

*The Church has to work....*

# *Magic with Leftovers*



*A Seven Sermon Series on  
Stewardship*

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## The Church Has To Work...MAGIC WITH LEFTOVERS

**TEXT:** II Cor. 8:1-9

**THESIS:** To set forth the relationship between Stewardship and Scripture, Satan & Spirituality.

**INTRO.:** A. Recently, a book was published with the title: **MAGIC WITH LEFTOVERS**. It was written about the kitchen but could have been written about the church. Often we have to perform MAGIC with LEFTOVERS, as far as money is concerned. Only two in ten tithe. Only one of the two gives a regular offering over the tithe and fewer still give love-gifts except when a special need is presented. We have worked some fantastic **MAGIC WITH LEFTOVERS!**

B. But, "leftovers" are not God's intention or plan. Instead of "leftovers", the Bible deals with "firstfruits". Instead of giving what's left after other obligations are met, God says we ought to give Him what belongs to Him first, and He will help us meet our other obligations. "Firstfruits" giving demonstrates faith; "leftovers" giving demonstrates spiritual immaturity and leads to spiritual shipwreck because "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

### **I. SCRIPTURE & STEWARDSHIP:**

A. Tithing Is Taught In Old Testament & New Testament:

B. Giving Is Emphasized In Old Testament & New Testament:

**ILLUS.:** 1 verse in 5 in the New Testament refers to money & property & man's relationship to them. Of Jesus' 38 major parables, 19 deal with money, property & man's relationship to them. (p. 28 God Doesn't Want Your \$)

C. Liberality Is Taught Elsewhere & In Our Text:

1. Jesus set the example: V. 9

- a. He stripped Himself of fantastic riches & became absolutely poor to demonstrate a principle: V. 9
- b. Paul here uses His example of giving as a pattern.

2. Paul sets forth several principles we should follow:

- a. Paul calls on the Corinthians "to prove the sincerity of (their) love" for the Lord by their liberality: V.8
- b. Paul uses the Macedonian Christians as an example of how to cultivate liberality of giving: V. 5
- c. Paul sets forth the principle of proportionate giving: V. 11,12
- d. Paul shows that equality of giving lightens the burden of all: V. 13,14
- e. Paul uses the Old Testament illustration of gathering manna to set forth God's blessings upon the liberal giver: V.15

### **II. SATAN & STEWARDSHIP:**

A. Satan Will Suggest A Postponement Of Generosity:

1. Postponement brings spiritual poverty:
2. Postponement curtails the church's ministry: the need is NOW.
3. Postponement could bring shame at His return: Mt. 25: 14 – 30

**ILLUS.:** The prophet Malachi asks: "Will a man rob God?" He answers yes! But, the man who attempts to rob God really robs the church, the world of the Gospel & himself of inner peace. A Jewish proverb says: "The eagle that robs the altar sets fire to her own nest." The stolen flesh carries with it the burning coals!

**B. Satan Will Neutralize Your Income By Increasing Your Living Standard:**

1. You get more money so live at a higher level & rob God!
2. You buy more so you give less!

**ILLUS.:** Instead of raising his standard of living, John Wesley raised his standard of giving with each raise of pay he received.

**C. Satan Will Suggest You Postpone Your Generosity Till Death:**

1. Including the Lord's work in your will IS proper.
2. But, a reward is promised in Scripture only for "deeds done in the body..."

**ILLUS.:** Someone said: "Do your giving while you're living, then you're knowing where it's going."

Jacob, the swindler, gave 1/10<sup>th</sup>; Zaccheus, the despised tax gatherer, gave 1/2; the zealous Jew gave at least 1/6<sup>th</sup> & the unnamed widow gave "all her living". HOW MUCH (OR LITTLE) DO YOU GIVE?

**III. SPIRITUALITY & STEWARDSHIP:**

**A. It Is A Venture Of Faith:**

1. Giving to God's work implies trusting God.

**NOTE:** Little girl placed her money in the offering plate & asked "Where is my money going, Mommy?" "We are giving it to God." Pointing to the usher, she asked, "Is he God?" Mom explained. Next day the girl wanted some candy, "I want to buy some candy, but God got my money yesterday. Has God got your money?!"

Isn't it strange that we claim to trust Him with our souls, but not with our money?

2. Giving to God's work implies investing toward unseen rewards.

**ILLUS.:** We give what we can see & measure, to gain what we cannot see or measure but are promised by God! "We walk... by faith!"

**B. It Is A Spiritual Exercise:**

1. It reveals your estimation of God's veracity.
2. It reveals your view of God's program.
3. It reveals your values & priorities.

**NOTE:** Money represents time; time is life; life is our greatest gift. Money is the energy of the body & mind transformed into currency. It is printed personality! Money represents life reduced to dollars & cents. It has spiritual value. The Lord asks for our money. But, God doesn't send monthly bills. Suppose He did!

The Cost Of Breathing Air: Since one breathes 18 times a minute or 25,920 times a day free of charge, it would be interesting to find out what it would cost to breathe through an oxygen tank. (A hospital calculated the charge of \$10,000 a year for the continuous use of oxygen. That comes to \$700,000 for 70 years.)

The Cost of Sunlight: A utility company estimated that an average six-room house would use 1,750 watts per hour if the lights burned day and night. Multiplying the wattage by 100 to arrive at the intensity of the sun, the sun's light would cost over a million dollars for a period of 70 years.

The Cost of Daily Prayer: How much would prayer cost? The telephone company claims that if you talked long distance anywhere in the United States during the low-rate hours an average of 3 times a day for an average of 3 minutes a call, it would cost \$100,000 for 70 years of telephoning.

When we add up the cost of upkeep on the body (as compared to an automobile), the cost of the air we breathe, the sunlight we enjoy and the "open line" of prayer, we arrive at a lifetime debt to God of \$1,860,000. That comes to almost \$75 a day. (Adjust figures for today's dollar value)

**CONCL.:** Scripture & Stewardship are inseparable partners! Satan & Stewardship are implacable enemies! Spirituality & Stewardship are indivisible quantities & qualities.

A Christian must first give of himself before he will give of his substance. Giving declares a commitment.

Unsaved, Christ became poor for your sake, that you through His poverty might become rich. Will you accept His riches NOW?!

## **"THE LAW OF THE TITHE"**

**TEXT:** Heb. 7:1-8

**THEME:** To show the laws of giving are not isolated to one dispensation but are uniform throughout the Scriptures. Many think of the tithe as a method of giving which applied only to the Dispensation of Law, but it isn't.

**INTRO.:** God is a God of order! He has a definite plan. This is true in the area of finances as well as the realm of salvation. He expects believers to be orderly & not haphazard in their giving. He expects them to follow His master plan. The tenth (TITHE) is the foundation stone of this Plan. God does not act on impulse, but by Law. As day follows night, & harvest the seed time, so God operates by prescribed law in relation to financing His program on earth through the Church.

Is TITHING still His plan? Or, was tithing simply for Israel under the Law? Or, are believers of every age expected to TITHE?

**ILLUS.:** A mother was reading about TITHING from the Old Testament to her son. The boy asked to whom these things were written. The mother replied, "To the Jew." The boy had apparently picked up some anti-Semitism from playmates and replied, "Well, I think we ought to give as much as the old Jews anyhow!"

We want you to see today that...

TITHING was not typical or a shadow of something to come. There is no other plan in the Bible for the work of the ministry. Tithing has never been recinded or relinquished by God... although believers have relegated it to the Old Testament. The patriarchs had a better knowledge of God's method than many Christians do today. (Because of willful blindness)

### **I. TITHING BEFORE THE LAW:**

#### **A. Gifts To The Lord Before The Tithe:**

1. Adam & Eve before the fall were to leave a portion of Eden to the Lord: Gen. 2:9,11,6,17. (After Fall...sacrifices) **"The earth is the Lord's."**
2. Cain & Abel were required to give to God. Gen. 4:1-5
3. Noah sacrificed after the flood. Gen. 7:2

#### **B. Gifts To The Lord After The Tithe:**

1. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek: (1<sup>st</sup> mention of tithes in the Bible... determines usage throughout.) (1<sup>st</sup> mention of tithe...Gen. 14:17-20) After successfully defeating Lot's enemies, Abraham returns & pays tithes & more!
  - a. Abraham was not under Law (400 yrs. before).
  - b. Abraham was under Covenant of pure grace!
  - c. Abraham paid tithes to God's Servant.

**ILLUS.:** Everywhere the TITHE mentioned in Scriptures it has to do with giving to God's servants! (Heb. 7:1-8) (type of Christ.)

2. Jacob paid tithes: (Gen. 28:20-22) Recognizing God's right to it.

**TRANS.:** The Law of Tithing was established by God BEFORE the Law of Moses! And, men respected it.

## **II. TITHING UNDER THE LAW:**

(Related to God's Sparing the 1<sup>st</sup> born in the land of Egypt.) (The land was His—Lev. 25:23)

- A. The First-Born Were The Lord's...Ex. 13:2
- B. The First-Fruits Were Lord's...Prov. 3:9 (Cf. with Mt. 6:33)
- C. The Levites Were Lord's...Num. 3:45 (1<sup>st</sup>-Born redeem)
- D. All Tithes Were Lord's...Lev. 27:30-34

**ILLUS.:** In the selection of Old Testament sacrificial animals... every 10<sup>th</sup> animal was touched with rod. If a man attempted to exchange an animal for a poorer one...both became the Lord's.

- E. All Tithes Given By God To The Levites...Num. 18:21

**ILLUS.:** My daughter Crystal wanted to know how Jesus was going to get our Christmas offering. God owns His ministers, therefore what is given to them is given to Him. (Old Testament clergy received 25% more than the average salary of the congregation... today this is often reversed. No retirement, fringe benefits, savings accounts, etc. Old Testament ministers were cared for by the people to whom they ministered.)

- F. Levites In Turn Tithed To The Priests: Num. 18:23-28

**ILLUS.:** Someone expressed amazement that one of our church-supported & commissioned missionaries sent their TITHE back to church. This is as it should be.

**ILLUS.:** Sometimes questions arise on how to determine a Tithe.

- 1) "I can't figure my tithe." Move decimal point one place to left.
- 2) "Shall I figure my tithe before or after taxes?" Uncle Sam figures his tax on TOTAL INCOME; shall we do less for the Lord?
- 3) "I am unsure of my profits...can't figure my tithe."

Each year people figure their profits & taxes for Uncle Sam. Remember, it never hurts to give the Lord more than the tithe. When in doubt, give more!

**ILLUS.:** But wait, you say, that was all on Old Testament Ground. I live on this side of the Cross. For you, let's look at...

## **III. TITHING AFTER THE LAW:**

- A. Jesus Approved Of The Tithe: Mt. 23:23

- 1. Christ, as a good Jew, would have tithed.
- 2. Christ declared that our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of Jews... Mt. 5:20 (Cf. Lk. 18:12)

- B. Paul Taught Tithing: I Cor. 9:1-14  
(\*I have taught nothing contrary to the Law...\*)

- 1. "Saith not the Law also?" V. 8
- 2. A soldier is paid by his own government. V. 7a
- 3. A Farmer eats of the fruit of his labors. V. 7b

4. Spiritual "farmers" reap of their crop. V. 11
5. "Even so...in like manner". V.14

**ILLUS.:** Priests & Levites, God's servants in Old Testament, were supported by the TITHES of the people...so, God's servants in the New Testament must be supported.

C. The New Testament Church Practiced This:

1. If there is a lack of emphasis on TITHING in New Testament it's due to a lack of a necessity to emphasize something Jewish converts would know about.
2. The early church gave not the Tithe, but EVERYTHING. They pooled their possessions. New Testament giving!

D. Book Of Hebrews Teaches This: (Capstone) 7:1-8

1. Melchizedek was a priest (God's servant).
2. Melchizedek was type of Christ: V. 3, 15-17
3. Christ, after the order of Melchizedek lives & is receiving TITHES!  
V. 8 (through His servants)

**CONCL.:** God's plan for supporting His work & workers is identical in the Old & New Testaments. God's TITHE has always in every age, belonged to God's servants. Today, these are: PASTORS, EVANGELISTS, and MISSIONARIES. These are Christ's Gifts to his Church. (Eph. 4:11,12) The Church is responsible for them.

**THIS IS THE LAW OF THE TITHE!!**

Claim God's promise today.

**"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Mal. 3:10**



## **"BEWARE THE DANGERS OF TITHING"**

**TEXT:** Heb. 7:8

**THESIS:** To show some real dangers of tithing.

**INTRO.:** A. It Is Very Dangerous To Tithe!

1. It is an addictive habit.
2. It could lead to giving more & more.
3. It may tell others you really do love the Lord.
4. It could help the church so it need not "beg for money".
5. It could keep the Pastor from ever mentioning the need for increased finances.
6. It may lead you to be less selfish.
7. It may cause a sacrificial spirit.

B. It Can Be Very Dangerous Not To Tithe!

1. It may mean God will have to extract his money from you some other way; hospitals, sickness, accidents, etc.
2. It may mean the Lord's work will have to limp along on the crumbs or leftovers.
3. It may mean great loss of souls.
4. It will mean great loss of reward.

**TRANS.:** Today, I will list 5 serious dangers for the tither...

### **I. SHEKELS & SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS: Luke 18:11,12**

A. Tithers Can Get A Superior Attitude Towards Non-Tithers:

1. Tithing is a personal transaction.
2. Tithing is a satisfying experience.

B. Tithers Usually Are Superior In their Attitude Towards Non-Tithers:

1. They see the importance of the Lord's work.
2. They sense the importance of obedience.

### **II. LUCRE & LEGALISM: Matthew 23:23**

A. Tithers Can Make The Tithe An End Instead Of The Beginning:

1. Miserly counting out the exact amount

**NOTE:** Like the wife who asked her husband, "Can you give me a little money?" "Yes," he replied, "how little?"

2. Miserly & miserably begrudging any more than the tithe:

**NOTE:** The Old Testament Law regarding the tithe was not so "legalistic" after all: 1<sup>st</sup> Tithe: (Levitical Tithe) went to the Levites because they received no earthly inheritance! Each of 12 tribes brought 1/10<sup>th</sup>...Levites received 120%. Old Testament clergy received 20% higher salary than the average person in the congregation this is often reversed today!

2<sup>nd</sup> Tithe: (Festival Tithe) 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the remaining 9/10's went toward the sacrificial feast at the Sanctuary. (Every 3<sup>rd</sup> year this tithe was used for widows, orphans, fatherless & strangers (Deut. 26:12-15) (Like our Deacon's Fund).

B. Tithers Are Usually The Most Generous, Non-Legalistic Church Members:

### **III. COINS & CONTROVERSY: Hebrews 7:8**

A. The Old Testament Taught Tithing:

B. Jesus Taught Tithing: Mt. 22:21; Mt. 23:23

C. Paul Taught Tithing: Acts 21:21; Heb. 7:8; I Cor. 9; II Cor. 9

**NOTE:** The question is NOT "To tithe or not to tithe..." The question IS how far beyond the tithe does the Lord expect me to go? For the Pastor the problem is how to get the people to learn the blessings of tithing! Ex.: Preacher encouraged all who would tithe to stand...had the pews wired & pushed button. The next day they found 3 Scotchmen electrocuted!

### **IV. SILVER & STEWARDSHIP:**

**NOTE:** Tithing takes the oyster stew out of the church & puts the stew in Stewardship! Churches, which tithe, do not need suppers, sales & circuses.

A. You Cannot Substitute Silver For Service:

B. You Cannot Substitute Tithes For Time & Talents:

"We give Thee but Thine own,  
What `ere the gift may be;  
All that we have is Thine alone,  
A trust, O Lord, from Thee."

### **V. PESOS & PROBLEMS:**

A. Tithing Will Not End All Problems:

1. It WILL eliminate selfishness.
2. It WILL result in satisfaction.
3. It WILL encourage more complete dedication.
4. It WILL enable the church to carry out its main task without hindrance.

B. Tithing Will Not Solve The sin Problem:

1. Silver & gold will not pay the ransom on sin.
2. Only Christ's blood will do that.

**CONCL.:** Gold cannot buy God or God's Heaven. But, it can buy the means to effectively carry out the Great Commission. God does not operate on gold, but His work on earth does. Are you a tither? Are you saved?

## **"HOW GOD WANTS IT DONE"**

**TEXT:** I Cor. 9:1-18

**THEME:** To reveal God's Plan of Financing His Work.

**INTRO.:** It is true that God desires that every man give "as God hath prospered Him" and as "he purposeth in his heart", but it is likewise true that He has given a holy standard below which no man should go.

He desires that our gifts be from willing hearts, but He also has a definite plan for our giving. I can preach & teach about God's plan of salvation, His plan of building the church, His plan for the future, but when preaching about God's plan for financing his work and workers, different reaction. Money is a "touchy subject" with some of God's people! Perhaps, it is due to the abuse it has had by some preachers, teachers, and evangelists.

**ILLUS.:** One preacher asked everyone in congregation who would give \$50.00 to stand...then asked the pianist to play "Star Spangled Banner".

**ILLUS.:** Another Preacher wired every pew to a button on pulpit. Sunday morning asked all people who could give a \$10.00 bill to stand, then pushed a button to give everyone a shot of electricity. Next day the janitor found 3 Scotchmen electrocuted!

We are not going to badger, bemoan, or belittle, nor to use a tricky method or idea to teach you God's financial plan today, but merely turn your attention to His perfect plan in His perfect Word.

### **I. THE ORIGIN OF GOD'S FINANCIAL PLAN:**

#### **A. The Scriptural Principles Involved:**

1. "The earth is the Lord's" Ps. 24:1 Cf. Lev. 25:23
  - a. By right of creation...Gen.1:1
2. "The tithe is the Lord's" Lev. 27:30 ("IS")

**ILLUS.:** Both these principles extend throughout Scriptures. God taxes every man's income by 10%...He charges them a tithe...for living on His land.

#### **B. Illustration Of These Principles:**

1. Adam & Eve...tree of knowledge of good & evil... keep small portion of their abundance sacred for Him.
2. Cain & Abel...God demanded their offerings & specified the nature of same.
3. Noah...offered sacrifices (Not money yet).
4. Abraham & Melchizedek...1<sup>st</sup> mention of Tithe (434 yrs. BEFORE LAW...under cover of pure grace.) Gen. 14:17
5. Moses...Institution of Law only reiterated God's plan financing His work & added details.

### **II. THE OBJECT OF GOD'S FINANCIAL PLAN:**

- A. The Tithe...That God's Special Servants Be Adequately Cared For: Lev.18:21 Cf. Neh. 13:10
1. Old Testament ministers received a 20% HIGHER salary than average in the congregation...today, just the opposite is often true.
  2. Many of God's servants today forced either to supplement their income through outside work or go without hospitalization, retirement benefits, vacation, savings accounts, insurance, etc., etc.
- B. The Offerings...That God's Work Be Adequately Cared For:
1. Only the BEST was good enough for God in Old Testament...today people give to God leftovers, something no good to them, worn out, broken or useless.
  2. First class furnishings in the Old Testament were the order of the day.
  3. Failure to give tithes & offerings causes God's work to fall into disrepair & disrepute.

**TRANS.:** Thus far, I have given you Old Testament...but now let's look at the:

### **III. THE ONGOING OF GOD'S FINANCIAL PLAN:**

- A. God Has A Program In The New Testament As He Did In The Old Testament:
1. Acts 1:8...evangelize world.
  2. Acts 15:14...to take out people for His Name.
  3. Eph. 4:11,12...to build up saints.
- B. God Has A Means (System) To Finance His Program In New Testament As In The Old Testament:
1. Does God Change? NO!
  2. Does His Salvation change? NO!
  3. Does His System of Finance Change? NO!
- C. God's Financial Program Is Consistent Throughout The Scriptures:
1. The Principle of Tithes & Offerings established before the Law
  2. The Principle was the same under the Law.
  3. The Principle did not change after the Law.
- D. God's Financial Program Has Not Changed Today: I Cor. 9:1-14
1. Paul brings together the Old Testament & New Testament teaching on the subject of giving:
    - a. Compare vs. 7-11 (Cf. with V. 1b) "saith not the Law also?"
    - b. Paul did make tents as part-time work but here admits he had a right to expect God's people to support him. V. 12(Cf. II Cor. 11:7-9)
  2. Paul reminds them that the Old Testament principle continues in New Testament (Compare vs. 13,14) "even so".

**CONCL.:** Here then is the origin, object & ongoing of God's financial plan, for His servants & His service. God has a plan, and it is clearly spelled out in His Word.

**IILUS.:** A barefoot boy was taunted by other children... "You are a Christian; why doesn't God tell His friends to send you some shoes?"

The boy answered, "I think God does tell them, but they don't listen."

God tells YOU what to do that His work & workers be blessed & strengthened... are you listening?

"God doesn't want your money...He wants YOU!"

## **"THE GREATEST CRIME OF THE CENTURY"**

**TEXT: Mal. 3:8-10**

**THESIS:** That "robbing God" of tithes & offerings is a serious offence & brings blight instead of blessing.

**INTRO.:** A. Some horrible crimes have been committed in this century! The multiple murder of nurses in Chicago by Richard Speck. The Great million-dollar Brinks Robbery in Boston. The kidnapping & torture of a lady in Baltimore by a pair of perverts. The Great Bank Robbery in Britain, computer crimes, Charles Manson, abortion, etc., etc.

B. But, the "Greatest Crime of the Century" is committed, not by perverts, but by church members. It is not robbing banks, but robbing God! It is not killing people, but damning souls & crippling the church. It is when God's people rob God!

**ILLUS.:** Preachers often apologize for preaching on giving. Paul apologized for not doing so in II Cor. 12:13 "Forgive me this wrong...!"

### **I. WHEN GOD IS ROBBED: V.8, 9**

A. The specific Problem: V. 8

1. To fail to pay the tithe is Robbery!

a. Because the tithe is God's, not yours!

**ILLUS.:** 10% of all you are entrusted with belongs to God! To use it for anything else is to steal from God. The tenth is the basket in which God hands us the nine tenths. If we do not return the one tenth to Him, we steal the basket! Intellectual logical & even scriptural arguments or human eloquence will not avail in relation to giving. Giving is a response to love & love is simply shown through obedience.

b. Because God demands the tithe returned:

**ILLUS.:** We do not complain when the box office at the ball game demands payment, or when the bill comes due for our purchase of a new car, swimming pool, TV, or other luxury, but let the church ask for money (that which really belongs to the Lord), & folks get mad, some stop coming to church, etc., etc. Love is in proportion to obedience.

2. To fail To give offerings is robbery!

a. After what He has given us will we rob Him of a gift above our debt to Him?

**ILLUS.:** Someone has said that the tithe is the Kindergarten of Christian giving. Church stewardship applies only to the nine-tenths!

B. The Specific Product: V.9

1. God curses those who rob Him.
2. Note what the curse involved (Cf. V.11)

**ILLUS.:** Any nation or individual guilty of robbing God is likewise cursed. Here, the curse involved plagues, crop failure, & famine. In your life it could be sickness, sorrow & spiritual starvation. God help us not to rob God, or we will pay!

Many testify of how costly it was to serve the devil, yet after they are saved they often keep money they used to pay the devil & claim they cannot afford to pay God! If you can't afford to tithe now on a limited income, you will never tithe when you have more to give!

## **II. WHEN GOD IS PAID: V. 10,11**

### **A. A Specific Portion: "tithes"**

1. The tithe is 10%
2. The tithe is the Lord's.
3. The tithe is required in every age.

**ILLUS.:** Some say the tithe is Old Testament. How foolish & ignorant of the Scriptures. Jesus approved (Mt. 23:22) of the tithe, New Testament believers paid the tithe & Jesus is still receiving tithes in this age according to Heb.7:4;5,8. Also, if you would rather give according to the New Testament plan, then sell all you have & give it to the Lord. Acts 4:33-35

### **B. A Specific Place: "storehouse"**

1. The Old Testament storehouse was the Temple (God's visible agency on earth to carry out worship & work).
2. The New Testament storehouse is the local church.
  - a. The Old Testament Hebrew Word "storehouse" (owstar) Mal. 3:10
  - b. The New Testament Greek Word "storehouse" (thesaurizo) I Cor. 16:2

**ILLUS.:** Dr. H. C. Thiessen, Wheaton p.26 "Putting Fundamental Churches On Their Feet Financially" by Cell. SA I Cor. 9:13, 14 times the Greek Word "thesaurizo" translates Heb. Word "owstar"

### **C. A Specific Promise:**

1. To "prove" God's faithfulness: "prove me"

**ILLUS.:** The promise was given expecting faith to be exercised. The blessings are promised AFTER not BEFORE the tithes & offerings are given. "Those who deal with God must deal upon trust." Mt. Henry. Cf. I Kings 17:13

2. To Provided Abundantly: "windows of Heaven"

- a. A promise to provide for actual need.

**ILLUS.:** They needed rain...they would receive according to their need.

- b. A promise to provide beyond their need.

**CONCL.:** V. 12 God wants to bless us so we may be a testimony to others. He would shower us with material needs to make us a showcase. He says "prove me now..." Will you do it? Or, will you commit the "Greatest Crime in this Century" and be a God-robber?



## **"MONEY TALKS! (ABOUT YOU)"**

**TEXT:** Mk. 12:41-44 **MEDIT:** Lk. 32:1-4 **CALL:** Mk. 12:17

**THEME:** To show the concern of the Savior over our contributions to His work on earth.

**INTRO.:** A. "The most sensitive nerve in the human body is the one that leads to the pocketbook."

**ILLUS.:** Two hunters: One was shot through head... not hurt...he only plugged up the hole. The other hunter dropped dead. Examination revealed he wasn't hit in the body but shot through the wallet."

B. The reason folks are touchy about money is because we are so closely identified with our dollars. Money represents us...our toil, time, talents. Our picture may not be on any bill, but our person is certainly in it. MONEY TALKS...ABOUT US!

**ILLUS.:** Poem: If money talks...as some folks tell, to most of us it says farewell!

C. In our text money says volumes about the people who gave it. Christ listened in on what it said, & it is forever recorded for us here...

**TRANS.:** One day Christ "sat over against the treasury" and we note...

### **I. HIS OBSERVATION OF THE OFFERINGS: V. 41a**

A. Christ Knows What We Give To Him & What We Withhold "...sat opposite the treasury."

1. We go to great lengths to hide what we give:

**ILLUS.:** One of the strangest sights in a service is offering time. In a department store folks flash wallets & bills & openly display their monies, but in church men hold their wallets cupped in their hands, fold bills so the denomination cannot be seen, hold their hand over their offering till plate moves on, etc.

2. The Lord looks over our shoulders:

**ILLUS.:** Dr. John Broadus left the pulpit, moved down the aisle with the ushers noting every penny placed in the plates. Some were surprised, some embarrassed, some mad, others delighted. He returned to the pulpit and said "Forget that I have seen what each gave, but remember God watches every gift & is keeping records."

B. Christ Knows The Motive With Which We Give: "how"

1. "God loveth a cheerful giver."

**ILLUS.:** A boy was given quarter & dime. The quarter for an offering & dime for himself...he switched them. Questioned as to his motive, he explained, "The preacher said the Lord loves a cheerful giver & I felt more cheerful about putting the dime in the offering than the quarter." (Cf. Ex 25:2)

2. HOW we give depends on how we love.

**ILLUS.:** You can give without loving, but you can't love without giving!

## **II. HIS CONSIDERATION OF THE CONTRIBUTORS: V. 41b, 42**

### A. He Noted The Financial Status Of The Givers:

1. "Many that were rich..."

**ILLUS.:** Not necessarily recognized by clothing, etc., but by how much they were able to give.

**ILLUS.:** One preacher remarked, "When I look at my well-dressed congregation, I ask, 'Where are the poor?'...At offering time, 'Where are the rich?'"

Another commented, "The poor are always welcome in this church, & when I glance at the offering, I know they have come."

- a. The rich gave of their substance... "cast in much..." (V. 44 for comparison).
- b. Apparently, they withheld the offering & stopped at the tithe.

**ILLUS.:** "A Christian's stewardship applies only to the nine-tenths of his income. The one-tenth is the Lord's from the beginning & is not given to us to use as we see fit." Dr. C.G. Trumbull

2. "Certain poor widow..."

- a. Christ looks at what a man IS, not what he HAS!
- b. Christ noticed the widow as well as wealthy.
- c. Christ recorded the amount of the widow's offering: (2 mites...¼ cent)

### B. He Noted The Financial Status Of The Others:

### C. He Noted The Actions (& Attitude) Of The Givers:

1. The "rich CAST in much"...perhaps with great show.
2. The "poor widow...THREW in 2 mites"...perhaps hurriedly & embarrassed at her small gift.

## **I. HIS OBSERVATION OF THE OFFERING:**

## **II. HIS CONSIDERATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS:**

## **III. HIS DETERMINATION OF THE DONATIONS:**

### A. Christ Used This Incident To Teach His Disciples: V. 43

1. He recently (Mk. 12:17) spoke of giving His due.
2. He often spoke of fulfilling the Law & was always pleased with those in obedience to it.
3. He had spoken to His disciples about their responsibility of tithing on other occasions ("this ought ye to have done...") Mt. 23:23
4. He never was ashamed to ask for money for God's work.
5. He didn't praise the widow openly, He spoke to disciples.

B. "Christ Taught Proportionate Giving Here: V.43, 44

1. The New Testament speaks of Christian giving above the tithe: "as God prospers".
2. The proportion you give speaks volumes about your spirituality!

**ILLUS.:** Many can quote the Word, know all the doctrines, etc., but are spiritually poor for they have never discovered that "it IS more blessed to give than to receive."

C. Christ Taught Sacrificial Giving Here: V.44

1. Men often give God that which costs them nothing.

**ILLUS.:** Two boys were playing Noah's Ark with a shiny new model of Ark & animals. After they brought the Ark to land, they wanted to imitate Noah's sacrifice, but didn't want to burn their new animals, so they went to the attic & got a lamb with broken legs, etc. to sacrifice!

2. Men offer to God the "left-overs" (Cf. Mal. 1:8 & 14)

**ILLUS.:** God doesn't want leftovers any more than YOU do. You want the best for your children, for your home, why not for your Savior? II Sam. 24:24

**"Neither will I offer...unto the Lord my God that which cost me nothing..."**

**CONCL.:** How many have given the "widow's mite"? Who have truly SACRIFICED that God's work may prosper? Everything given in this church is voluntary, but that doesn't mean we ought to give less... but more!! The most important gift, of course, is to first give yourselves to the Lord!!!

## "HOW MUCH CAN I AFFORD TO KEEP?"

**TEXT:** Eph. 4:28

**THESIS:** To set forth the advantages & blessings of tithing & giving beyond the tithe.

**INTRO.:** A. GOD OWNS EVERYTHING! We know this fact intellectually, but we need reminding.

**ILLUS.:** A husband & wife never really forget the vows & obligations of marriage, but usually don't think about them every day. When they attend a wedding, they are reminded of the promises they made before God & witnesses. We need reminding of God's ownership. (Cf. II Pet. 1:12,13)

1. Because of creation: Ps. 89:11; 95:5; 50:10; Hag. 2:8
2. Because of His providence: Is. 42:5,5; Col. 1:17
3. Because of His redemption: I Pet. 1:18,19; I Cor. 6:20

B. GOD LOANS US SOME THINGS! I Cor. 4:2 The "steward" is a manager. One day every steward will be called to account for his stewardship (Mt.25). The car you drive, the house you live in, the luxuries you enjoy, are only on "loan" from God. They are all really His. He expects you to use & invest them wisely.

**Ps. 89:11:** "The heavens are Thine; the earth also is Thine; as for the world and the fullness thereof, Thou has founded them."

**Ps. 95:5:** "The sea is His, and He made it, and His hands formed the dry land."

**Ps. 50:10:** "For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills."

**Hag. 2:8:** "The silver is Mine, the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts."

**Ps. 100:3:** "...it is He who hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are the sheep of His pasture."

**Is. 42:5,6:** "...He who created the heavens, and stretched them out... & will keep thee."

**Col. 1:17:** "by Him all things consist."

**I Pet. 1:18,19:** "...not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver & gold... but with the precious blood of Christ."

### I. TAKING THE "STEW" OUT OF STEWARDSHIP: II Cor. 9:7

**NOTE:** The word "stewardship" in the New Testament is related to the Greek word "oikonomia" (translated "dispensation") & refers to a "house manager". In Bible days a house manager had oversight over property belonging to another. He was accountable for the way he handled his task & how he treated the owner's property. He possessed the property, but did not own it.

A. Because Of God's Ownership He Doesn't Want Us To "Give" To Him Grudgingly!

1. What we "give" is in reality returning what was loaned to us.

**ILLUS.:** What goes through YOUR mind as the ushers pass the offering plate? Do you give absentmindedly or alertly? Is this act of worship exciting or do you simply endure this part of the service?

2. What we "give" should be given as good stewards.
  - a. Some give a tip to God as they would in a restaurant.

**ILLUS.:** Someone has decided that a TIP should be 15%! That's more than a tithe. Isn't it strange that we "tip" a waitress when we are PAYING for a meal; yet God provides freely the air we breathe, the sun we enjoy & the rain which produces the food we eat yet some give the waitress more than God! Then, there are always those who "eat" here in the local church & "tip" God elsewhere.

- b. Some give the bare minimum of 1/10<sup>th</sup>, but with bitterness.
- c. Some give the tithe demanding God's blessing in return.
- d. Some give the tithe as if they were doing God a favor.

**ILLUS.:** Some apparently think they are doing the church or the Pastor a favor & that THEY ought to be thankful & should "pay them back" when possible.

- e. Some withhold their giving because they are out of harmony with the program of the church or the Pastor.
- f. Some give or withhold their money as a weapon to get their way.
- g. Some simply give to get credit with the IRS.
- h. Some give so they can boast of the amount to others.
- i. Some designate their giving & only support their favorite ministries (regardless of the local church priority &/or the voted budget).

**B. Because of God's Ownership He Doesn't Want Us To "Give" To Him Out Of Necessity!**

- 1. Though it is true that "the tithe is the Lord's" our motivation for giving must not be "I have to, so I will."
- 2. Though the tithe is sacred & should not be used for self, we should never begrudge Him His portion.
  - a. If all only paid the tithe, the church would never need to "beg" for money.
  - b. If we all give "our fair share" by tithing, all God's servants would have sufficient income.

**ILLUS.:** It can be demonstrated in Scripture that the tithe should pay THE WORKERS, the Offerings should support THE WORK, & Love Gifts should handle SPECIAL NEEDS!

**C. Because Of God's Ownership He Wants Us To "Give" With Happy Or Cheerful Hearts: Hilariously!**

- 1. If God loves a "cheerful giver" does He love YOU?!
- 2. If God wants gifts given cheerfully how much of your giving pleases Him?

**ILLUS.:** When you tithe your income & give offerings besides & then compare your luxuries & "extras" with your non-tithing neighbors & grudge-giving Christian friends, do you feel just a tinge of jealousy or even bitterness? Do you think: "I too could have a swimming pool if I didn't HAVE to tithe!"

## **II. GIVING UNTIL IT STOPS HURTING: Eph. 4:28**

**ILLUS.:** Some wit said: "Don't give till it hurts, but keep on giving till it STOPS hurting!"

A man knelt with his Pastor & committed himself to tithing. His pay was \$10.00/wk., & he gave \$ 1.00. His pay increased, and his tithe to \$7.50, \$10.00, \$40.00, \$100.00 through \$200.00 and

A man knelt with his Pastor & committed himself to tithing. His pay was \$10.00/wk., & he gave \$ 1.00. His pay increased, and his tithe to \$7.50, \$10.00, \$40.00, \$100.00 through \$200.00 and then \$500.00. He called the Pastor and asked if he could be released from his promise since he couldn't "afford to give away money like that." The Pastor replied that he couldn't be released from the promise, but that they could kneel and ask God to shrink his income so his tithe could be only \$1.00 again!!

A. Our Earning Power Ought To Increase Our Giving Level:

1. We ought to work to give, not just to get.

**ILLUS.:** John Wesley, in a sermon, preached these 3 points: I. Earn all you can, II. Save all you can, III. Give all you can. He practiced what he preached!

2. We are able to work because of God's grace.

**ILLUS.:** Suppose God sent bills for His blessings? Bills for our body maintenance, for sunlight, air, trees, flowers, etc.?!

B. Our Giving-Level Should Reflect Our Spiritual Status:

1. We should give with humility:
  - a. All our abilities and talents are God-given.
  - b. There are no "self-made" men!

**ILLUS.:** Some make more than others & then strive to let everyone know how successful they are by the cars they drive, the home they buy, the trips then take, etc. All this to make an impression. They are not stewards, but sewers; where everything that comes into their bank account becomes a stench in God's nostrils. This is a worldly attitude.

2. We should give with gratitude:
  - a. A thankful heart gives with spontaneity.
  - b. A thankful heart gives with sacrifice.
3. We should give with compassion: I Cor. 13:3
  - a. Because we love souls, not because it's in the budget.
  - b. Because we love the Lord, not because the bills must be paid.

**III. ASKING NOT HOW LITTLE, BUT HOW MUCH! II Sam. 24:24**

**ILLUS.:** M. R. DeHaan said, "Under grace, God does not look at the amount on the face of the check, but on the balance left on the check stub.

C. S. Lewis observed, "If a Christian is living on the same level of luxury as others in his income bracket, he's probably not giving the way he should."

A. Your Giving should Express Both Gratitude and Faith:

1. The widow gave her 2 mites...all she had.

**NOTE:** Both these incidents were given not to show that Christians are to own nothing, but to demonstrate that we must learn to live by faith & give by faith sacrificially. Cf. I Cor. 7:24

**B. Your Giving Should Be Proportionate To Your Income:**

**ILLUS.:** Surely, the man who earns \$150.00/wk. And tithes \$15.00 is giving more proportionately than the man who earns \$500.00/wk. And only tithes \$50.00. the percentage is the same, but the obligation is generally greater.

You should STOP TITHING as soon as possible! You should start giving more as God enables you to.

**C. Your Giving Must Cost You Something: II Sam. 24:24**

1. You should not give to receive (Giving for compensation).
2. You should not only give out of your abundance.
3. You should give sacrificially.

**ILLUS.:** Maybe you should put off buying that new car so the missionary can have a car to do this work more effectively. Maybe you should not buy that swimming pool so the church can buy that new bus!

**D. Your Giving More Will Produce More Rewards:**

1. Abundant reaping: primarily spiritual & eternal: II Cor. 9:6
2. Kind treatment from others: Lk. 6:37-38 (now)
3. Material sufficiency: II Cor. 9:7-15 (NOW)
4. Joyous fellowship: Lk. 16:9 (future)

**CONCL.:** As a Christian steward don't "stew" ... GIVE! Don't give until it hurts... keep giving until it stops hurting. Don't ask how little you can give, but rather how much!

Not: "HOW MUCH MUST I GIVE, BUT HOW MUCH CAN I AFFOR TO KEEP?"!!! He gave everything for you...what do YOU give?

Unsaved, Jesus gave His life on Calvary. It was all He had. He wants you life in return! Will you give it to Him today? He bought you with His blood. Will you accept His payment price for you?

2. Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell all he had & give the money to the poor.

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