

Eagle Ridge Lake Elsinore — April 26, 2020

“Why do you do that?!” (Part 2): Tithing

Scripture Reading (Matthew 6:19-24)

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. **22** “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, **23** but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! **24** “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Introduction

- For those that have been a part of the church for any length of time, the concept of tithing/giving/offering probably seems ‘normal’.
- There may be some that have never understood why we tithe in church.
 - What does ‘tithe’ mean? How is it different from ‘offering’ or ‘giving’?
 - Why is this such an embedded part of the church process?
 - Why do we give our money to the church?
 - Is it a command from God to tithe? If so, how do I give? How much am I supposed to give?
- **What is “tithing”? (the biblical precedent)**
 - Tithe = tenth [10%]
 - **Leviticus 27:30, 32**, “Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord’s; it is holy to the Lord...And every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the Lord.”
 - According to the old covenant that God gave to Moses, the tithe was issued as a command
 - Offering = donation, present, sacrificial giving, that goes beyond a tithe.
 - **[According to Alfred Edersheim, biblical scholar and Jewish convert to Christianity]** “All around ran a simple colonnade, and within it, against the wall, the thirteen chests, or ‘trumpets,’ for charitable contributions were placed. These thirteen chests were narrow at the mouth and wide at the bottom, shaped like trumpets, whence their name. Their specific objects were carefully marked on them. Nine were for the receipt of what was legally due by worshippers; the other four for strictly voluntary gifts.”
 - Does God need our tithe/money?
 - **Deuteronomy 10:14**, “Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it.”

- **Psalm 50:10-12**, “For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine...for the world and its fullness are mine.”
- **Job 41:11**, “Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine.”
- No, God doesn't need anything from us.
- Tithing is not to be seen as a business transaction. It is not a matter of payment to God to stay in His favor.
- **In short:** Tithing is what we offer back to the Lord, because He is worthy. Because we understand that all that we have was given to us by Him. Therefore we offer back to Him a gesture of sacrificial praise and honor.

- **Why do we give?**
 - Act of Worship
 - Last week, we specifically mentioned that worship does not stop with a few songs we sing in church.
 - Worship comes from the heart, as an all-encompassing response to the God we serve, because of who He is, and what He has done for us and given to us.
 - **Our Great Command:** “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” **[Matthew 22:37]**
 - The Bible is very clear that from an all-encompassing love for God, we then live our life through the lens of scripture and the various ways in how we live.
 - B.I.B.L.E [basic instructions]
 - Instructions on church, marriage, family, work, relationship with others, speech, trials/temptations, and yes, even money.
 - **Proverbs 3:9**, “Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce;”

- **How do we give?**
 - Last week: Our worship is to be done from the heart out of reverence for God.
 - What we call it, or the style of music doesn't matter as much as what we believe about our Lord that we worship.
 - So is the same for *HOW* we tithe.
 - Today, we don't tithe our produce, our fruits and veggies, or the animals we raise...we tithe our finances.
 - **2 Corinthians 9:7 NLT**, “You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. ‘For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.’”
 - This is a matter of the heart.
 - This should not be viewed as “religiosity”, or a legalistic-binding contract.

- If you're not sure where to begin, start with 10%. It may reveal where your heart is at when it comes to giving back to the Lord.
- **Proverbs 22:9 NLT**, "Blessed are those who are generous, because they feed the poor."
 - We give generously because there will always be people who are in need.
 - Core Values: Love & Justice
- **Luke 14:13-14**, "But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."
 - We give without the expectation of getting something in return.
 - **Acts 20:35**, "In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
 - God will bless us as He sees fit. Whether that be physically, financially, or in eternity.
 - **Malachi 3:10**, "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."
 - Scripture tells us our worship to God is to come from a place of Joy, Gladness, Heartfelt, and with Thanksgiving.
 - In like fashion, we read that our giving should be: **Generous, Cheerful, Willing, Selfless.**
- Giving back to the Lord is sacrificial and is a representation of our commitment to Him.
 - When we prioritize our giving, it shows that the very first thing we think about in regards to our finances, is the Lord.
 - **Matthew 6:33**, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness..."
 - If we seek God first in all that we do (marriage, family, job/career, serving, etc.), why would we stop short with our finances?
 - **Proverbs 3:9**, "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce;"
 - This is very antithetical to the American Dream isn't it?
 - **[J. Vernon McGee]** "The Lord gave you everything. Some folk may say, 'I have worked hard. I earned this.' But who gave you the health to work? Who gave you the work to do? Who made it possible for you to make money? My friend, God did all that for you. Acknowledge Him. That is the evidence of total commitment."
 - **[Warren Wiersbe]** "Our tithes and offerings are evidence of our faith and obedience."

Application

- **Matthew 6:19-24**, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
 - When it comes to our finances and lifestyle, we have to evaluate why we accumulate the things we do.
 - If it is the accumulation of the things that becomes the chief end, then the material has become our idol. The material wears out and will fade away.
 - So where should we rather invest?
- “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”
 - What we value, is what will become the center of our heart’s focus and desire.
 - We all need to consider the two great commandments in light of our financial provision.
 - Love God and Love others. How does giving back to the Lord through our tithes and offerings help us fulfill these commandments?
- “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”
 - God and Money here are referred to separate masters.
 - Who are you going to serve?

Conclusion

- We don’t stop giving because we’re confined to our homes.
- We don’t stop giving because we don’t have ushers passing the plate in a church building.
- Just the opposite, we give because of who God is.
- We give because God is with us, wherever we are.
- We give back to the Lord because our life should be an indicator of the sacrificial response we have towards Him who sacrificed His only Son, so we could live!

Ways to Give back to the Lord at ERLE:

1. Church: Website, App, Via mail
2. Missions: local or international
3. Community