

#555 – A Now Word About Tithing
Is Tithing Because of The Natural Man?
What IS New Covenant / Kingdom Giving?
What IS Spirit Led Giving?

October 14, 2013

From time to time I am asked about tithing and its place in the church offerings and for the support of the “work.” How should a Christian, as a New Covenant believer, respond to this expectation, responsibility and assumed entitlement by the ministries? I am always hesitant to give a plain answer because people think I don’t believe or practice “GIVING.”

To begin with it should be clear that money and all other resources are a great blessing in the hands of dedicated and consecrated individuals who will use it for the will of God and for the work He has ordained. Using our resources for the genuine work of God is a Christian virtue.

However, this same prosperity in the hands of greedy, carnal and self-serving individuals is just contributing to the work of darkness even if it is used by religious people. The idea that we should give to get more and have an abundance has been practiced by multitudes because of another gospel called “The Gospel of Prosperity.” The basic purpose of this “gospel” is to benefit the “minister” and contribute to his prosperity. Also, the offerings are promoted to provide a building or resources and a work place for the minister to practice his chosen vocation.

Misrepresentation of the “tithing,” the offerings and our responsibility to “give” has become a very sore point for many. The misuse of “sacrificial” funds by various ministries is another issue! We will confine this document to our responsibility to give and to share so there may be “equality” among the believers.

The tithe or the tenth part is first mentioned in Genesis 14 and then as part of the Law of Moses. The word “tithing” is used 18 times in the Bible and once in the New Testament where Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their “tithing.”

Mat 23:23 “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.

Abraham gave tithe or the tenth part to Melchizedek in Genesis 14. This is given as an example for the church to prove the principle of tithing. The theory is that tithing took place before the Law of Moses and is, therefore, a principle for the church. For that reason, because it preceded the Old Covenant, it is assumed that “tithing” is also a New Covenant expectation.

To offer an explanation about the difference between “giving” and “tithing” it is important that we recognize the radical difference between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant. We should make a distinction between the outward things and the inward Life. Why? This was Jesus’ criticism of the Pharisees that they did things to be seen by men.

Within the New Covenant, there certainly is a great difference between the natural man and the spiritual man and between the “old man” and the new species of the new man, which is Christian. There is a difference between the visible and the invisible kind of giving that Jesus emphasized.

Under the Law of Moses, God gave the species of Adam (Israel) instruction about giving and for the support of the widow, the orphan, the poor and the stranger. Israel was instructed to give out of their abundance so that there could be some equality among the people of God. Israel was also given instruction about bringing a tenth part of everything they harvested into the house of God for the work of the Tabernacle and the sacrifices and offerings. This is still used as an example of tithing today.

In the Old Covenant that God gave to Moses at Mount Sinai, or “the Law,” the people of God were commanded to give “10%” of all of their livestock and from what they harvested from the fields to the priesthood for the support of the priests and for the work of the Tabernacle. This is logical and well documented.

However, we must point out that this “ordinance” was given to the species of Adam or to the natural man. The process was very simple because the natural man could give 10 % by simple mathematics. If you prospered by ten you just gave one. If you earned 100 then you owed 10. This was very necessary and important because no spiritual insight was needed and no spiritual life was expected because everything was reduced down to a law and mathematics. However, the natural man actually originated in Genesis 3 and NOT at Mount Sinai. Therefore, the tithe in Genesis 14 to Melchizedek by Abraham was still done by the natural man. Abraham gave 10% (the tenth part) of the spoils he had taken from the foreign kings when he defeated them.

Heb 7:6 But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham, and blessed the one who had the promises. 7 **But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.** 8 And in **this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on.** 9 And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

Melchizedek was NOT a mortal man and he was not of the genealogy of Aaron and preceded Aaron! Not by many years but from all eternity past. He was a priest of God Most High forever. Therefore, to use Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek as a commandment for the lesser (the believer) to pay tithes to the greater (the minister) seems out of place! Abraham did NOT pay tithes to a mortal man and therefore, Melchizedek was immortal. The “tithe” was of an entirely different realm that may have an application to our giving today.

Since Melchizedek lives on and never dies and has His Priesthood forever and Jesus took up His Priesthood after that eternal order, it is clear that Melchizedek was the Holy Spirit in bodily form. Abraham, then, actually paid tithes to the Holy Spirit and THAT is the application we recommend today. Being led by the Holy Spirit in our giving is the New Covenant method connected to sonship. If we were really led by the Holy Spirit in our giving, most all of these strange, carnal or corrupt ministries would starve to death.

Nevertheless, I am not condemning tithing to mortal men. Why? Because, that is the best the natural man, of the Adam species, can do! Why? He has no spiritual ability to be led by the Holy Spirit so he must revert back to the simple mathematics of giving 10%. If spiritual people, who should know better, quit giving money to carnal ministries, those ministries would soon be forced to quit and the real church and ministries could benefit greatly. However, the visible church is full of the wrong species of persons so the best way to provide for that system's existence is to promote the tithe and to publicize the offerings and promise the giver he will receive greater blessings.

While this example in Luke 19 is generally given as an example of New Covenant giving, it should be obvious that Zaccheus was just responding to the Law of Moses.

Luke 19:8 And Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." 9 And Jesus said to him, "**Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.**" 10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

If this example was for the New Covenant Christian, how can we explain how Zaccheus was "saved" before Calvary? It had to be by the Old Covenant provision because he was Jewish and the son of Abraham. Suddenly, Zaccheus just did the right thing according to the Law of Moses but this was not Kingdom Giving but returning what he received by fraud.

To use this as an example of Christian giving appears to be rather strange! When we use the Old Covenant law as an example of the New Covenant giving we must be VERY careful because these Covenants were NOTHING alike and totally different in every way. Why? That is because two different species of believers are involved in their application. Even carnal and unsaved people can give tithes but ONLY New Covenant, spiritually developed Christians can give within the Kingdom dimension.

A close observation of the current system of evangelism and ministry reveals that it is essentially selfish and self-serving. If you become a Christian and start giving, that is your hope of gaining something financial or something personal. The "come and get" message is counter productive and an offence to the Kingdom message. If 2 Cor 6 and 2 Cor 11 are expressing Kingdom TRUTH that is lived out on earth and in ministry, then can this modern system of "leadership" even qualify as Kingdom ministers? Obviously, this "sacrifice" is not even considered as important by today's ministers! Still, if THIS kind of sacrifice is Christian Reality how can we evaluate the current system of COME AND GET?

The question I am continually asking is this; Can this system change to meet the Kingdom requirements? Has this "selfish system" deteriorated and corrupted the visible church to the point of no possible return to the standards of Kingdom Life and Christian giving that was designed by God to be effective within the New Covenant provision?

Is there some new Truth or revelation that can change the direction of the visible church to embrace the 2 Corinthians 6 and Chapter 11 reality? Is the "come and give" gospel just too radical for the "come and get" philosophy promoted by the modern ministries. Their "GIVE TO

GET” theology is primarily selfish and a means to fill their own pockets through the “tithe and the offerings.”

I was watching a large and popular Christian TV program recently. The host was saying how they were being criticized for their doctrine of prosperity through giving. He said what are we supposed to preach; POVERTY?

My opinion is that if they have nothing more to preach about than money and prosperity they should close up. In other words, their gospel is one or the other and we choose prosperity.

Then what IS Kingdom Giving and how does it differ from tithing?

Most alert Christians and some unbelievers are well aware of the con men in the pulpit that are using “giving” as a deception to fill their pockets with a lot of money. Many of these “ministers” do live as the top one percent with jet planes and a high life style! They justify this as a wonderful example and testimony of God’s blessing the ministry so the unbeliever will be impressed and he will want to get “saved” so he can also prosper.

We are not condemning “prosperity” but exposing the con game involving the deception of “giving to get!” Some call it “sacrificial giving” using the Altar in the Old Testament. However, of course, the sacrifice was burned up and the believer went home with nothing more than he had before. He didn’t sacrifice one sheep in order to get two sheep to take back home. That “burned sacrifice” is a clearer understanding of the “offering,” it cost you something!

To identify New Covenant, Kingdom Giving, we will use Paul’s example when he wrote to the believers in Corinth about the believers in Macedonia.

2Cor 8:1 Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that **in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.** 3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord, 4 begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, 5 and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

This “giving” is quite different from “tithing” or “sacrificing” or what is called “covenant giving” or “you are not really giving until it hurts.” This is a far cry from “painful giving” or “sacrificial giving.” However, these same scriptures are used to con the believers to give what they don’t have but to give by faith so they can get more to give.

2Cor 8:11 But now finish doing it also; that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it by your ability. 12 For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable **according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have.** 13 For *this* is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality-- 14 at this present time **your abundance being a supply for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want, that there may be equality;** 15 as it is written, “HE WHO *gathered* MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO *gathered* LITTLE HAD NO LACK.”

We should note that Paul is NOT taking up a collection for himself so he can travel to Jerusalem and comfort those who are in desperate need. This “offering” is not for him or for ministry but for the saints in another location that were in desperate need, probably in Jerusalem.

Rom 15:26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

This giving was not referred to as a sacrifice but in way of equality and not for the affliction of those in Macedonia and for the ease of those who receive the help. Paul’s reasoning was that whenever the saints in Macedonia were in need that, in return, the abundance of others would be available to meet their need. In other words this “giving” was between churches or believer groups and not for the minister so he could go there to preach.

This next thought in 2 Corinthians 9 is generally misused and taken out of the context in which it is given.

2Cor 9:6 Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. 7 Let each one *do* just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 **And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;**

This is NOT about filling your pockets but so you will have a abundance for other good deeds. The prosperity preachers use this verse to prove that the more you give, the more you get back. In other words; If you give sparingly you will only receive sparingly. You must give a LOT to get back a lot! Now, let us see this principle from the Kingdom viewpoint.

2Cor 9:9 as it is written, “HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ABIDES FOREVER.” 10 Now **He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness;** 11 you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving **to God.**

The truth presented here may easily be perverted by its application. God provides the “SEED FOR SOWING” and not for our prosperity. He who sows little will reap little. The more seed you sow the greater the harvest. Let us examine the truth Paul is sharing!

God provides you seed but it is for sowing and NOT for eating. But then how can we eat? **He who supplies seed to the sower will provide us the bread for food. God supplies the sower with both the seed for SOWING and also the bread for the SOWER to eat so he can focus upon the sowing of the seed.** This is NOT about prosperity for the sower but about the Kingdom Principle of providing equality for the believers in need. This is NOT about welfare or food stamps or debit cards for the poor. This is about providing for a temporary hardship among the believers. These believers, that receive the help, must also be willing to give when they are no longer in a desperate situation so that their abundance can supply the needs of other believers who are in desperate situations. This kind of giving does NOT produce a culture of poverty from one generation to another or what we call “the welfare mentality.”

There is another application of seed and sowing that relates to the Kingdom. Jesus said the “Good Seed that HE sows is the Sons of the Kingdom.” This is not about giving but sowing.

Mat 13:37 And He answered and said, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, 38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, **these are the sons of the kingdom**; and the tares are the sons of the evil one;”

The application that the “ministers” use for sowing and reaping is all about raising money for the ministry. They are not so concerned about raising money to give to the desperate in another city. Their concern is to raise money so they can travel to the poor city to teach them how to prosper through their giving.

We know of these “prosperity ministers” visiting Cuba where the believers are desperate because there is no economy. These ministers were boldly preaching that America should not have to send money to Cubans but the Cubans should give tithes and offerings so they could prosper. Even if the tithe was only one Peso they should give to get back. Some of these “ministers” stayed at the American Hotel at \$200 dollars a day as a testimony to the VERY poor Cubans that “giving to get” really works. Their personal prosperity was their Christian testimony about how it all works. Just see how God is blessing us!

Has this “church / ministry system” deteriorated to the point that it cannot be restored to the Kingdom Dimension and the reality of Christian Life? Is there no way to reverse this “religious philosophy” to embrace the Kingdom of God and its demands? Are there no New Covenant Ministers who will at last embrace the Kingdom Life and Character so their message has authenticity, reality and power? Is there no hope of a new “restoration of experiential Truth” that will deliver the visible church from all this “religious corruption” and the selfish and self-serving ideals of a back slidden leadership?

Asking relevant questions is one thing but getting relevant answers is quite another. Exactly where can we go and to whom can we enquire about a solution to this “under-coming” plague that has encompassed the visible church? To even suggest that Jesus will return for what is called “the church” today, that is in this present darkness, is ridiculous. The Bible is clear that He will only return for the “over-comers” who are the “first-fruit harvest.” To teach the “under-comers” how to store food and water to survive the tribulation or the birth pains will never restore the church to become the “over-comers” that receive the promises in Revelation 2 and 3. The time for the “under-comers” to prosper by tithing or offerings should be passed.

My theory is that the “over-comers” will be missing from the visible church life until many ministers from many backgrounds fully embrace the Kingdom Life and its demands. The greatest lack and the biggest problem for the church to experience the next restoration lies with the ministers and leaders and their selfish and self-serving ways. Just returning to the Absolutes contained in Scripture and to recognize God’s Absolute Sovereignty and His Predestined Plan for man can do much to alleviate this lukewarm condition in the visible church and establish a much higher goal than to just believe and fill you pockets.

Giving the “tenth part” is definitely an Old Covenant ordinance. This ordinance was given because the people of Israel were afraid and did not go up Mount Sinai, hear God’s Voice, keep

His Covenant and obey. The “tenth part” was given as a substitute for directly hearing from God. In the New Covenant this transitions to “BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT.” The “New Covenant” is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. He will not only be WITH US He shall be IN US. He will teach you all things is the NORMAL. Being “taught by man” is just for laying foundations and our preparation for the Kingdom life. The NORMAL is that we shall all be taught by God.

While tithing is taught by man and is basically selfish and self-serving, Kingdom Giving is taught by God. Since this is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, HE WILL LEAD US INTO ALL TRUTH. Giving a “tenth part” to Melchizedek by Abraham transitions to GIVING according to the direction of the Holy Spirit by the New Covenant Christian.

Well, brother, that is just more of your idealism and sounds wonderful but in our experience the Holy Spirit is saying nothing. That “silence” is our “realism! My theory, then, is that the “silence” is not the provision of the New Covenant believer and is “sub-Christian, or “pre-Christian” but NOT Normal Christianity. However, if that **IS** your experience then giving the “tenth part” is the best you can do and is normal for the natural man. After all, the natural man in the pulpit depends upon you and the tithe for his provision. Surely, the workman is worthy of his hire and the ox should not be prevented from eating from what he is grinding. After all the priesthood after the Order of Aaron is totally different from the Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek. The first is just for the natural man while the second is just for the spiritual man.

However, my question is this; has the “church” fallen so far from the purpose of God and the total rectification and development promised by the New Covenant that they cannot qualify to participate in the Church He is Building? Has the modern church developed a philosophy that has ruined it and kept it from its original purpose?

Col 1:25 Of *this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the *preaching of* the word of God, 26 *that is*, the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, 27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. 29 And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

How much different this is than teaching the church how to tithe? That is pitiful!