

Week 11

Tithing-relevant for today?

I tithe because it is biblical and the Word says to do it, therefore I do. But you may hear from someone who wants to contradict that by saying it is under the law of the Old Testament and not for us today.

Instead of taking what that person has said is truth, look deeper into the scriptures. Yes it began in the Old Testament but what did it begin with? Who is the Father of all nations of whom our Christian life is model after from the Old Testament? Abraham. Abraham was a great man of faith. How did Abraham get that faith? Were there Bibles and churches to teach him about faith? No, there was no Jesus and “modern day” teachings on what faith is, yet our Bibles tell us to model our “faith” after the likes of Abraham.

In the book of Hebrews chapters 5-8 there is scriptures centered around this verse: You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Who is this Melchizedek? He was the high priest when Abraham was around. It was the high priest that Abraham paid his ten percent tithe to and the priest would bless him. Abraham was a man who walked by faith even when there was no laws. He did not live according to the laws of Aaron, this was way before then. So why did he tithe to his high priest Melchizedek?

What was the life of Abraham like? When we read in the Old Testament he had lots of cattle, herds, land, almost too much for him to have. That sounds a lot like Malachi 3—I will open the windows of heaven and pour out my blessings upon them. Remember prosperity isn't always about how much money you make. It is about what you don't lose. You can be very successful money wise but have ten times the problems financial. It is so important to not run after money in life, run after where God has you. He will prosper you where he has you. Think of all the things He will save you from? Protect you from. Those are an important key for life. If you aren't always having to spend money to get this repaired or this fixed, you will have a lot more money left in your possession. It is important to be protected from whom will devour your things.

Tithing is relevant within the New Testament and the Old Testament. Jesus is our high priest. It is the same order and the same succession as the order of Melchizedek. He doesn't need to make a sacrifice any more like they did in the Old Testament, he gave his body as a living sacrifice for us. But we are still to take our tithes and our offerings to him so that he can bless us, as the high priests would do.

The Bible talks more of Melchizedek in the New Testament than in the Old Testament. Jesus repeats this order seven different times within these chapters. Something worth knowing is repeated often. When you look at the Old Testament in Genesis 14:17, Melchizedek was made high priest by God. There was no laws or someone setting him in that position, it was from God. He was saying to Abraham publicly, what Abraham already knew. Abraham knew that God would protect him and he didn't just do it with words he did it with his tithes. He didn't just give a small amount, he gave the wealth of the city. Is Abraham doing this to keep the law? Or to be justified by his works? No there was no law or nothing to justify. So why did he do this? He is acknowledging the person who would protect him. Afterwards the King of Sodom wanted to give him all the money and all the goods but Abraham refused. Why would he refuse all of that? His next words were, “I shall not take anything that is yours lest you say, I have made Abram rich.” Abraham was publicly stating that his money comes from the Lord not from man. He is tithing to honor God. In verse 15:1 the Lord tells him that his reward will be very great. His word was true, Abraham was a very rich, blessed man.

Daily Bible reading: Acts 5,6,7,8

Day two

“It’s not all His”

In Matthew 22:15, it talks about when the Pharisees wanted to try and trick Jesus by asking Him whose money was whose. His reply was to give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and give to God what is God’s. He was acknowledging that we are to pay our taxes that which is owed to the government. It is right, even if we don’t think we should have to pay taxes, the Bible tells us to do so. No matter what we think about our government, how much they waste on things, it doesn’t matter. We have to be thinking that our money is going to our military, and to our roads and all of the things that we use for our own use.

He then goes on to say to give to God what is God’s. Now stop and think for a moment....how many times have you heard someone say, “All that I have is the Lord’s?” I know myself I have been guilty of this saying, but it not true. Yes, the Lord gives us the ability to be able to work and make money, but not all of it is His. If it was His money, we shouldn’t be spending it on ourselves. The Bible says in Matthew 22:21....give to God the things that are God’s.

We are usually good about paying to the government what is owed to them, but when it comes to the Lord, we often times don’t give to Him what is His. In Matthew 23:23, it says...yes you should tithe, but you shouldn’t leave the more important things undone. Jesus said we should tithe. This is in the New Testament.

Tithing is not about keeping a rule, it is about honoring God and being blessed. In Malachi 3:6...it says the tithe, the tenth part, belongs to the Lord. The rest is ours to do with whatever we please. Tithing is not an offering....we are a steward of the tithe. Our stewardship is to tithe and return it to God. Anything above the tithe is ours. If you give it to Him, it is a gift to Him and He receives it as an offering. He tells us to give back to Him and he will give to you. He will pour out His blessings from an open window in heaven.

We are also protected from the devourer. We can make more money, but if things break and we have to replace them it can get costly. I know for us the other day, our water stopped suddenly. Went down and popped the breaker and it still wasn’t coming on. I talked with my husband and then he started thinking, “Well it could be the well, it could be this or that.” Yes, it could have been a lot of things and very costly. He had me look at as much as I could over the phone and do what I could to see if it was something simple and nothing worked. I would wait till he got home. As soon as I started thinking about all the “What ifs?” I immediately stopped myself and said, “No, no, no! I am a tither and God promises protection from the devourer on my things. My water will work and will need no repairs!” I stated that over and over throughout the day. I didn’t let myself doubt. My husband came home, looked and checked a few things and then popped the breaker again and it started working. Even though I had previously popped the breaker myself. When it was fixed, he said he didn’t know what happened, and I said that I knew, God protected our things from the devourer:) You get that protection when you give to the Lord what is His. I can say this because it is something that we never did and things always broke and went bad. We would always get ahead only to fall behind shortly after. It took being obedient to God’s word and then it worked!

Daily Bible reading: Acts 9,10,11,12

Day three

Alms

This is a type of giving that is directed towards people, churches, and ministries because they are in need. The other type of giving that we discussed all has motives behind them but this is simply done out of compassion and love for others. You give because you see a need to help. The reward that you receive is joy and our treasures are stored up in heaven. We love others and want to show the love of Christ through us to them, this is a good way to do so.

It is great for other people to know you are a tither, a seed planter, and a first fruits offerer but it is important for them not to know that you give alms. Why would this be a big deal as for others to not know what you do? This is to protect the person or group you are giving it to. it protects their dignity in a crisis. A key verse in the Bible is in Matthew 6:3....But when you give to the needy, do not your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. There is no mention of giving your tithe in secret, this is ONLY for your alms giving---to the needy.

I remember a time in our lives when we were going through a tough financial time(we were not tithers at the time nor understood it) but someone was moved to pay alms to our family and help. They specifically stated for no one else to know , it was just for us because they loved us. It was a touching moment that I never felt I had to make a big deal out of in front of others, they were trying to protect our dignity because loss of income is hard and embarrassing at times.

This is why you should just give and not exploit what you do for helping the needy. Just give and don't expect anything. This is where God see's your action done in "secret" as the Bible says and will repay. When you make a big deal out of it and show others which child you sponsor or let others know that you are supporting a certain group—you negate all of God's promises. You have already exposed yourself and God does not need to reward you, you rewarded yourself in front of people.

Give because your heart is pure and you want to bless someone. Show that you have the love of Jesus inside of you and that you have compassion for them. As the Bible says.....if anyone gives even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly I say to you, he will be no means lose his reward. (Matthew 10:42). If you see a need and the Holy Spirit is prompting you to do so...then give. But do not let anyone know. No need to discuss, no need to tell anyone, God see's what is behind your motivation and he will bless you.

Daily Bible reading: Acts 13,14,15,16

Day four

There is a lot of Old Testament scriptures about tithing, that is the “claim” which others will say is not relevant for today. They will speak that the Old Testament is not for us today. If the Old Testament is not for us today, then why did God give it to us to read? Most everyone has the Old and the New in their Bibles, would we rip out the Old Testament and disregard it’s reading? No the Old Testament is a book for us to learn from. There are many prophesies and truths that are presented in the Old that are then brought forth into the New.

In 1 Corinthians 9, there is a whole chapter about Paul’s defense to tithing. You can read all of it yourself, I will save the space to not type it all in. He references about the Old Testament and tithing and how it is relevant today. He says doesn’t God speak for our own sake and well being? The Old had lots of rules and laws, but it was to be of betterment for the people. We can take a lot of those and use them today. Tithing is one of them.

Galatians 6:6 says “let the one who is taught the word, share all good things with the one who teaches.” If you look at other versions it will say “contribute money.” It is our duty to help pay the preachers, the ministries, etc that we look to for spiritual food. Back in the book of 1 Corinthians 9, Paul says does a soldier go out to battle and pay for his own way? When he is directed from his superior does he say, “Oh I need to make some money so that I can fill up this army tank and then I can go off to war.” No that sounds absurd, he is taking care of financially by our government. That is the same way that pastors and churches operate. If they were not there and could not devote their time to feeding us and directing us spiritually, then what is the point to go off to church or watch sermons from other preachers? It is very important that you be in a church that you are being fed spiritually. A place that God has you in your stage of life. Then you support and get under the leadership and teaching so that you can grow. You honor God when you support that ministry, and in turn God promises the blessings and protection from the devourer.

We are to contribute to our churches and the duty of the pastor is to bless us. Just as in the Old Testament. When you bring your offering to the church, what is it that you want? You want a miracle, you want a blessing. You want that seed to multiply in your life. The “blessing” in the Bible is so much more than what we have desensitized it today. In the Old Testament, “the blessing” was huge and you wanted a part of that. In parts of the New Testament, they wanted to get to Jesus so that they could be blessed. When you read the loaves and fishes story, Jesus blessed the food and then the food multiplied. The power was in the blessing. You can’t have a blessing if you don’t contribute with your seed to something.

Daily Bible reading: Acts 17,18,19,20

Day five

We have learned over the last two weeks about tithing and how it is biblical. Money is an important tool that we need on this earth to function. It would be great to not have to worry about money, but in our world to live, we must have it. You will not have to worry, if you do as God says to with your money.

Number one, don't love it. Don't hoard it, don't stress over it, don't let it become your drive in life. There is nothing wrong with putting some away for "emergencies" that is smart, God gives you a mind to think to prepare for the future, I am talking about when your heart is wrong and you "hoard" it.

Number two, give to God what is biblical for you to give to God. Don't go off your emotions or your feelings. The bible and your feelings won't contradict each other. The Bible says the tithe—which means tenth. Give that to your church or your ministry. Then as the Lord leads you, give offerings, first fruits, and alms. Those are spirit directed because they will be determined based upon the people or situations God places in your life.

God is looking across the earth for those with faith. He will look for those whom He will use as an instrument of Him. Isn't it a great feeling, knowing that you are taking part in something way bigger than yourself? It always feels good to give. That is why the Bible says it is more blessed to give than to receive. When you are making a financial difference in someone else's life, helping them, that is a blessing to you. Nothing feels greater than knowing you are able to take care of someone.

One problem is that people will always "talk" about how they would do this or do that "if" they had the extra money. Don't fall into that trap. Go back to the story of the master giving the talents to his workers. He blessed the one that went out and multiplied the amount. The one that hid it for safe keeping, he took it away from. If you are too afraid, start small. If all you "think" you have is \$10, then give \$10. God knows your hearts, it took us some time to have the faith to know that we could give the full 10% of our income. But once we did, that is when the blessings really started happening. All those worries and cares financially in our lives, gone. I used to think about how great it would be to not worry about certain things or having enough money for this or that. Now I put my faith to work. It is amazing, truly amazing. How God took us from teaching to where we are doing it and now we are seeing the results! I am passionate about wanting to share that because I see it working in our own lives. It is great to watch pastors and learn the truths and then you wonder, "Are they just saying that because they want my money?" I know I was skeptical much of the time, then the Lord softened my heart and I had to "want" to have a teachable spirit. Once when I was open to it, that is when things started happening. Great things, less stress, more money, less debt, and miraculous results.

Daily Bible reading: Acts 21,22,23,24