

Shall a Man Rob God?

by Dean Stump

The sermon emphasizes the importance of tithing as a biblical principle and the consequences of failing to honor God with our finances.

Duration: 1:20:15

Scripture: Malachi 3:8-10, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 19:21, Luke 6:38, Acts 20:35

Topics: "Robbing God"

Description

In this sermon, Brother Denny emphasizes the transformative power of Jesus in our lives. He highlights the importance of coming to Jesus with a cry for salvation, as He is able to revive our dead hearts and make us new creatures. Brother Denny also discusses the seriousness of sin in God's eyes, using the example of stealing and the required restitution. He encourages believers to consider the principles taught by Jesus, such as treating others as we want to be treated and being good stewards of our possessions. He concludes by emphasizing the eternal value of investing in the Lord and His people, as opposed to earthly possessions that will eventually fade away.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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Aren't you thankful that when we come to Jesus with that cry, Lord, save us, He still can quicken the dead hearts. He still knows how to take that old man and make a new creature out of him. I praise God that in Christ I have become a new creature and the old Dean that I once knew is passed away.

One brother standing back there in the back said, Oh, I just love this. This does my heart good to hear these testimonies. And it is good.

And it is important for us to share our testimony. And not just here before the saint, but also before the sinner. It's good to share our testimony before the sinner.

You know, there's no argument against a clear testimony of what God has done in my heart of a changed life. No atheist can refute, can argue if God has done something in your heart. So, don't be ashamed as brother Ted's testimony was.

I am not ashamed of the gospel. I am not ashamed of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's not be ashamed of our Jesus.

Well, before we start our message, let's kneel for prayer. Father, I thank you this morning for the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for salvation.

Thank you for your mercy. Thank you for hope beyond the grave. A lively hope.

Lord, I bless your name this morning. Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord. This is the day that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it. Lord, we humble ourselves before you and acknowledge that in us dwelleth no good thing. I pray, Lord, that you would flow through me this morning.

I make myself available to you and give us all ears to hear this morning. Father, I pray for each one here this morning that you would give each person a receptive heart, an open heart to your word. A desire to go home and search the scriptures and to see if these things be so.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I'd like to have a little teaching here this morning.

It's a little difficult to know how to begin what I want to share here. But I think I'll start with the Eighth Commandment. Who knows what the Eighth Commandment is? Any of you children have the commandments memorized? What's the Eighth Commandment? Well, I'll help you.

Thou shalt not steal. One of the Ten Commandments. Thou shalt not steal.

God says he established in the hearts of his people that it was a sin to take something that someone else possessed. And another question. In Exodus 22, after the Ten Commandments were given and some of the... There was some... there was some... Oh, what do you call it? God helped make those commandments practical to them.

He explained, I guess in a sense, put the gravity of the different sins in their perspective. And gave them some precepts, some laws to abide by in how to administer these different commandments when they were violated. When someone did commit one of these sins.

Does anyone know how many oxen you had to give back if you stole your neighbor's ox? How many oxen did you have to replace that ox with? Brother Philip? Five. You had to give back five oxen for stealing an ox. This says something of the weight, the seriousness of this matter in God's eyes.

If you stole an ox, you didn't just have to replace it back with an ox of the same equal value. You had to replace it with five oxen. What about a sheep? If you stole a sheep, how many sheep did you have to give back? I thought it was interesting that it was a different number.

Four. Yes, you had to give back four sheep. If you stole a sheep, you had to give back four sheep.

You know, with our children, sometimes we have had to go through this, where they will come home with something from the store, or from a yard sale, or from someone's house, and we make them go back and pay for it. But, maybe, to help them see the gravity of it, we should make them pay four or five times its amount. What about stealing a man? What happened if you stole a man? I guess this stealing of a man maybe would be taking someone else's servant from him.

What was the payment for stealing a man? Josiah. No. Yes, it was death.

You had the death penalty for stealing a man. It was a serious matter. And, we know that even though Achan did not steal a man, he received the death sentence, and all of his family, for stealing from the accursed thing.

God gave them specific instructions not to take anything that was from the heathen. It is the accursed thing. And, that received even a sorer punishment.

Achan, and all of his household was taken outside the city, and stoned for that sin. Well, we have come to the New Testament. Well, one other thing, I thought was very interesting in looking at this matter of stealing.

In Deuteronomy 23, verse 24 and 25, it's a little bit different than what we would normally, the way we would see things here today, I believe. In that, you were allowed to go into your neighbor's vineyard and eat his grapes. Or, go into his corn field and eat his corn.

But, you couldn't harvest any and take home with you. You couldn't take a basket and fill your basket up and take home your winter supply. But, you were allowed to go into his field and eat to satisfy your hunger.

It seems we would tend to look at that also as stealing here today. But, that was the law there. Just to show you that it didn't pass away.

This wasn't something that just passed away with the passing of the old covenant. When Christ came, he reiterated the commandments. And, one of them being, thou shalt not steal, to the rich young ruler, Paul.

Also reiterated it in Romans 13, 9. He says that you shall not steal. Also, in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 28, it says, Let him that stole, steal no more. But rather, let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

So, the standard is being raised. You're not only not supposed to steal, but you're supposed to try and make more than what you need to support yourself so that you have to give to the person who has a drought or has some misfortune come his way and finds himself going hungry. You are to look out for that person.

So, another question. What is at the root of stealing? Why would someone steal? Ernie? Greed. Okay.

I thought of selfishness and covetousness, which is greed. That at the heart of stealing is selfishness, greed, the desire for more. Also, I had Brother Mark find out a report here for me.

I have a report from the FBI, Uniform Crime Reporting, who has given this report here. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting. It's called the UCR.

That in the United States, in 2003, there was 413,402 robbery offenses with the collectively estimated value of what these robbers robbed from people was \$514 million. An average dollar loss of \$1,244 per offense. That's, as I understand it, these robberies is when you steal something off of another man.

You come up to him and steal his wallet or maybe, well, yeah, it has to do with robbing a person is how I best understand it. And then you have the same report given of burglaries, which is breaking into someone's house or breaking into this building and confiscating the goods. There was an estimated number in 2003, an estimated 2,153,464 burglaries in 2003 with an estimated \$3.5 billion of losses there.

So, the robberies were \$514 million. The burglaries \$3.5 billion. And then we come to larceny theft, which is you going into a store and taking something or walking past someone's car and seeing they have a nice camera in there and you snatch it out.

That's my understanding of larceny theft. And there were an estimated 7 million offenses in 2003 with an estimated \$4.9 billion in property lost to thieves in just larceny theft. If you add these together, and I also have a report here on carjacking, which is an estimated \$34,000 a year from the years 1993 to 2002.

If you add all of that together, it comes to over \$10 billion. An amazing amount of theft that goes on just in our country. And we think that we don't have it bad when it comes to theft.

Isn't that right, Daniel? Doesn't it seem worse in Africa? It seems like to lift up the 8th Commandment, Thou shalt not steal, seems to be in order. Seems like it does need to be taught. There are a lot of people that obviously don't have much conscience about stealing.

And you may be saying, well, why would you preach about stealing here? Who do you think is stealing in here? We're not thieves. We don't steal. Well, that's the introduction to the message that I would like to share with you.

In Malachi, we have a scripture here that has been very sobering to me. Malachi 3:8-10 It says, It says, Will a man rob God? Seems the question is being asked because the feeling is, no, no man can rob God. You can't steal anything from God.

Yet God is saying, you have robbed me. But you say, wherein have we robbed thee? And God says, in tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

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 you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

And all the nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts. God is giving Israel a rebuke here, because of robbing Him of the tithes and offerings that He established back in the covenant there in Leviticus. It's very clear in Deuteronomy, a few different places.

And I'd just like to have a little teaching on tithing this morning. It's something we don't talk a lot about around here. And I think it's partly due to the overemphasis of it in the evangelical circles.

But I see in the Word of God that tithing is a universal principle, something that is important even today, even in the new covenant. Though things are different, it's still a principle that is there. And I feel it needs to be taught.

And it was a burden on my heart the last few weeks, and I couldn't get away from it even while I slept until I told the Lord, okay, I will study this matter and see what You say about it, Lord. It's a burden, and it has been convicting even to me. Though I'm sharing the message, God is working in my heart in the matter of tithing, of giving.

It's very interesting to me also that before the law was given, Abraham tithed and Jacob tithed. That's why I call it a universal principle. There seems to be... Well, even before that, God did have Adam... God had Cain and Abel bring of their first fruits.

I hadn't even thought of that until now. That it goes all the way back to Cain and Abel. They brought of their first fruits.

God wanted them to bring their first fruits. And He still desires us to bring our first fruits. And I trust that you'll see that with me from the Word of God here.

It says in Leviticus chapter 27, you don't need to turn there, verse 30 through 33, And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy unto the Lord. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof.

And concerning the tithe of the herd or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it. And if he change it at all, then doth it and the change thereof, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy.

It shall not be redeemed. And here it says clearly what a tithe is. It was a tenth.

Here in the Old Testament here talks about the tithe. Well, tithe means tenth. A tenth part.

When you're tithing something, you're giving a tenth part. A true tithe. And because they tithed of the fruits, of the things that they harvested, of their cattle, of their grain, of their sheep, it says here, you shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it.

Which, it seems to me, he's saying you shouldn't be trying to divide out the tenth part that is the poorest or the worst and give that to the Lord. Rather, it seems the opposite, that you should give the best tenth to the Lord. Deuteronomy 14, is also a scripture I wanted to read.

Verse 22. Again, this is Deuteronomy 14, 22 through 29, I believe I wanted to... Yeah, I think I'll just read the rest of that chapter. 24, 22 through 29.

Chapter 14, 22 through 29. Thou shalt truly, or surely, tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds, and of thy flocks, that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always.

See, God has a purpose for it. And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it, or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee, then shalt thou turn it into money. Meaning, they may have lived too far away

from the tabernacle, and it would have been too large a burden to get all of their grain to the tabernacle.

They were to sell it, and then take the money there. And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth. And thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice thou and thine household, and the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him, for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.

At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates. And the Levite, because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates shall come, and shalt eat and be satisfied that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest." So, this was very important to God. It determined whether or not He was going to bless them.

It was a... As we saw there in Malachi, God was reprovng them because they were not tithing, and He was withholding from them His blessing because of that. And here we see its purpose being for those who were ministering in the tabernacle, the Levites, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, God did have a purpose for it, and His eye is open to the fatherless. We see that different times in Scripture, that He will be a father to the fatherless.

And this is one way, it seems, He becomes a father to the fatherless. He wants that our increase go to support the fatherless, and those who are laboring among us. Now, you say, well, we're living in the New Covenant, and again, things have changed under the New Covenant, and yet, because this is a universal principle, we're not just free to not tithe.

And I'm going to, for the sake of principle, here, to begin with, on the matter of giving, lift up the matter of tithing, and that it is something that Christ did not do away with. In the Sermon on the Mount, there were things that Christ did away with. Clearly.

There were some things He raised to a higher standard. I think giving was one of those things He raised to a higher standard. Now, the reason I see this as an important teaching here, this morning is, one, it hasn't been taught on much, and two, it seems there becomes an attitude among us sometimes that, well, we're not under the law of tithing.

I'm not under that law of giving that 10%. And, sort of, frees me up that I don't have to give my money. But Jesus said, I'll just read those words, because they're very pertinent.

Take heed that you do not your alms before men to be seen of them otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly. Now, Jesus is giving us direction on how to give, but He's not taking away the principle of giving. And, in Luke 11, verse 37 through 42, I thought is probably the clearest Scripture in the New Testament on the idea that tithing is a New Testament principle.

Jesus, as He spake, a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with Him, and He went in and sat down to meet. And when the Pharisees saw it, He marveled that He had not first washed before dinner. And the

Lord said unto Him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

Ye fools! Did not He that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather, give alms of such things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean unto you. But woe unto you Pharisees, for ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment, and the love of God. These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Jesus is giving this Pharisee a rebuke for His hypocrisy. But, He's not, He's not criticizing him for tithing mint and rue. He's, He's saying that's a very small part in comparison to the love of God, judgment, discernment.

You're passing over those things that are more important than tithing. Now, you should do tithing, He says. Don't pass over them.

As a matter of fact, He says in the verse before, Rather give alms of such things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean unto you. I'm not sure I understand that perfectly, but in my understanding of that Scripture, Jesus is lifting up the importance of tithing. And He's not telling him that because you tithe all the way down to these, the herbs in your garden, that you shouldn't be doing that.

That's just a bother. No, He says, You're putting too much attention on that and you're missing out on the love of God. And, yeah, the love of God should be preached many times and much more than tithing.

But there is a place for this teaching because it's clear here that Christ didn't just pass over tithing and do away with it and say that, But I say unto you, as He said in some of the things there in His Sermon on the Mount, some things very clearly He did away with or changed. Tithing is not one of them. And I believe that according to 2 Corinthians 9, I have a difficult time knowing exactly where to turn to here.

There's a lot of Scriptures we could read about giving. And there seems to be a lot of emphasis put on this Scripture here in 2 Corinthians 9. And I'm just going to read a few verses here in verse 6 through I probably should read the rest of the chapter. Right now, I think I'm just going to read 6, 7, and 8. It says, But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.

And he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man, according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth the cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

Now, some use this Scripture to say that this is where the principle of tithing is done away with. Because it says, Every man, according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give. So, if he purposes in his heart, he just wants to give 1%, then that's what he'll give.

But, that's not what's being said here. As I understand the Scriptures, and I'm going to read some other Scriptures to you then, and hopefully you'll come to that same conclusion if that's where you're at. But my understanding is that the tithe is a universal principle, something that Christ did not do away with, and something that we are supposed to still be doing, tithing of giving of our first fruits.

Then, as we purpose in our heart with the extra that we have over that 10%, as God blesses us and we have more than what we need, as we purpose in our heart, we'll give, not grudgingly or of necessity. For

God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

Meaning that even though you're giving over your 10%, and there may be a need, and you decide, and you just have compassion towards that brother, and you give down to the last penny that you have, God is saying, He is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound. As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad, and this is very interesting because of the way this Scripture is interpreted many times. Right here in verse 9, it's bringing in an Old Testament verse.

And Paul is not saying that, as I see it, he's not lessening at all our giving. It's being raised. The standard is being raised.

It says, He hath dispersed abroad, He hath given to the poor, His righteousness remaineth forever. That's a quote from Psalms 112, verse 9. Now, it's very clear there, also, as I see it, in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. I think there's another Scripture that even makes it clearer that I didn't read in Deuteronomy 26, that talks about the tithe going to the temple, going for the Levites, because they were ministering to God, they were there serving the people, and they didn't have a plot of land that they could call their own.

They needed to be supported. So, much of the tithe went for that purpose, for supporting the Levites. But there was also, above and beyond that, much Scripture here about the poor, remembering the poor, that seems to be a clear giving out of our abundance over and above the tithe.

It says, I'm not sure, my time is already gone here, but in Psalms 41 it says, "...Blessed is he that considereth the poor. The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." Now, my argument for what I'm saying is based on the fact that the tithe was very much a part of their life, and that they believed in that wholeheartedly, and yet there was a blessing pronounced on the person who considered the poor. I don't believe that had to do with his tithing.

I don't understand it that way. It says here in Proverbs 3, 27 and 28, "...Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not to thy neighbor, Go and come again, and tomorrow I will give when thou hast it by thee." If you have it in your pocket now, don't tell him, if he has a need now, don't tell him, well, go tomorrow, I'll pray about it, I'll think about it.

When you have it to give to him, this is coming out of what you haven't tithed on. I mean, this is coming out of what you have already tithed on, I believe. I think that the tithe is your first fruits.

This is clear, as we've read in Leviticus there, in Deuteronomy, and goes all the way back to Cain and Abel, our first fruits. And then, when there's need to rise, and we have extra, God help us to be compassionate and give over and above our tithe. "...Withhold not good from them to whom it is due.

The liberal soul shall be made fat." Proverbs 11, 25, "...And he that watered shall be watered also himself." Now, is that a liberal soul that's giving his first fruits to God? No. That's God's. You're not being liberal on giving to God what's God's.

Proverbs 22, verse 9, "...He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed, for he giveth of his bread to the poor." That's not talking of his tithe. Proverbs 25, "...If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink. For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee." Proverbs 28, 27, "...He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack, but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse." Isaiah 58, "...Is not this the fast I have chosen, to loose the bands of

wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou hast seen the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day, and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones.

And thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." And again, I say, I contend that that is not the tithe. What you are giving to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, is not the tithe. Well, that was the Old Testament.

What does the New Testament say? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. Now, that's not the tithe. That's certainly above your first fruits.

He says, one of the more convicting Scriptures in the Bible, in Matthew 25, I was in hunger, and ye gave me meat. I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me in.

Naked, and ye clothed me. And this is some of the prerequisite. This is what God is using to judge us by.

He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none. And he that hath meat, let him do likewise. You have extra? Your neighbor, your friend, your brother, doesn't have any? You give to him.

You don't say, well, I've already tithed. I've already given my 10%. Well, I think that's all I can read.

My time is gone. But the question may still be, why is it important for us to hear this, and why the teaching on stealing? Well, first of all, my heart is that if we're not tithing, we're robbing from God. We have become a thief.

And you may have thought it's terrible. It's just terrible that \$10 billion worth of goods are stolen in the United States in one year. That is terrible.

But I wonder how many billion dollars we're stealing from God, that God's people are stealing from Him in a year's time. I wonder how many people are going hungry because we're not dealing our bread to the hungry. It has been a growing concern on my heart because I've watched the finances, as you probably have.

They come month after month, and for probably at least a year, maybe more, our outgo is more than our income here with our local finances. And I did some figuring. I guess it's okay to do that.

And took an average of what I thought we were making. And I looked at the figures of our income for the last six months, and it doesn't come to half. That's just figuring us just tithing.

It doesn't even come to half. Now, I have room for you to say, well, I'm not under the law. I don't have to tithe down to the penny of everything I make.

But, the standard, the law, hasn't been taken away. It's been raised. The standard has been raised.

And the giving should be at least, if you're not under the law of tithing, then you should be giving at least 12%. And, I guess, yeah, I guess it is a rebuke to you brothers. And yet at the same time, not a rebuke in

that I'm wanting to just show you from the Word of God that the principle of giving, although it may be abused in some of the evangelical circles, and I leave room also that maybe you're doing your giving elsewhere, and maybe you are supporting a widowed mother, maybe there's just lots of those kind of things going on, but I want to just lift up this matter of tithing before you all this morning and make sure you're not robbing God.

I want you to examine your heart and know that it's not pleasing to God if you're stealing from Him. It was a serious matter as we saw there in the Old Testament. And though we live in an age of grace, a day of grace, there is still a principle there that we cannot get around.

It wasn't done away with when Christ died on the cross. He didn't say, keep all you have to yourself. And the other reason, it is a burden to me because I have heard in the past, He's no longer among us, but a young man that was with us.

He had the principle of tithing down clear. He tithed. But then, don't ask me to give a penny over my tithe.

I tithe my ten percent and the rest is mine. And He told me in those words, the rest is mine. And I'm not giving to anything else.

I mean, I tithe my ten percent and He made a good income and so it looked like He was giving lots of money. But, brothers and sisters, that attitude is wrong. That is deadly.

And it is not pleasing to God. So, I encourage us all to examine our hearts. Let's not rob God.

Thank you, Brother Dean. I appreciate a subject like that on a day like this. I don't see it to be unfitting.

When we're talking about communion as a brotherhood, to get right down to practical matters like that, that's very fitting. Thank you, Brother. A couple of comments that I have on that subject.

I've noticed when we're growing up as boys, let's just talk to us men because probably finances hit us the most. But, you know, as boys we grew up and we early discerned what mine meant. Mine this and this was mine, right? And I would like that also to be mine.

And we learned that very early. What, about two, three years old? Then we began working. The thrill, anybody remember that? Of earning a dollar.

There was kind of a... That was something, wasn't it? How many remember that? When you start earning money. And hey, I earned this money and it's mine. How many remember when they first started paying taxes? Anybody remember that stab? Hey, I thought that was mine.

He's taking mine, right? Fifteen percent of mine. Well, somewhere along the line, someone didn't teach us right. Pardon our parents, or whatever, but we didn't get a clear view of money when we were growing up.

That boy, when he was three years old, should have been told, David, this isn't yours. It's being loaned to you. It belongs to God and He's given it to you.

And He'll expect back from you of that which He gives to you. So don't hold it very tight like it's yours. And when, you know, the Bible speaks of taxes very plainly, and what does it say? It just says, it's not yours.

It's not yours. So don't hold on to it like it's yours. And this whole matter of tithe is the same thing.

What if God asks us for ten percent of His? Well, amen. Give Him ten percent. And what if He asks for more? Amen.

There's something wrong with that attitude that we picked up as boys, that it's mine. This is my income. I've got it.

And when something comes into our lives, you know, when your insurance is required of you and they want to hike the bill, how do you look at it? Do you consider it, that's mine? They're stealing from me, you know. They're hiking the insurance and it's required. I can't get out of it.

Or do we look at it, okay, I didn't realize that that wasn't mine. You know, that wasn't within the boundaries of what I have to work with, with my family and all. And there's an element of faith, is there not, in the whole thing, Brother Dean? An element of faith.

An element of self-control. And also, there's an element of contentment with what I have that's just the opposite of covetousness. And there's also another element in it of care for other people.

Looking for the interest of another instead of just my own. And all those principles work into it and I know for sure that God knew that when He instigated it. When He instituted the tithe, He knew that the person, the soul that works this discipline in his life will blossom in so many other areas of his character because of it.

So I bless God for that. Thank you, Brother Dean. I needed to hear that this morning.

Does anyone else have something they'd like to share about the opening message or the message here or a testimony? Confession? Any of you sisters would have a testimony you'd like to share? You're welcome to call for a mic and share a testimony. That's been a blessing. Over here, Brother Ed.

Brother Moe is up front here. Just raise your hand and we'll get a mic to you. Brother Daniel, go ahead.

Yes, I thank God for the message. God bless you, Brother Dean, for being willing to stick your neck out on a subject that's a little bit difficult. I find that if we look at the New Testament commands on giving, tithing becomes a baseline because if you try to obey all those other commands and then you do the math, you'll probably find that you're beyond that critical 10%.

I wanted to just share a little story or insight maybe to encourage you in this line from Africa. I know that you don't have the opportunity for your Konkoma brothers and sisters to stand up and take a mic, and so maybe I could just share a little story that might encourage you. My encouragement to all of us is that we take an open heart towards God's Word and how to find a way to work it out in our lives.

We've been doing teaching on the subject of giving there in Ghana. It becomes very, very critical to the functioning of the church when there are no buildings and the leaders are all farming hand to mouth. It's very critical that the people begin to understand the necessity of giving.

So we've been doing a lot of teaching on it but trying to leave the very practical elements of how do you give when nobody collects a paycheck. We've been trying to allow the local leaders to determine how to work that out. One of the ways that some of them have been doing their tithing is when we have what you would call a Bible school, some of the men will bring their tithes as food to give to the church to cook for all the men who gather.

I found this particular instance to be very encouraging and very sweet. You have to remember that most of the men are illiterate and if they can do math, we're talking math in the 1 to 20s not thousands or hundreds of thousands. We were having Bible classes a few months ago and one of the men came to me the day before the Bible class and said, well, I would like to tithe some of my yam which is a large tuber like a root crop.

And I said, okay, how many do you think it would be? And he said, well, I don't know for sure. Maybe about 30 or 40 yams. And I said, well, how big are they? Because I'm trying to look at the food supply and make sure we're going to have enough food for all these 50 or 60 men who are gathering.

And he said, well, I don't know how big they are. And I said, well, how do you not know how big they are? And he said, well, they're the tithe yams. And I still wasn't understanding.

I don't understand how he's tithing. And he said, well, how do you not know their size? He said, well, they're God's yams. And I said, how do you know they're God's? He said, well, when I harvested a couple weeks ago, I counted 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. And I harvested those nine.

And then I left one. One big mound in the middle of my farm not harvested. And then I counted nine more and left one.

And then I counted nine more and left one. And so here's a man who has a huge field, maybe the size of the building we're in right now, and nine are harvested and one is standing. Nine are harvested and one is standing.

And he has already harvested his 400. But he knows that there are 40 individual yam mounds. And he doesn't know how large they are.

And I found that very interesting when Brother Dean read the verse there. You know, don't say is it good or bad. And sure enough, the next day, he showed up with his tithe yams and some of them were tiny and some of them were huge.

And he said, this way I know that I won't cheat God. Because he said, if I was choosing them out, it might be very easy for me to choose the smaller ones or the ones that have nicks in them, the ones that won't get as good of a price in the market. But this way, God gets whatever he wants.

I told him at the beginning of the year, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and the next one is for you. I'd just like to encourage all of us that we take that kind of a fresh, exciting view that just says, Lord, whatever you want, it's yours. One out of ten.

God bless you. Ok, Brother Ed, did you have a testimony? Yeah, you know, in Proverbs 19, it says, He that has pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he has given will he pay him. Isn't that a blessing that we can lend our Lord money? And He will repay.

It's His in the first place. And I remember one time I had some trouble with what was going to cost me the money, and it dawned on me, and I said, Ok, Lord, it's yours, whatever. And we have to have that attitude in our hearts.

If something breaks, Ok, Lord, whatever. And you let go and give it all to Him, and you just use it, whatever comes along. And I think that God has been very good to us financially and spiritually.

The spiritual food that we receive from Him in our souls, we can never repay Him anyway for it. Let's do the little attempt that we can. Any other testimonies here? Ok, Brother Luke.

Go ahead, Brother Luke. Yes, I want to thank Brother Dean for sharing on that topic. It's one that's close to my heart, the topic of finances and tithing and giving.

And it would be my testimony that tithing, we have done that since we're married. I'm not sure even when I started that, but God does bless that. It has been a real discipline in my life, a very good discipline, as was alluded to.

And recently, I'm not sure how recently, it just gets to the place. I guess my question is, do you tithe on gross income or net income, just as a practical question. And I was figuring, doing all the math and keeping track of it, and it got to the point where it was taking so much time.

So I decided I would just give beyond what I was giving the base of 10%. But what I hear Dean saying is, and I think he's right, is that the 10% should go to the church, our local assembly. And anything we give beyond that goes to the poor, to the needs in the world, or whatever it may be.

And I guess my practical question I would have for any of you brethren is how can we efficiently figure that 10%? Or is it okay just to guess about what you think you should give and maybe at the end of the year do the math and see how you're coming out. I don't want to rob God. I want to give Him what is His, and yet also give beyond that from my heart.

So thank you, brother. Yeah, I also thank you, brother Dean. That was a very timely and needed message.

In our midst, I just wanted to mention I know it's a deteriorating thing due to the overemphasize, emphasis of grace, about grace, grace in our life, and we're not under the law, that people have shirked their responsibility. I think the average, national average, of church giving is down somewhere between 2% and 3%, which shows the sad state of affair of the conscience of man that has deteriorated over the years with the free grace teaching where men don't feel responsible. But that verse that he read to us there in Corinthians, God is able to make all grace toward you abound.

It's such a comfort, and it is my testimony. I've seen that a hundred times and more, and I love that subject and believe that giving is truly a blessing back upon our lives and God's hand and grace upon us. In answer to Luke's question, I think one of the ways I've done it is just give throughout the year and keep account of it, and then when you do your 1040 at the end of the year, then you have all your figures and you're able to compare and make what necessary adjustments that are yet needed at that point.

I just want to say I appreciate the word today, and it is a hard word, but I kind of want to give a good word. We struggled with giving a little bit there back in Dallas because the gospel that was going out was such a convoluted thing, and there were so many causes that were being supported with it that we just struggled to be supporting whether it was a CEF thing. I don't know.

There were so many things. I won't go into them, but it was very difficult for us to give there because there were so many things that we didn't agree with or we had trouble with. Without going into that, I don't have that problem up here.

To me, it's a great privilege. I don't mean to sound self-righteous. Actually, like I say, I've struggled with this, but it's a great privilege to give to something like this assembly and not just here.

But I mean, from what I've understood from reading figures since we're talking figures, you get more bang for the buck here for sending out the gospel to people with tapes and letters and so forth. There's a lot of return on the investment. It's a privilege.

I know my cell phone I pay for, my car I pay for, the food I pay for, all that's going to burn. It's hardly real even when it's in front of me. And it comes and goes.

I'm not big on prosperity giving doctrines, but it seems to me that some of this will stand. Our investment in the Lord and in His people is a thing that will last, not just in this life, but in the life to come. And we get to see people coming up and giving testimonies.

Somebody knocked on their door and shared Christ with them. Half of us are here because somebody shared the Lord and maybe they shared money. Whatever we share, it's a privilege, it's a joy to give.

Cain was at least righteous enough that he wanted to give. If we're not as righteous as Cain, we have problems. So I would say not only should we give, but just think of the privilege we have to give to such a worthy thing that will last far beyond any investment we can come up with in this life.

Amen. I want to thank Brother Dean for the message. As he was preaching, I was thinking on a few principles that we see very clearly in Scripture, in the teaching of Jesus, where He said, with what measure you make to others, the same measure will be measured to you.

And what it means, the way I understood it, is when we come to God and we ask to bless us, He then, who is righteous, will just measure as much as we give to others. That's how much He gives to us. And we wonder why our life is so dry.

And maybe that can be one of the reasons. And He just waits for us to open our eyes to that area. And also another principle is there that who wants to be a disciple of Jesus, one of the first requirements is to forsake all possessions and to become a steward of whatever He has.

Which means sometimes He gives more, sometimes He gives less. But He decides to live sacrificially so that His Master can be pleased with His wise using of His assets that He has. So I think that's one of the principles that we see very clearly in Scripture.

And I'm very thankful for the message. Yeah, I just wanted to share a public testimony today of something that God's been really doing in my life. Just this last couple of weeks especially, God has brought some things into my life where I've seen some of the friends that I grew up with in my younger days.

Choose hard, choose roads that go against God. And it stuck me with a knife. And I've been just really hurting over it.

And all the pain of it. God has just been working a really deep work in my life. I'm just realizing that the salvation that God brought into my life was nothing of my own choice.

I mean it was my choice, but God chose me. And just looking out for all the friends and just saying, God, am I the only one? And I just want to stand up and give a public gratitude to God for the work that He did in my life. And just a desire to live this life knowing that I've been called for a purpose.

And to live my life as the brightest testimony that I can possibly live. Amen. Amen.

I know many of us can say that. We look around at all the people we used to go with. How many of us are the only ones that are following Christ today? And you have to wonder, Lord, why is it me? Why is it me and not all those other people that I grew up with? Amen.

Thank You, God. Any other testimonies? Someone has something to share? Brother David, back here. Well, I just thought I should share a testimony of when my daughter, Nicole, had surgery two years ago, or two and a half.

I saw a living Bible come from this congregation in the area of lip giving. And there was much giving. And one in Pacific received an envelope.

And on the way home, I pulled it out and I counted ten hundred dollar bills in front of my wife there. And I said, this is Christianity. This is giving from the heart.

So, I just wanted to just give that encouragement that I've seen that and continue to do that. It does minister and it teaches. Even, although I've seen giving in my growing up years, not near to that extent.

And that's a desire in my life to give in that same way. So, may God bless you for that. I want to bless you too, Brother Dean, in your good example of both your handling your finances and also having the rule over your spirit.

So, God bless you, brother. Acts 20, 35 says, I have showed you in all things, Paul speaking, how that soul laboring, ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how He said, it is more blessed to give than to receive. And I would have to agree with those words.

I probably have received from this congregation more than anyone. I know I came here with a doctor bill that was astronomical many, many times since then. But I would say that the blessing we get just sitting in a brother's meeting and knowing that we make a decision to meet a need is a greater blessing to me than all those others, though I'm thankful for those receiving.

But to be in a place where you can give is much more blessed. Is it? Does the Lord Jesus tell the truth? It is more blessed to give than receive. And therein we differ greatly from the world.

Therein is one of our greatest differences. We do not believe like the world. And Brother Moshe, you know, the degradation of our... that decline.

I remember the day that I first started seeing billboards that said, do it for you. Or, you deserve it. You know, remember that? That wasn't long ago, was it? 20, 30 years.

You didn't see that kind of thing in public, but there was a bold, brash movement to the you deserve it mentality and it went public. Television commercials and radio commercials and now it's just common to see that. You know, do it for yourself.

You owe it to yourself. And that probably would have been, I would consider, the greatest hindrance to giving. Because when a person starts thinking like that, they stop that seeing of needs.

Brother Lonnie, did you want to share something? Yes. I really thank you, Brother Dean, for your example. As I have seen that a month ago when you were there with your crew there.

That really blessed my heart in giving and also the message was very hitting to me. God has blessed us and I feel we're accountable to what God has done and given and as He gives daily. Another part of my testimony this morning is I want to bless my son, Marcus.

In these hard times that we went through, personally, he has been and stuck it out with me and that's been a real blessing in helping me in some grit to oversee this thing and come over that mountain. God bless you for that. I'd like to bless you too, Brother Marcus.

Before we leave this subject, I would say one more thing. There's another verse that comes to me. Paul says when he received a gift from I think it was the Philippians that sent him a gift.

If you remember, he said, he didn't say thank you. He said, much thanks is being given to God for your kindness. And isn't that what we want? We want God to be thanked.

When we give, our desire is that God would take note and be pleased. And I've taken a lesson over the years. It's hard to receive sometimes just because of the pride and the ego, but can we just give thanks to God for ministering to our needs? Thank God for it.

And won't that build up and edify a brotherhood? I thank God for that.

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