

ALL THIS MATTERS: TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Sunday, July 17, 2022

1. Last week Pastor Frank talked about having a generous heart/soul; being givers in all areas, and specifically with money.
2. We're going to continue from last week – today is part 2 – as we look at some specifics when it comes to being a person with a heart/soul of generosity.
 - a. If something is in my heart, it's going to be seen in my life.
 - b. If it isn't coming out in my life, then it really isn't in my heart. And even if I think it's in my heart but it isn't coming out in my life, what good is it doing?

ABRAHAM TITHES TO GOD

Genesis 14:12,14,16,18-20 NLT

¹² They also captured Lot—Abram's (Note: God changes his name to Abraham later) nephew who lived in Sodom—and carried off everything he owned.

¹⁴ When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household...

¹⁶ Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives.

¹⁸ And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine.

¹⁹ Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.

²⁰ And blessed be God Most High,
who has defeated your enemies for you.”

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

Several “firsts” in this story:

- a. This is the first time the word “tithes” appears in the Bible. Tithe = one tenth (10%).
- b. It's also the first time we hear of this person “Melchizedek.”

WHO IS MELCHIZEDEK?

Hebrews 6:20 NLT

²⁰ Jesus...has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

1. This tells us that this person, Melchizedek, was/is in the same High Priest order as Jesus.
 - a. Jesus is our High Priest, the only One who can connect us to God our Father.
 - b. And yet this person/being is also a part of the same High Priest order as Jesus. How can that be?
 1. There is one way this can all work out: if Melchizedek was actually the Son of God. (We also see this in the fiery furnace.)

Hebrews 7:1-4 NLT

This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and also a priest of God Most High. When Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against the kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. ² Then Abraham took a tenth of all he had captured in battle and gave it to Melchizedek. The name Melchizedek means “king of justice,” and king of Salem means “king of peace.” ³ There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors—no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God.

⁴ Consider then how great this Melchizedek was. Even Abraham, the great patriarch of Israel, recognized this by giving him a tenth of what he had taken in battle.

JACOB TITHES TO GOD

1. In **Genesis chapter 28**, we read about another person bringing a tithe to God: Jacob, Abram’s grandson.
 - a. In this story, Jacob has a vision/dream and God speaks to him. Then Jacob calls the place this happened, “Bethel”, which means “House of God” (which is significant).

Genesis 28:22 NKJV

²² And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.

2. Jacob is saying: “This is God’s house, and I’m going to tithe to God here.”

3. Some would say that tithing – bringing 10% of our increase to God – is only in the O.T. law/commandments, and therefore it doesn't apply to us today.
 - a. I just shared 2 clear examples of tithing, and both took place before any law was given. And we read in Hebrews chapters 7 – the N.T. – about the tithe.
 1. Tithing was in the Bible before the law, it was after the law, and we'll see in a moment it was in the law.

TITHING IN THE LAW

Leviticus 27:30 NKJV

³⁰ 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.

1. This helps us understand the importance of bringing the tithe to God. It's important because: IT BELONGS TO HIM!
2. Tithing is about so much more than just money. Tithing is about...
 - a. ...our honoring of God.
 - b. ...our faith in God.
 - c. ...our own heart.

BLESSED OR CURSED?

Malachi 3:8-12 NKJV

⁸ "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.

JESUS INSTRUCTED US TO TITHE

Matthew 23:23 NIV

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.” (Jesus says the same in Luke 11:42.)

1. Jesus makes it clear: we are to tithe, and remember to do the other things He instructed also.
2. “Jesus said tithing isn’t important.” No, He simply said there are more important matters. As disciples of Jesus, we want to do all that God wants us to do.
 - a. Nothing God instructs us to do is “unimportant.”

GOD’S GENIUS IS SEEN IN THE TITHE

1. 10% is the exact same sacrifice for all. 10% is 10% for everyone. No harder or easier on anybody.
2. It is super easy to calculate. Simply move the decimal point over one digit. On \$275.00, the tithe is \$27.50.
3. Anyone can start anytime they want. It doesn’t matter what you’ve done or not done in the past. You don’t have to be at a certain spiritual level, know so much of the Bible, been saved for a certain amount of time.

4. It makes economic sense. Low-income area, income and cost of living will be less. High-income area, income and cost of living will be more.

WHAT PRIORITY DOES GOD WANT TO HAVE IN OUR FINANCIAL GIVING?

Proverbs 3:9-10 NKJV

⁹ Honor the LORD with your possessions,
And with the firstfruits of all your increase;
¹⁰ So your barns will be filled with plenty,
And your vats will overflow with new wine.

1. Most of us have lots of stuff. And we're buying more stuff. We have to get bigger houses for all our stuff. We put stuff in the garage. Then we rent storage units to store our stuff.
 - a. Does God say we shouldn't have stuff, or that stuff is bad? No. Proverbs 3:9 says to make sure we honor Him with our stuff/possessions.

1 John 3:17 NIV

¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

2. Along with our possessions, Proverbs 3:9 also tells us to honor God "...with the firstfruits of all your increase."
 - a. Increase speaks of what we don't yet possess, but will possess.
 - b. Vs. 9 specifically says we are to honor God with the "...firstfruits of all your increase."

GOD WANTS OUR FIRST AND OUR BEST

1. We see throughout the Bible, that God is concerned with firsts.
 - a. In Exodus, God told Moses to consecrate (set apart; dedicate to Him) the firstborn among the children and animals.

Matthew 6:33 NKJV

³³ ...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

2. Jesus didn't say seek only the kingdom of God. He knows we'll seek other things as we live life.
 - a. But He did clearly tell us: in all that we seek, make sure God's kingdom is first.
2. God cannot be 2nd. He can only be 1st. If He isn't 1st, He's not God. If He's really God, then He has to be 1st.
3. We started today's message with the story of Abram bringing a tithe to God, by bringing it to God's High Priest, Melchizedek.
 - a. Later on in the same chapter, Abram refers to God as "God Most High", a term used many times in the Bible.
 - b. It's easy to think God is the Most High when it comes to all of creation, His place in eternity and everything.
 - c. But the practical application for each of us...is He my/your God Most High?
 1. Is He really at the top of our list? In what we seek, in what we say, in what we think about, in what we do with money.
 2. When we make it personal, it becomes very tangible, very measurable.

CAIN & ABEL

Genesis 4:2-5 NKJV

² ...Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ³ And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. ⁴ Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, ⁵ but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

1. What do we see Abel brought that Cain did not bring? The FIRST. Cain brought "...an offering..."; Abel brought "...the firstborn of his flock..."

- a. By bringing the first, Abel was expressing the desire in his heart of 1) wanting to honor God, and 2) having faith in God.
- b. I believe Cain & Able knew what God wanted them to do/bring. Able did it; Can didn't do it, & didn't want to do it...here's why I say that...

Genesis 4:6-7 NKJV

⁶So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire *is* for you, but you should rule over it."

2. What is God saying here? He's letting Cain know, "You can still do what's right. You can still put Me first."
3. Cain made the choice to not honor God.
 - a. That choice was seen in his lack of obedience to what God wanted him to do – bring God the first & the best.

SUMMING IT UP

1. What you and I do, individually, with money, is about so much more than money. It's about our honoring of God, our trust in God, our heart.

CLOSE LESSON

1. Earlier I talked about how we are responsible to tithe to God's house. Once we do that, our responsibility (as far as the money we tithe) is fulfilled.
 - a. Now the church takes the responsibility; it was transferred from me, to the church.
2. It's much the same with this message: I am responsible to get the message to you, in the way God wants me to. In about 1 minute, I will have done that.
 - a. At that moment, the responsibility will transfer from me, to you.
 - b. Now you're responsible for what you do with it.
3. I hope you realize that what you've heard today, is all about freedom and liberty for your life, heart, soul, you.

- a. Jesus said it in John 8:32: You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.
- b. No matter where we're each at with money/giving/generosity, we each have a chance to grow from what we've heard today.
- c. If you're feeling condemned, you didn't hear what was meant to be heard today.
- d. If you're feeling excited, expectant, looking forward to what God might have ahead for you when it comes to your finances...the seed has been properly planted.