and gaining many possessions in the process . . .

Genesis 14:18-20 (ESV)

(18) And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) (19) And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; (20) and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Note: The tithe is a tenth, or 10% - Abram gives God's priest (maybe Jesus, certainly a type of Jesus), 10% of what he just earned in battle.

2. The OT law – Exodus 13, Leviticus 27, Numbers 18, Deuteronomy 12, 14, 26

Part of Moses final words to people before He dies and they enter the Promised Land . . .

He open Deut 26 with a reminder of all the Lord has done for them, to set them free, and bring them into this new land, and he says this is your response to Him . . .

Deuteronomy 26:10-17 (ESV)

(10) And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O LORD, have given me.' And you shall set it down before the LORD your God and worship before the LORD your God. (11) And you shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you. (12) "When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the third year, which is the year of tithing, giving it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your towns and be filled, (13) then you shall say before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the sacred portion out of my house, and moreover, I have given it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all your commandment that you have commanded me. I have not transgressed any of your commandments, nor have I forgotten them. (14) I have not eaten of the tithe while I was mourning, or removed any of it while I was unclean, or offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God. I have done according to all that you have commanded me. (15) Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless your people Israel and the ground that you have given us, as you swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.' (16) "This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and rules. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. (17) You have declared today that the LORD is your God, and that you will walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and his commandments and his rules, and will obey his voice.

Notes: Bringing of the First Fruits & Tithe is an act of Worship!

- It is given in Worship – notice with all your heart & soul.
- It is given with Joy!
- It is given for the care of the priests, widows, orphans, and foreigners.
- It is given no matter their current situation –in good and hard seasons, it is not withheld (verse 14)

King David's final prayer to God, blessing over God's people, and celebration of the money provided by the people for the building of God's temple . . .

1 Chronicles 29:10-18 (ESV)

(10) Therefore David blessed the LORD in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: "Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. (11) Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. (12) Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. (13) And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name. (14) "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. (15) For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding. (16) O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own. (17) I know, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. In the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you. (18) O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you.

Notes: We see both Moses & David addressing this issue of giving to God. Notice common themes . . . Worship, joyfully, freely, because God is the ultimate provider forever!

Additional Passage on First Fruits . . .

Exodus 13:2, 12-16 (ESV)

(2) "Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine." . . . (12) you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD's. (13) Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. (14) And when in time to come your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'By a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.'

Notes: All firstborn males to be given or redeemed (notice this is connected to the Passover)

- All of the **clean** animals the firstborn is given as a sacrifice to God
- All of the **un-clean** animals aren't worthy of sacrifice. So, in order to keep them they must be redeemed by the sacrifice of a clean animal.

3. The OT in times of Reform – 2 Chronicles 31, Nehemiah 10 & 12

2 Chronicles 31:4-5, 9-10 (ESV)

(4) And he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion due to the priests and the Levites, that they might give themselves to the Law of the LORD. (5) As soon as the command was spread abroad, the people of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field. And they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything . . . (9) And Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites about the heaps. (10) Azariah the chief priest, who was of the house of Zadok, answered him, "Since they began to bring the contributions into the house of the LORD, we have eaten and had enough and have plenty left, for the LORD has blessed his people, so that we have this large amount left."

Notes: Notice the over-flow of giving as they returned to the Lord, and notice the abundant blessing that followed!

Nehemiah 12:44-46 (ESV)

(44) On that day men were appointed over the storerooms, the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the Law for the priests and for the Levites according to the fields of the towns, for Judah **rejoiced** over the priests and the Levites who ministered. (45) And they performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the command of David and his son Solomon. (46) For long ago in the days of David and Asaph there were directors of the singers, and **there were songs of praise and thanksgiving to God.**

Notes: Notice as they returned to the Lord, practically, they returned worshipfully. Don't give from obligation, but as a joyful response of worship and gratitude!!!

Bridging the Gap between OT & NT . . .

Malachi 3 – the last book in the OT has some key things to say about the issue of tithing. After speaking about the coming of the Lord as a refiners fire (a glimpse to Christ's coming) we are gonna pick up in verse 6 . . .

Malachi 3:6-12 (ESV)

(6) "For I the LORD **do not change**; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. (7) From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?' (8) **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 tithe 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. (11) I will **rebuke the devourer** for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. (12) Then all nations will call you **blessed**, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.

Notes:

- God doesn't change
- The tithe is His – He calls it robbery to withhold it from Him
- Put Him to the test! Woah!
- He will rebuke the devourer
- He will bless abundantly – this is about more than your pocket book, this is about a blessed life!

Take Note: Living with **gratitude & generosity** will change your outlook, behaviors, and therefore your life.

4. NT giving . . . Acts 2 & 4, 1 Corinthians 9, 2 Corinthians 8 & 11, Philippians 4, 1 Timothy 5

One of our favorite passages to quote about the early church and their community . . .

Acts 2:42-47 (ESV)

(42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (43) And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. (44) And all who believed were together and had all things in common. (45) And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. (46) And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, (47) praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Notes: NT generosity doesn't lower the bar; it raises it!

- Shared all their belongings and covered all the needs
- Daily gathering: worship, prayer, study, fellowship
- Similar passage: Acts 4 – laid their gifts at the disciples feet, and they distributed according to the need

Churches cared for their ministers and the greater body of Christ . . .

Philippians 4:15-16 (ESV)

(15) And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. (16) Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.

2 Corinthians 11:7-9 (ESV)

(7) Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge? (8) I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. (9) And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way.

Notes: The Philippians gave to bless Paul, and help minister to other churches. Paul tells the Corinthians about this and further encourages them to grow in their giving in chapter 8.

5. NT Jesus & Tithing . . . Matthew 23, Mark 12, Luke 11 & 18

Jesus – having dinner by invite with a Pharisee . . .

Luke 11:42 (ESV)

"But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

Jesus – teaching in Jerusalem during the week of his death . . .

Matthew 23:23 (ESV)

"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.

Notes: Jesus affirms the tithe, while always pointing to the larger issue – **The Heart!**

- **Does God need your money?** **No!**
- **Does God want your money?** **Yes!**
- **Why?** **He is after your heart, and if He has your wallet, then He has your heart!**

This is personal to Jesus – because of who he is . . . Remember the principle of First Fruits & the Redemption of the Firstborn? The Clean was sacrificed in order to redeem the Unclean.

Jesus is the **Ultimate Tithe** & the **Ultimate First Fruit** – He is God's best given for our redemption. And because He was risen from the grave, He is also called the first fruit of eternal life (1 Corinthians 15)

Conclusion: The context of our tithing should be . . .relational. A loving response of joyful worship, given freely, to the God who has all, gives all, and who paid the ultimate tithe himself. Remember where we started this series . . . **All tithes are a reminder of The Tithe!**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son . . ." (John 3:16)