

March 9, 2025

Controversy could be said of my message today. That's right a topic that has ramifications almost back to the beginning of time. How folks have dealt with it has produced either blessings or death. What is it?

Well, let me ask you a question. What does God expect from us? The big Why> Why we were created.

We read in Ps 29 "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; bring an offering and come into His presence."

We are created to worship Him. So important is it that He even tells us how to do it!

Bring Him glory, Bring Him offerings.

Worship by singing and lifting hands praising God. We do this; Like this morning.

God gave directions to Adam on bringing offerings of which instructions he passes on to his boys -and what happens? Cain and Abel - one follows the Lord's directions the other not so much- Abel's offering is accepted and Cain's offering is rejected. Then out of his self righteousness indignation and jealousy Cain then kills Abel, because God accepted Abel's and not his.

God is serious about receiving His offerings. And some are serious about not giving it to Him too.

Now through out the Old Testament it tells God's people to bring Tithes and Offerings to God. The tithe - Abram did it. Jacob did it. Later it was used to support the Priests and Temple. Then there was the tithe of first fruits, and other offerings which came out to about 23% of a Hebrews income.

Now some say that's OT. and now we are NT. True, but Jesus says (Mat. 5:17)I did not come to take away the Law but to fulfill it. We can also read in the book of Acts 20 that on the first day of the week the early Christians brought their offerings to the temple. So offerings and glory still apply to how we honor God.

There is an old saying you don't talk about politics and money. Now let's get practical here. Jesus was practical right? Guess what he talked about the most? Not money, but the kingdom of God, yes. But guess what is extremely important in our living out our lives in God's Kingdom, our hearts. Where your heart is - is where your money is- true?? So- Jesus did talk about money.

I am giving each of you a little gift, a single, a green back, a buck, worth 100 pennies-oh that's right we don't make pennies anymore-so 20 nickels.

Take it out and fold it like.....instructions.

Now that little strip is about 10% what God asks for the tithe, the rest you can do with as you would like- wait a moment- Some will say we are not bound by the tithe (10%) we are NT. Right??? Well that maybe true we are not bound to 10% we can give 15-20-30-40-50-even more R. G. LeTourneau "the dean of earth movers". Came through financial disaster - and because of God's faithfulness he adopted a 90/10 split 90% went to God and he kept 10%.

Now I have another question for you- can you out give God? I mean really?? My God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills? Now come on He owns all the cattle on all the hills, right? Can you out give Him?

It was fairly early on in my ministry. The congregation I was serving was behind in their apportionments (fair share of the denomination's ministry). Now they had never paid their share 100%. God whispered into my ear, Dave don't take a pay check until they are up to date. WHAT NO Paycheck!!! I mean God got my attention with only a whisper. So I prayed, my little family prayed, and I prayed some more —finally we said ok.

So I announce this to the church. I will only take my pay for the weeks the church's fair share was paid up to. You would have thought I lit off one of those big firecrackers in the place. You could hear a pin drop then the hub Bub. She people were upset with me, others applauded my step of faith there was no middle ground in this thing. News like that didn't stay inside the church either. Gradually offering totals started to increase.

Now this didn't resolve itself right away, and boy did it test my faith—— let me tell you a few of the stories of this event! Slipped a 20\$, a "free haircut", a wedding dress, trunk full of supplies, bags of groceries, and more bags of groceries! I couldn't give them away fast enough, before God put more on the door step.

Now guess what- after several months Dec. 30th rolls around and I get a call from the church treasurer, She says to me, "Pastor I know you tithe- can you bring me your final tithe check?" "But I haven't got this months pay check from the church yet." "Yes, I know", she said, "if you bring it to me I can write your check and along with the last apportionment check, and we then have 10 bucks in the black for the end of the year. All paid in full. 100%" I said, "I will be right there!"

Also God blessed, I had been able to pay all my bills for that period too. And oh yes the dear lady who gave her wedding dress, we were able to graciously return it to her, she was emotionally in a better place.

Good story pastor but, you can fill in the blank with your next excuse. Why you can't -

A stranger to me, but with all the commotion of the members you would have thought the most important person had finally come to church. I learn that today was his once a year visit, and he put in his yearly check of 100\$. Todays money at least worth 5-600 \$. They had lavishly placed accolades on him.

I remember looking back at the right corner of the Riley Center Church sanctuary, another attendee received no accolade, sitting in the last row was a young single mom. She was there every Sunday and when the offering plate came by she would place her envelope with \$2.25 in it. She may have only missed a couple a Sundays a year. No one hardly noticed her, no slaps on the back etc. now do the math. $\$2.25 \times 50 =$ It's more than \$100!!!! Se beat the guy's amount each year!

Where were people's hearts in this? The young mom's was in the right place. The others not so much they had not cherished her and her tiny family. It reminded me of Jesus' story of the widows mite.

May I encourager you in your faith? Not tithing yet? let's get you there. As a little boy my dad would put a nickel in an envelope for me on Sunday- my allowance was 50 cents.

I know by statistics most of you don't tithe. the average giver in church is 2.5% at best. And a number of you never place an offering. Let change that. Don't you believe God would be in that move of your faith? Add one percent to you next giving. Then add 1 % each month. Till

you reach at least 10%. God will help you do it.

I would like to give a few guide lines to help-

You have not given an offering until you have given a tithe, 10%.

The Bible said bring the tithe to the storehouse (your local congregation). You can bless other ministries after the tithe has entered the storehouse.

You are responsible only for what you have control over, ie. If your spouse is not at this place in their faith, only what is yours, under your control.

You may have made decisions in the past that placed you in a financial bind -before this new step(s) of faith. So keep good faith in your debt payments and corral your spending, Now keep making gains toward your tithe of 10% even if they are small steps, maybe 1/2% increase per month. You will see God at work.

Remember giving is about your heart towards God, God loves a cheerful giver.

Don't like me preaching on tithing? The only ones who have complained are those who are not tithing right now, those who are, are happy to hear the message.

Why because they have witnessed the blessings in their own hearts in tithing.

Let us join in prayer.