

INTRODUCTION

- The Bible declares that God is the Creator and Owner of this universe
- God gave man the responsibility of stewardship of the earth

(Genesis 1:28)

“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

(Genesis 2:15)

Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

- God gave man a “Divine Order” that man may acknowledge he is a steward and God is the Owner

(Genesis 2:16-17)

“16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

- The tree was “set apart”
- It was sacred because the Garden and the earth belonged to God

TODAY GOD HAS SET APART A SACRED PORTION – TITHES

(Leviticus 27:30)

“And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’s. It is holy to the LORD.”

- A tithe is the law of the first fruit

(Leviticus 27:26)

“But the firstborn of the animals, which should be the LORD’s firstborn, no man shall dedicate; whether it is an ox or sheep, it is the LORD’s”

- A tithe is “a tenth” of what you make
- A tithe is not a gift but a payment
 - It is not a gift because it does not belong to you
 - It is the Lord’s and it is sacred
 - When you pay your taxes, it is not a gift, it is a payment, failing to do so has a punishment and a penalty, or both
- A tithe cannot be designated because it is not yours
 - It belongs to God’s storehouse – the Church.
 - You don’t designate your taxes nor the rental of what you hire
- A tithe is not proportionate giving like you pay your taxes
 - You pay your tax in proportion of what you make.
 - The more you earn, the higher the proportion of your tax.
- The tithe is to acknowledge and to honour God as your Creator and Maker
- What you give beside your tithes are offerings

- We belong to God

(Acts 17:28)

“for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’

- We are bought or redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ

(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

“9 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

(Song of Solomon 2:16)

“My beloved is mine, and I am his.”

- What about the 90%?

- You are a steward of that 90%
- As stewards we must give account of our life - all we own and have

(Romans 14:11-12)

11 For it is written: “As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

(1 Corinthians 10:31)

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

(Romans 14:8)

“For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s”

Illustration - The parable of the talents

(Matthew 25:14-18)

14 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. 18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money.

(Matthew 25:26)

26 “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.

(Matthew 25:28)

28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

(Matthew 25:30)

30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

WHAT GOD SAYS WHEN WE GIVE HIM OUR LEFT-OVER - THE UNWANTED AND THE LEAST OF THE BEST

Israel was doing this

(Malachi 1:6-8)

6 “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts. To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’ 7 “You offer defiled food on My altar, But say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’ By saying, ‘The table of the LORD is contemptible.’ 8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?” Says the LORD of hosts

You would not give such gifts to the Governor, the sovereign head of the nation.

- Pagan philosophy
 - Get all you can and keep all you get
 - Give to get
 - Give to seek for favour
- Christian philosophy
 - Give thanks (an act of worship) and not to receive thanks
 - Honour God and not to get honour.

(Proverbs 3:9-10)

9 Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

- We don't give to a system that works but to a Person who is sovereign
 - We love God because He first loved us.
 - We obey God – by disobedience, we lose, by obedience, we gain
 - We give cheerfully – giving is an attitude

(2 Corinthians 9:7)

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."

- Giving brings blessing

(Luke 6:38)

"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

LIKE THE TREE IN THE GARDEN, THE TITHE IS THE SACRED PORTION

To acknowledge is a matter of honour.

To recognize is a matter of intelligence.

- Whenever God gave Israel victory over the enemies, He would say to them, do not touch or take certain items of the spoil of the land.
 - So that Israel will know that it is the Lord who had given them the victory
 - To disobey is to come under the curse of sin

(Malachi 3:8-9)

8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation.

- The Battle of Jericho

(Joshua 6:16-19 (E.S.V))

"16And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city. 17And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. 18But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. 19But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD."

- Achan and the defeat of the city of Ai

(Joshua 7:10-13, 20, 25-26)

10The LORD said to Joshua, "Get up! Why have you fallen on your face? 11Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. 12 Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. 13Get up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the LORD, God of Israel, "There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you."

(Joshua 7:20) The confession of Achan

20And Achan answered Joshua, "Truly I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel and this is what I did:

(Joshua 7:25-26)

25And Joshua said, "Why did you bring trouble on us? The LORD brings trouble on you today." And all Israel stoned him with stones. They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones. 26And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his burning anger. Therefore, to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor.

- Saul and the battle with the Amalekites

(1 Samuel 15:3) God said to King Saul

3 Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

- What did King Saul and Israel do?

(1 Samuel 15:9)

But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

- God sent the Prophet Samuel to King Saul

(1 Samuel 15:10)

"10 Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying,"

(1 Samuel 15:13-16)

13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD." 14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" 15 And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." 16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak on."

(1 Samuel 15:22-23)

22 So Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king."

- Ananias and Sapphira – they lied in their giving

(Acts 5:1-5)

"1But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. 2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought

a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." 5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

God will deal with us accordingly.

The manner may not be the same but the consequences of disobedience will be the price we pay.

- Other things not to touch

- Vessels used in the temple

(Numbers 4:15)

And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is set to go, then the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them; but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. "These are the things in the tabernacle of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.

- The Ark

(2 Samuel 6:6-7)

6 And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. 7 Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error; and he died there by the ark of God.

- God's anointed

(1 Chronicles 16:22)

Saying, "Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm."

CONCLUSION

- To obey is to be blessed

(Malachi 3:10-12 ESV)

"10 Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. 11I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. 12Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.

(Deuteronomy 28:1-14 ESV)

1"And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God. 3Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. 4Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. 5Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. 6Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. 7"The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you. They shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. 8The LORD will command the blessing on you in your barns and in all that you undertake. And he will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. 9 The LORD will establish you as a people holy to himself, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in his ways. 10And all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. 11And the LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your livestock and in the fruit of your ground, within the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. 12The LORD will open to you his good treasury, the heavens, to give the rain to

your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. And you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. 13And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you shall only go up and not down, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, being careful to do them, 14 and if you do not turn aside from any of the words that I command you today, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

- To disobey is the curse of sin

(Deuteronomy 28:15)

"But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

God desires to bless you and He has given us a way to receive the blessings. The way of the obedience is by recognizing He is God and we are His stewards.

- Jesus Himself endorsed tithing

(Matthew 23:23 ESV)

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others."
