

## 24.02.2018 THE IMPACT OF TITHING

***“Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.” 1 Corinthians 9:13, 14.***

Our church, as a denomination has a world-wide presence and mission. Our mission is to restore to the world the knowledge of God’s grace and salvation; justification by faith and its fruit of holiness. This is the third angel’s message of Revelation 14.

God requires consecrated, spirit-filled men and women to reveal the gospel (good news) to the world, by the witness of the spoken word and the witness of their lives. This is imperative because we live in the time of God’s judgement and His soon-coming return. Like Jesus, who revealed the glory of His Father when He first came to earth, we, His people are to reveal God’s glory (which is His character of love and righteousness) to the world before His second coming.

The preaching of the gospel for a witness to the entire world (*Matthew 24:14*) also requires money; money to pay the workers in the vineyard and additionally for the support of poor members and institutions of teaching and healing. We saw from last week’s study that money will never be a problem if we recognise who our Heavenly Father is and consecrate ourselves and our possessions 100% to His service.

***Our greatest burden should be, not the raising of money, but the salvation of souls; and to this end we should do all in our power to teach students how to lead souls to a knowledge of the third angel's message. When we are successful in the work of soul saving, those who are added to the faith will, in turn, use their ability in giving the truth to others. When we labour diligently for the salvation of our fellow men, God will prosper our every effort. EGW: 9Testimonies.p 85, 86.***

### **Funding the Mission of the Church**

#### **Providing for the gospel ministry**

As a denomination, we follow the Biblical plan for providing for the Levites. The Levites of old correspond today to ministers who have the ministry of the Word – pastors, evangelists and Bible teachers. We give a tithe (10%) of our income to provide for those involved in gospel ministry.

Examples of tithing from the Old Testament are:

Abraham:

*Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. Genesis 14:18-20.*

The Nation of Israel:

*“Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting... For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer up as a heave offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance; therefore, I have said to them, ‘Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance’.” Numbers 18:21, 24.*

*Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: ‘When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the LORD, a tenth of the tithe.’” Numbers 18:26.*

These passages refer only to the offerings for the support of the Levites. Earlier in the same chapter (Numbers 18) there were additional provisions for the priests (Aaron and his sons). This was covenanted again in Nehemiah’s time.

*We made ordinances to bring the first-fruits of our ground and the first-fruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, to the house of the LORD; to bring the firstborn of our sons and our cattle, as it is written in the Law, and the firstborn of our herds and our flocks, to the house of our God, to the priests who minister in the house of our God; to bring the first-fruits of our dough, our offerings, the fruit from all kinds of trees, the new wine and oil, to the priests, to the storerooms of the house of our God; and to bring the tithes of our land to the Levites, for the Levites should receive the tithes in all our farming communities. And the priest, the descendant of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive tithes; and the Levites shall bring up a tenth of the tithes to the house of our God, to the rooms of the storehouse. Nehemiah 10:35-38.*

We saw last week that 10% is our duty or obligation. But a consecrated Christian is 100% available to God, both himself and his possessions.

Even 10% (our duty) given by every Christian out of a sense of gratitude and worship to God will result in an overflow for the needs of the ministry.

*Hezekiah commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute support for the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the Law of the LORD. As soon as the commandment was circulated, the children of Israel brought in abundance the first-fruits of grain and wine, oil and honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything. And the children of Israel and Judah, who dwelt in the cities of Judah, brought the tithe of oxen and sheep; also, the tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the LORD their God, they laid in heaps.*

*In the third month they began laying them in heaps, and they finished in the seventh month. And when Hezekiah and the leaders came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD and His people Israel. Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. And Azariah the chief priest, from the house of Zadok, answered him and said, "Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and have plenty left, for the LORD has blessed His people; and what is left is this great abundance." 2 Chronicles 31:4-10.*

**In the New Testament** we have the example of the early apostolic church and how the Spirit-filled believers supported the church. This support extended not only to labourers in the vineyard, but to every member who was in need.

They shared their resources and sold possessions for redistribution.

*Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. Acts 2:44, 45.*

*Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. Acts 4:32-35.*

They collected funds for other churches and regions.

*Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem." 1 Corinthians 16:1-3.*

*"So, the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea." Acts 11:29. At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem." Romans 15:25-26.*

They were exhorted to help the needs of members.

*"Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality." Romans 12:13.*

*"They asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do." Galatians 2:10.*

*“So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Galatians 6:10.*

They funded mission work.

*“Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.” Galatians 6:6.*

*“Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.” Philippians 4:14–16.*

*“I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you.” 2 Corinthians 11:8.*

*Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. 1 Corinthians 9:13:14.*

*The labourer is worthy of his hire. 1 Timothy 5:18.*

#### Paul’s Example and Exhortations

*Nevertheless, we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ... But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing this in the hope that you will do such things for me, for I would rather die than allow anyone to deprive me of this boast. For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach willingly, I have a reward; if not willingly, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me (my stewardship). What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make full use of my rights as a preacher of the gospel. 1 Corinthians 9:12, 15-18 (NIV).*

*“Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself.” 2 Corinthians 11:7-9.*

*“I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by labouring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’.” Acts 20:33-35.*

#### **The Blessings of God upon those who are faithful**

*“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” says the LORD of hosts; “And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,” says the LORD of hosts. Malachi 3:10.*

***In the world, income determines giving. For a Christian, his giving determines his income.***

#### **The Judgement of God on those who are unfaithful stewards of tithes and offerings stored in God’s treasury**

*“Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” 1 Corinthians 4:2.*

*“Cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness,” Matthew 25:30 is the judgement upon the unfaithful servant. (See also Matthew 24:45-51 and Nehemiah 13:4-13).*

*And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. Luke 12:47, 48.*

### **Salvation by Faith and Giving**

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16.*

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:8-10.*

Our hearts must go with our tithes. *Amos 4:4* and *Luke 18:12* describe people who gave tithes but whose hearts were not right with God.

As we walk in the Spirit, His love will be shed abroad in our hearts and we will reflect the grace of God in our giving. We will claim no merit for our giving, but recognise as Abraham and King David and all of God's saints in all ages have done, that all that we give to God is but a returning of what was His in the first place.

The spirit of liberality is the spirit of heaven. This spirit finds its highest manifestation in Christ's sacrifice on the cross. In our behalf the Father gave His only-begotten Son; and Christ, having given up all that He had, then gave Himself, that man might be saved. The cross of Calvary should appeal to the benevolence of every follower of the Saviour. The principle there illustrated is to give, give. *"He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." 1 John 2:6. Acts of the Apostles: A Liberal Church. p 339.*

*"Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You...O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and fix their heart toward You." 1 Chronicles 29:13, 14, 18.*

They brought their gifts to Jesus,  
And laid them at His feet,  
And love for this dear Saviour,  
Made every offering sweet;  
Good deeds and words of kindness,  
Help for the poor of earth,  
And not a gift among them  
Was thought of little worth.

*Wouldst bring a gift to Jesus,  
That He will count most sweet?  
Say, "Lord, my heart I give Thee,"  
And lay it at His feet.*

Eben E Rexford

God Bless

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