

Sermon Notes & References

God's Tithe – Christian Liberty

Proverbs 11:24-26

September 2, 2012

A. Introduction

1. Our Text – **There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want. The generous man will be prosperous, And he who waters will himself be watered. He who withholds grain, the people will curse him, But blessing will be on the head of him who sells it.**
2. The Inborn Desire to Give
 - a. God is a giving God^A
 - b. Man created in God's image^B
3. The Blessing from Giving
 - a. better than getting!^C
 - b. money is important!^D

B. The Tithe in the OT (Tithe = 10%)

1. Tithe of Abraham
 - a. Lot taken captive, Abraham rescues him^E
 - b. the spoils of battle^F
 - c. the NT commentary^G
 - d. the NT lesson from this

2. Tithe of Jacob
 - a. was it really an offering!^H
 - b. like the Sabbath, no reason to apply tithing to Christian^I
3. Tithe for the Levites (God's, or, the Lord's Tithe)
 - a. a legal requirement^J
 - b. the Levites salary^K
4. Other Tithes
 - a. for the festivals^L
 - b. for the needy^M

C. The NT Does Not Teach Tithing

1. Tithing of the Pharisees^N ... not an example!
2. NT conclusions – no tithes to support NT ministers^O

D. The NT Standard of Giving – 2 Corinthians 8:1-12

1. Christ the Standard (verse 9)
2. The Macedonian Churches
 - a. verse 2 – giving a priority
 - b. verse 3 – giving beyond capacity
 - c. verse 3 – giving voluntary
 - d. verse 5 – giving from devotion
 - e. verse 12 – giving according to means

E. Conclusion – giving by grace not by law (Romans 6:14-15)

^A Matthew 5:45; 1 Timothy 6:17; John 3:16

^B Matthew 7:11

^C Acts 20:35; Proverbs 3:9-10

^D Matthew 19:21-22

^E Genesis 14:1-16

^F Genesis 14:17-23

^G Hebrews 7:1-11

^H Genesis 28:20-22

^I Colossians 2:1; Romans 14:5-6; Ezekiel chapters 40-48

^J Leviticus 27:30-32; Malachi 3:8

^K Numbers 18:6, 21 (as the offerings were the priest's salary)

^L Deuteronomy 12:10-11, 17-18

^M Deuteronomy 14:28-29

^N Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; 18:9-14

^O 1 Corinthians 9:7-14

A. Introduction

1. Out Text: it's just to kick off the subject of giving,
 - a. '24 There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want. 25 The generous man will be prosperous, And he who waters will himself be watered. 26 He who withholds grain, the people will curse him, But blessing will be on the head of him who sells it.' (Proverbs 11:24-26)
 - b. Ah! this Labour Day weekend I get to preach to the choir!
 - c. and, on the subject of giving, too!
 - d. I will try to be not too pointed; but I trust I shall be instructive

2. The Inborn Desire to Give
 - a. God is a giving God – this truth is broadcast throughout the Scriptures – from the beautiful garden He gave to mankind in Genesis to the beautiful eternal home He gives in the book of Revelation
 - (A) God gives impartially – '... He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.' (Matthew 5:45)
 - (B) God gives generously – He is the '... God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.' (1 Timothy 6:17)
 - (C) God gives sacrificially – how else can you describe it John 3:16?
 - b. that describes the God who created man in His own image
 - (A) despite that image being damaged by sin, people give
 - (B) what was Eve first act after sinning? ... giving to her husband!
 - (C) Jesus is talking to us: 'If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!' (Matthew 7:11)
 - (D) a gentleman I know – maybe you know him too – who has done some volunteer campaign work for World-Vision, commented to me the other day, 'God has put a generous spirit in people'
 - (E) people are capable of great generosity: it's true; indeed, it is true

- (F) funds and workers will pour in to help in the aftermath of Isaac
- (G) periodically I receive calls and ads by from fund-raising offering help; in its 25 years, this church has never yet had to make an appeal for funds; nor is this message this morning such an appeal

3. The Blessing from Giving

- a. In Acts 20:35 Paul tells us of Jesus' words, '[It is more blessed to give than to receive.](#)' – believers and unbelievers alike have found this true
- b. our text is only one of many that advises us to be generous, because the blessing from being generous far outweigh any cost
- c. another such message is '[9 Honour the Lord from your wealth And from the first of all your produce; 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty And your vats will overflow with new wine.](#)' (Proverbs 3:9-10)
- d. you may think this kind of talk about giving money is a less than spiritual subject for a Sunday morning worship service ... well ...
- e. consider this: '[While Scripture offers about 500 verses on prayer, and fewer than 500 on faith, there are more than 2,000 verses on money!](#)'^{2}.
- f. I remember one wise teacher saying this, '[When you've converted a person's wallet, you've converted the whole person.](#)'^{3}.
- g. consider the young ruler who came to Jesus seeking eternal life: '[Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.](#)' (Matthew 19:21-22) – his wallet was never converted ...
- h. so today we will speak about giving; about giving your money

B. The Tithe in the OT^{4}.

1. the Tithe of Abraham

- a. In Genesis 14, Lot was taken captive in a battle of rebellious local city-kings against the more distant ruling king, Chedorlaomer, with his allies. When Abram was told of this, he raised an army of 318, defeated these kings, and returned with all the prisoners and a great deal of the enemies' goods – the spoils of battle. Genesis 14:17-23,

- (A) '17 Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. 19 He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all. (we shall return as to what that 'all' included) 21 The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." 22 Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.'"
- b. the NT comments on this passage: '1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. 3 Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually. 4 Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.' (Hebrews 7:1-4) – first, 2 notes on this passage
- (A) **choicest spoils** – akros, uppermost, highest (Acropolis) + This (Thinia), heap – the topmost of the heap, the best part – not that Abram gave him 10% of only the best part, i.e. less than 10% of them all; rather the part given was from the best of the spoils
- (B) 'all,' then, in this passage has reference specifically to 'all of the goods' taken in the battle; not to all Abram's possessions, nor to all of Abram's income – only what God gave him in this battle
- c. Hebrews 7 continues in order to make the point that
- (A) even though Israelites were required to pay tithes to the Aaronic priests and the Levites – more about this in a minute –
- (B) on the basis of this one meeting, Melchizedek was a greater priest
- d. there is no basis then, that this tithe of Abraham to Melchizedek was either required or repeated – it was a free-will offering to Melchizedek as a priest of the Most High God that Abraham worshipped too
- e. On this passage, C. F. Keil, a great Bible and Hebrew scholar, writes: 'This priestly reception Abram

reciprocated by giving him the tenth of all, i.e. of the whole of the booty taken from the enemy. Giving the tenth was a practical acknowledgment of the divine priesthood of Melchizedek; for the tenth was, according to the general custom, the offering presented to the Deity.'

(A) that is the point: among even the pagan people of that day, a tenth was generally considered the proper offering to their gods

2. the Tithe of Jacob

- a. is another OT story that is used to support the idea that tithing came before the Law and survives the law to apply to Christians today
- b. but its use in that fashion is questionable: read Jacob's words in Genesis 28:20-22, 'Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I return to my father's house in safety, then the Lord will be my God. This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.'" – this wasn't an offering! This was a business deal!
- c. Jacob was seeking a bargain; God's percentage was to be 10%
- d. just because something existed before the law, does not mean that it exists in this day of grace after the law; the observance of the Sabbath existed before the Law; but,
 - (A) Colossians 2:16 says '... let no one act as your judge in regard to ... a Sabbath day -'
 - (B) Romans 14:5-6 gives the same message: all days are the same
 - (C) just because these Patriarchs tithed does not make it a rule for us
- e. it is significant that the tithe is not reinstated in Ezekiel's vision of the coming (I believe, spiritual rather than physical) temple as found in chapters 40-48 of Ezekiel.
- f. but, let us continue, and briefly consider

3. the Tithe for the Levites

- a. with the Law as given through Moses, we come to the first mention of the tithe in Scripture that was required giving; it is called the Lord's or God's tithe, and is sometimes referred to as the Levite's tithe
- b. Leviticus 27:30, 32, 'Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S; it is holy to the Lord. ... For every tenthpart of herd or flock, whatever passes under the

rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord.'

- c. this was not a free-will offering; it was required – what if you did not give it? Malachi 3:8 tells us, 'Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, "How have we robbed You?" In tithes and offerings.'
- d. what was to be done with this tithe? Numbers 18:6, 21 explains: 'Behold, I Myself have taken your fellow Levites from among the sons of Israel; they are a gift to you, dedicated to the Lord, to perform the service for the tent of meeting. ... To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting.'
- e. the tithe was the salary paid to God's full-time servants, the Levites
- f. but, that wasn't all, for there were ...

4. the Other Tithes

a. for the festivals

- (A) three times a year, the children of Israel were to come together to celebrate the feasts of the Lord
- (B) at these they were to bring their various offerings as well as another set of tithes – not the tithes which went to the Levites, but from which those at the feasts would eat and rejoice
- (C) Deuteronomy 12:10-11, 17-18 – 'When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security, then it shall come about that the place in which the Lord your God will choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the Lord. ... You are not allowed to eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or new wine or oil, or the firstborn of your herd or flock, or any of your votive offerings which you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the contribution of your hand. But you shall eat them before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord your God will choose, you and your son and daughter, and your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God in all your undertakings.'

b. for the needy of the town

- (A) 'At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and

shall deposit it in your town. The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.' (Deuteronomy 14:28-29)

(B) so, every third year, there was another 10% to be given!

c. someone has calculated the total required giving of the OT church as amounting to about 33% ... but don't get nervous! at least not yet!

C. The NT Does Not Teach Tithing!

1. References Respecting the Pharisees

a. Jesus' words are found in two places but refer to the same speech

(A) 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.' (Matthew 23:23); Luke 11:42 is approximately the same

b. the other is from Jesus' parable in Luke 18:9-14, of the tax collector and the Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray, and the Pharisee's prayer included these words, 'I pay tithes of all that I get.'

c. so these references to the self-righteous attitude of the Pharisees cannot be taken as teaching that tithing is the standard of giving!

2. Conclusions in principle from the NT

a. Paul, defends his apostleship in 1 Corinthians 9. He had as much right as any of the other apostles to be supported by their church. It was by choice, and not because not an apostle, he forfeited that right:

b. '7 Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? 8 I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, "you shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? 10 Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. 11 If we sowed

spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? 12 If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. 13 Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? 14 So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.' (1 Cor. 9:7-14)

- c. consider how Paul frames his argument
 - (A) he uses the secular examples of a soldier, a farmer, a shepherd, and even an ox
 - (B) he uses the religious example of the priests who partook of some of the offerings that were made
 - (C) but he omits the obvious OT example of the Levitical ministers who were supported by the OT tithe
- d. so we conclude that the tithe is not given in the NT as the standard of giving by Christians; what then is ...

D. The NT Standard of Giving

1. Christ is the Standard

- a. this becomes readily apparent when Paul writes to Corinth church
- b. he uses the example of Christ
- c. then he describes in 2 Corinthians 8:1-12, how this was effected in ...

2. The Macedonian Churches

- a. verse 2: giving took precedence and priority over a current bleak situation – 'that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.' – it is relatively easy to be generous when things are going well – it is when we run into difficulties that we are really tested
- b. verse 3: giving is unrestricted by human ability – 'For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, ...' – like the widow giving all she had, humanly speaking they gave beyond their means – and that is the essence of generosity in giving
- c. verse 3: from free will – '... they gave of their own accord' – let the world use high-pressure tactics to raise funds; it is not for the church

- d. verse 5: giving is an aspect of personal commitment and devotion – ‘... they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.’ – giving should be just one outlet of a Christian’s desire to serve God
- e. verse 12: giving is to be proportionate to our means – ‘For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.’ – this accords well with the principle of the OT tithe as well as the NT direction, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, ‘Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, ...’
- f. well, though there is a lot more in Scripture concerning giving, for this morning at least I have exhausted the topic and probably you, in ...

E. Conclusion

- 1. so then, the Christian is not faced with a law, the tithe as a standard
 - a. yet, the OT tithe does serve as an example Christians
 - b. it is a reminder that God has provided us with all we have, just as He provided Israel with all they had, through the land He gave them
 - c. ‘... we are not under law, but under grace. ...’ (Romans 6:14, 15)
- 2. but we face a higher standard
 - a. the standard of the NT church in Macedonia
 - b. but above that, the standard of Jesus Christ
 - c. ‘For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.’ (2 Corinthians 8:9)
 - d. therefore there is no room for pride in giving; you can’t out-give God!

1. © 2012 by Garth Hutchinson, Faith Fellowship Baptist Church of Aurora (Ontario): may be distributed or quoted freely, only let this be done to the glory “of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

Except as noted otherwise, quotations are from the New American Standard version, used by permission. Various other English versions of the Holy Bible may be used in this sermon. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in (*braces*). Version identifiers are:

AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers

2. From the sermon '*The Giving Church*', by Rev. Jim Mooney; Kerux sermon #14795
3. Rev. E. L. Simmonds, Principal, Toronto Bible College, ca. 1960
4. Rev. John F. MacArthur, Jr., has preached an excellent series of four sermons on this subject, '*A Biblical Model for Giving*', from the third of which I have drawn heavily. It can be read / heard at <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/47-56/a-biblical-model-for-giving-part-3> or from Kerux Sermons, # 3137, 3146, 3147, 3148