

Generosity 3

Ill:

I ask if anyone has a \$100 bill on them.

Please get it out and show it.

[I have given someone a \$100 bill and ask them when I ask if anyone would give me \$100, they will bring it forward. I then ask them if they will give me the \$100. They will give it to me and then I ask them why they were willing to give me \$100. They reply, because you gave it to me before service and said you'd ask me to give it to you.

- It's a little easier to be generous under those circumstances, isn't it?

Start powerpoint here:

Today, we are going to share on one of the oldest Biblical principles – the subject of tithing.

- It's just like what was described in this illustration.
- It's the belief that God handed me something for a little while, then said: "OK, give it back."

Last week we closed by saying there was a ladder of giving:

1. The bottom/first rung of the ladder was **tithing**. This is the first thing the Lord tells us to do.
2. The next rung is **offerings**. Giving to specific needs.
3. **Extreme generosity**. Not many get to this level. This is tied to me wanting to have the heart of Christ and being generous.
The reason I want to give is to be like Jesus. To give to someone in need, an important cause.

Jesus spoke of money in **16** of His **32** parables. That's half of what He talked about.

- So it sounds like that is a prominent issue with Him.

1. Tithing is a TIMELESS principle:

- Some think of tithing as just an Old Testament thing to do. A law and since the law is passed away; we don't have to participate in this.
- Actually tithing pre-dates the Law by 430 years and in Gen. 2 we notice God testing us:

Remember, I said last week that God doesn't tempt us but He does test us:

Gen. 2: 15-17 "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, you are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

- Adam was actually free to eat from all the trees of the garden, proof is that he actually ate from the wrong tree.

Early on, God starts testing mankind:

All this stuff is yours, but don't forget; this tree is Mine.

I don't want you to mess with My stuff.

In the New Testament, God says all that is created is for your enjoyment:

1Tim. 6:17 "Direct those who are rich in this present age not to be proud or fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, **but rather on God- who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.**"

- But He's real clear to say that the first fruits or the tithes belong to Him.
- The tithe is a part of the Old Testament Law, yet it transcends the Law.
- All of the great eternal principles of scriptures are found scattered throughout the O.T. but they are continued in the New Testament.
- The O.T. tells us about God:
 - Take for example that I saw you on the street and I took a shot gun and killed you. Some said, you can't do that!
 - But I told you, no that was under the Old Testament – thou shalt not kill – but we are under the New Testament and the Old does not apply any longer.
- That's not a good defense – you can't say well, we live under grace now.

That was an Old Testament principle telling us that God values life in every form.

It didn't go away when Jesus showed up – those great principles still stand for right and justice.

Many people believe that when Jesus came, He came to do away with the Law; but when you listen to His words, Jesus came to take the Old Testament ethic and raise the bar on it.

Matt 5:17-20 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will be no means pass from the Law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches me so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, **that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.**”

Jesus was saying: “I don’t want you to do just as good as those Old Testament scribes and Pharisees; I want you to rise to a level above that.”

That has always been the principle of Jesus: to raise the bar!

Ex 20 & Duet. 5 the Bible says “Do not murder.”

But in Matt. 5 – Jesus raises it to a higher level: “**If you walk around with hatred in your heart, you are already guilty of committing murder.**”

- Old Testament says: “Do not commit adultery.”

In Matt 5 Jesus raises the bar: “**If you look lustfully at a woman, you have already committed adultery in your heart.**”

Jesus didn’t do away with the Law, He raised the bar/standard to a new level.

He is so involved in tithing that when you tithe, you are actually giving to Jesus specifically – He is actually the recipient of your tithe.

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

Abraham, the Father of the Covenant meets Melchizedek who is a representative of Jesus in the Old Testament.

- Many Bible scholars think Melchizedek was a Christophany in the O.T. an appearance of Jesus Christ.

- Melchizedek is called the King of Righteousness, the King of Peace –
- Heb. 5 & 7 tell us that Melchizedek was meant to be seen as Jesus in the O.T.

So this principle is set when Abraham first came into contact with this priest Melchizedek, he gave him a tithe of everything he owned.

The principle God is teaching us through eternity is that when we tithe, we are not giving to a man, a ministry, or a church/building or an organization or fund; we are giving in a very real sense to Jesus.

Heb. 7:8 “Here mortal men receive tithes, but there [heaven] He [Jesus] receives them, of whom it is witnessed that He lives.”

When you write your check, give cash or online, send it by text-give; it may be a man-made institution or a church on the earth; but Jesus Christ is the One receiving it.

This is such an amazing principle to know that Jesus receives your tithe.

We should start recognizing that and just saying at offering time:

“Jesus, we give our tithe to you for Your glory and Your kingdom advancement.”

There’s a bumper sticker that says: “Honk if you love Jesus; but I saw another that said: **“Any fool can honk, pay your tithe if you love Jesus.”**”

We are talking about paying tithe today!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

2. You can PASS the TEST

God is big into testing because He wants you to pass every test so you can mature and go on to the next level in Him.

- If you fail the tests, He will let you take it again until you get it right.
- Some people are in the perpetual PATIENCE test- because the Lord wants to give you the test until you pass it.

Tithing is all about testing –

Tithe means tenth = **10%**.

All through the Bible, **10** means testing:

- How many plagues were given to Pharaoh to test his heart? - **10**

- How many Commandments did God give us to test our hearts? – **10**
- How many times did God test Israel in the wilderness? – **10**
- How many times did Laban test Jacob by changing his wages to see if he really wanted Rachel? – **10**
- Daniel was tested how many days? – **10**
- In Matt 25, how many virgins were tested to see if they were ready to meet the Bridegroom? – **10**

Every time you see **10**, its meant to be a test.

It's a serious and difficult test, and it's the only place in scripture where God allows you to test Him.

Malachi 3:10 “Bring [not pay or give] the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. **Test Me in this, says the Lord Almighty**, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”

It's like God is saying: “Alright, you're not going to believe this, but test Me and see.” The Lord is so sure that His principles will work for you that He invites you to Test Him.

10 – 10 – 80 PLAN

- **The first 10% belongs to God – tithe.**
- **The second 10% goes to savings.**
- **We pledge to live off the 80%.**

This is such a simple plan, yet so wise.

The average American, instead of living off 80%, lives off of **108%.**

Excuses:

- It's the governments fault we are in a recession.
- It's the Democrats or the Republicans fault.
- It's the banks or the real estate markets fault.
- **NO – IT'S THE FAULT OF THE PERSON WE LOOK AT IN THE MIRROR IN THE MORNING, who's spending 108 % of their income.**

If we had all been on the 10- 10 – 80 plan in the last decade, we would be living much better off and out of debt right now.

Some of you will accept the challenge to move to the 10- 10- 80 plan, others will keep doing the same old thing expecting something different; but it ain't going to happen for you.

Give God the test and see if this doesn't work for your life because it is the Biblical way for you to live.

How do we know it will work?

Malachi says if we get under God's plan we will be blessed, if we resist God's plan you will live under a curse. You do it to yourself because you are the one who chooses.

3. The benefits of tithing

1. I get to be like Christ – no one is a bigger giver than Jesus Christ.
 - When you start giving like Jesus Christ – YOU get to be like Him.
 - Jesus actually receives the tithe.
 - Matt 23:23 Jesus endorses the tithe. He says tithing is not enough, you need to have mercy, justice and truth, but don't neglect the tithing.

But most of all, Jesus proves His generosity by giving His whole life for us!

- He sacrificed His life by coming from heaven, dying on the cross, giving up heaven to come for us.
- When you become a giver, you get to be like Him.

2. I get to be blessed – **you don't tithe to be blessed, but you can't help to be blessed when you tithe.** We don't give to get, but when you give – He will bless you.

Mal. 3 – God opens the windows of heaven over us when we become tithers.

“He rebukes the devour for your sake.” The devil is the devour seeking whom he can destroy – 1Peter 5:8 “Be alert and sober minded. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

2Chron. 31:4-10 when you talk about your money, how do you talk about it?

- Your little bit or average bit of money?
- How many of you would like to be able to talk about “your heaping pile of money?”
- Be honest now, and don't have that false humility – religious spirit.

v.4- “Moreover he commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute support for the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the Law of the Lord.

As soon as the commandment was circulated, the children of Israel brought in abundance the first fruits [tithe] of grain and wine, oil and honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything.

And the children of Israel and Judah, who dwelt in the cities of Judah, brought the tithe of oxen and sheep; also the tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the Lord their God they laid in **heaps**.

In the third month they began laying them in **heaps**, and they finished in the seventh month. And when Hezekiah and the leaders came and saw the **heaps**, they blessed the Lord and His people Israel.

Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the **heaps**. And Azariah the chief priest, from the house of Zadok, answered him and said, “Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat and have plenty left, for the Lord has blessed His people; and what is left is this great abundance.”

Hezekiah became king in a time when Israel was suffering depravity and poverty.

He told the people that the way out of the extreme poverty was to give something to the Lord. They had nothing, so they were going to give what they had to the Lord.

They began to tithe to the Lord and the result was the Lord blessed them – the 90% they kept got larger and larger.

As the increase came; they tithed more and a heap developed.

The priests explained that when they had nothing and began to tithe on nothing, it increased to something and they tithed on the something and it has turned into more and they tithed on the more and now these heaps/abundance.

I don't give just to be blessed, but I live under a covenant that says I will be blessed with the blessing of Abraham as I walk in the covenant.

3. I get to be a part of what God is doing – **His Plan**.

I told you last week that studies have indicated that only 3% of Christians in America tithe. Can you imagine if 100% of WOWC tithed, there would be an the increase in people we could minister to in our city, country and the world?

- WOWC doesn't turn anybody away that has a need. We may not be able to meet all their needs, but we help them in some way.
- We help those who come to us with a **YES** and a **NO**, because we can't always meet the whole need, but we can help with some of their need.

- How many orphans, poverty stricken, homeless people, left out by society people could be helped if all of us decided to be a part of God's plan.

When you and I tithe, we get to be a part of His plan:

Every soul that is saved at this church, when you're a tither, you're a part of that!

Every person that has received food and help at this church, if you're a tither, you're a part of it.

Every person that has had the gospel ministered to them in Kenya, Cameroon, Uganda, Rwanda, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and every other country, you maybe didn't go; but if you're a tither, you have a part in it.

Matt 6:21 Jesus said: "Where you treasure is; there will your heart also will be."

- He was teaching a principle that you can't separate your treasure from your heart.
- Whether you like it or not, they are linked together.
- Some people are thinking, I love church, but I just wish pastor would leave money out of the preaching.
- Jesus knew that people would feel that way; that's why He also knew that was not possible – because:

Wherever your treasure goes, there you heart will go also.

Well let's leave money out of it, wherever your heart goes [guide balloon] your money will follow.

If your heart is crazy into boating, fishing, golfing, clothing, cars, houses, sports etc. your treasure is going to go there also.

You can't decide, I'll leave my heart over here and separate it and do ungodly things over here with my money and think it's not going to affect your heart – it doesn't happen that way.

Eventually, your heart goes where your money is.

What we need to understand is that God is not after your money; He's after your heart.

God doesn't want your treasure, He just wants you to let go and say: **God, have my heart, it's Yours. I want it to be with YOU.**

The closer you are to Him, the better your life is going to be.

PRAYER FOR PEOPLE WITH FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.