

# Please Don't Tithe to Our Church

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     A few more announcements real quick before we get into our message today. One thing, so family night, it's in the bulletin, but I can't remember what day it is.

I guess I can open it up and read. But we're going to change that this month. Just FYI, I think it's going to be a Thursday instead of a Tuesday that same week.

We'll try to update the bulletin to match that, but I just wanted to share that, get that out early. Again, thank you, Shiloh, so much for filling in for Sophie.

That means a lot to everybody. You did a great job. Also, a few other sign-up things out in the foyer there or the hallway. So we have a few sign-up sheets.

One is for the fair. So we're trying to see if we can get a booth at the fair this year. But the first thing that we need to find out is do we have enough people who would be willing to volunteer for a booth at the fair?

[ 0 : 5 7 ]     This will be more than just a church booth telling people about our church. This will be an evangelistic type thing. We're going to share with people about the gospel. We'll have things to pass out. We'll have fun things that they can do at the booth.

So if that's something that you're interested in helping out in some way, I think we're going to do like three or four-hour shifts, I think three per day for a whole week. There's a sign-up sheet out there.

Put your name down. And also there's another column that says how many slots, I think I call them slots, you'd be willing to do. So would you just be willing to come once or maybe multiple times, whether multiple days for one shift or maybe stay a whole day?

That's a long time because I think it's, what, 10 to 9 or something like that. But, again, you don't have to be, you know, super good with people or whatever as long as you can smile and say, did you get one of these?

Right? And who can do that? A few people. All right. If you're not, then, you know, you're qualified. So sign up on that sheet. I'll try to remember to announce that at the end of the service so nobody forgets.

[ 2 : 0 1 ]     And also on that column that says how many shifts you'd be able to do. And also if you've already signed up and didn't fill that out, if you're able to do more than one, you think, just write down, you know, two, three shifts, whatever.

And that way in the next few weeks we'll determine do we have enough people where we can actually do this. That'll be great. There's also a treat sign-up. So between Sunday school and this service, we have some coffee and some treats.

And there's a sign-up for that. And all you have to do is just bring in some cookies or crackers or whatever else. And I notice that it's looking kind of bare, that sign-up sheet.

So if that's something you'd be interested in doing, check that out. Put your name. Pick a day. And put your name on there. And, oh, and then the John 3.16 thing.

That's coming up. So last year we kind of experimented with this idea. There were some people that talked about out in the internets or something that decided that March 16th will be John 3.16 day.

[ 3 : 10 ] Right? March the third month. John chapter 3. See how that all fits together. Anyway, cool idea. But, hey, I'm up for anything, any time to help get the word out about the gospel, right?

So we're going to, I think there's three things I know of that we're looking at doing. Yard signs. So if you'd like a yard sign that just says John 3.16, I think that's all it says on it, to put in your yard.

Sign up for that. The other thing is cookies. Am I getting this right? So one of the things we did last year was just get a plate of cookies or a tin of cookies.

A box. A box of cookies. And with a little gospel message on it to give to, like, first responders, like police and fire stations and medic, you said?

Anybody. We can give to anybody. So if that's something that you'd like to sign up for, is there money involved in that? Do people need to pay for that? I'm not sure.

[ 4 : 13 ] Anyway, I think it should say somewhere on that sheet. And then the last thing was we were going to look at doing a billboard display. So if that's something you'd like to just contribute some money to, go ahead and sign up for that as well.

So lots going on, but I think that's it. Well, as we get into our message, we kind of finished a series about, you know, who do men say that I am?

About Jesus Christ and who he was. And we're going to, we're going to, I'm looking for the next book. I'd like to get into another book of the Bible and just teach through another book of the Bible.

But I've got one more thing I wanted to do before that. And so today we're going to talk about Christian giving. Before we do that, though, there's one, I guess, more thing that I wanted to talk about.

And some people have asked me about, have you heard about the revival going on in Asbury College or University? I forget whether it's a college or university down in Kentucky.

[ 5 : 23 ] And I've seen little things pop up all over the Internet about this revival going down. I think we have some family that are even down there, family members in the church.

And so what are my thoughts? And I've seen all kinds of thoughts from all over the Internet from, you know, everybody's got to get down there, we've got to get down there and catch the move of the Spirit and that kind of thing, to, well, you know, it's just a bunch of nonsense and people getting emotional and all that kind of thing.

And so, you know, what do I think? Am I on one side or the other? Well, I think I'm in the middle. So I think, well, first of all, what is revival?

I've seen lots of people say, well, that's not really revival because there's not a preacher. There's not a gospel message being preached on a regular basis. Well, where is that in the definition of the word revival?

I mean, revival is actually not a biblical word. In fact, we looked it up the other day, didn't we? We found, at least in the New King James Version, there was one verse, and I think it was like in Ezra or something, about revival.

[ 6 : 30 ] But, you know, it wasn't really talking about the kind of revival that we speak about today. But really, revival is just people getting excited about the Lord, right? And what's wrong with that?

Nothing at all. We want people to be excited about the Lord. And sometimes, you know, people can be bored with the Lord, right? Whether they're a young person or maybe you're older and you've been a Christian for a while, and it's just like, ah, Christian life's kind of boring.

A Christian's life is not boring. It should never be. And so it's good that we should get excited about the Lord. We should get excited about the Lord every day, right?

And it's not like, you know, there's always amazing adventures happening in our lives. In fact, a lot of the Christian life is what? Just being a boring, faithful Christian, you know?

It's doing things like changing diapers, right? That's part of the Christian life, isn't it? Or going to work and typing on a computer. Or going to work and filling up pools, right, Joe?

[ 7 : 37 ] Or just being a good friend to your neighbor. Or going to church and listening to a message. Or opening up your Bible every morning and finding out more about the Word of God.

And so I think there are two kind of ditches that we can get into. One is, what I see a lot, is people that I refer to as revival chasers. They're constantly looking for the next revival that's happening somewhere in the world.

And they're going to go there and they're going to try to, you know, catch the Spirit and get like a big booster shot of the Holy Ghost or something like that. And did you know that the Holy Spirit isn't just in Kentucky?

Did you know that? The Holy Spirit, where does the Holy Spirit live? In believers. In us. He lives in us. So you don't have to go to this revival over here or over there to find the Holy Spirit, to experience the life of God.

If you're a believer, if you're trusting in Christ, you have that now. And I think the other ditch is to just poo-poo anything. And especially when you have a revival of any kind.

[ 8 : 47 ] In fact, there's a movie coming out this weekend. It has come out this weekend called The Jesus Revolution. Am I getting that right? Is that the name of the movie? It's about the Jesus movement out in California, specifically the Calvary Chapel kind of churches, where there was this, kind of had the Jesus people and the Jesus Revolution and all these hippies, really, coming to faith and going to church and all that kind of came with that.

Really exciting period of time. But do you think that it was just pure and, you know, everything was wonderful and there was nothing negative that came out of that?

No. It was, I'm sure, very messy, right? There was all kinds of nonsense things that happened or things that were maybe not biblical. And you're always going to find that with anything.

You might even find that in just a regular church service, right? Some nonsense going on or things that aren't biblical. And so we shouldn't, on the other ditch, just kind of poo-poo anything that, well, it's not part of our denomination or it's not part of our church.

So, you know, it's not really, God's not really at work there. And of course God's, God's always at work in each one of us. And anytime anybody gets excited about the Lord, I'm all for it.

[ 10 : 10 ] And so, anyway, that's kind of my perspective. I think, you know, we should always be discerning. And if people are doing things or getting involved in things that are outside of what's really proper biblically, then, of course, we can say something and we can address it.

But people coming to the Lord and getting excited about the Lord, it's messy. When I got excited about the Lord, I look back and I think about all the silly things I did or said.

Anybody else can relate to that? Okay, a few. Yeah, Roger's not going to admit it. So, anyway, I'm going to finish up there.

But I think it's neat, especially this is mostly young people. And young people getting excited about the Lord, I think it's wonderful. All right.

But today, we're going to get into our message this week and next week about Christian giving. And today, what did I title this? The title of this message today is, Please Don't Tithe to Our Church.

[ 11 : 12 ] All right. So, a little bit kind of salacious. But we're going to talk about this concept of tithing. One of the things I want to do, the reason I'm doing this is not because I'm looking to, well, we've got to increase the giving in church or something like that.

In fact, this message probably wouldn't help with that, would it? But really, use this topic of giving in the Bible to try to compare and contrast what it means to live under the law and compare and contrast it with living under grace or living by grace.

One of the most important things that is a duty of all Christians is to live by grace. It's one of the most important things we can do as Christians.

Live by grace. It's a wonderful gift that God gave us that He doesn't want us to reject, that He doesn't want us to sneer at, that He doesn't want us to ignore. God wants us to live by grace.

Today, we're going to focus on something that's in the law. And the next week, we're going to talk about kind of the opposite. There's something that happened last year that shocked me.

[ 12 : 29 ] There was a big-name preacher on television who teaches a prosperity-type gospel down in Atlanta, a guy whose name is Creflo Dollar, which is a very interesting name for a prosperity preacher, right?

But he did a series of messages last year that made headlines everywhere because he said, I've got to tell everybody that there's something that I've taught for years, and I was wrong.

And I'm not sure of all the specifics. There was a few things that he listed. But one of the things that he talked about was he said, I was wrong about tithing. And that was shocking.

He told people, I told you all that you need to tithe and all these different things, but I was wrong. Christians today should not tithe as prescribed under the law in the Old Testament.

And so one of the things I want to do is kind of describe what is a typical tithing message that you might hear and then kind of go through and actually look at what does the Bible say about this whole concept of tithing.

[ 13 : 50 ] So everybody, if you've got a Bible, whether it's a paper one or one on your phone or an iPad or something like that, turn to the book of Malachi.

Now, the book of Malachi might be hard to find, but it's one of the easier ones of the prophets because it's the very last book in the Old Testament. So if you know where the New Testament starts, look for the book of Matthew, and then just go back a few pages, and you're right there at Malachi.

Malachi chapter 3. Malachi chapter 3. And we will start at verse 8. Now, the prophets, if you've read any of the prophets, are the prophets, they tend to tell Israel about how wonderful they are?

Not usually, right? Usually there's some kind of message of judgment or God being upset with the way that they're living, the things that they're doing.

And this is not any different. So here in Malachi chapter 3, we'll look at verse 8. Malachi says this, or this is really the Lord speaking through Malachi.

[ 15 : 09 ] Will a man rob God, yet you have robbed me? But you say, in what way have we robbed you, Lord? You've robbed me in tithes and in offerings.

You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed me. God's saying to the Israelites, because you have not done your tithes and offerings, you have not submitted your tithes and offerings, you have robbed me, and because of that, you are under a curse.

Even this whole nation. 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 God of hosts.

And all the nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land, says the Lord of hosts. So, I've heard several times this passage preached as both a warning and an encouragement, I guess.

[ 16 : 32 ] One warning is what? Listen, if you don't tithe, what's going to happen? You're going to be under a curse. A curse that's going to be from the Lord.

The tithe in Israel's day was not optional. It was required. And so, because of that, if you did not do this tithe, if you did not give this tithe, it was considered robbery.

That's what God says here in the scriptures. This was a tithe that belonged to the Lord. And so, because it belonged to Him, and you failed to give it, then it was like robbery.

That came with a curse. But later on in the passage, He says, now bring those tithes into the storehouse, and if you do, then the windows of heaven will be opened, and there will be prosperity and blessing.

And so, these are the kind of messages that I've heard over the years. One of the ways I've heard it put is, well, you have your tithes, and then you have your offerings, right?

[ 17 : 41 ] Your tithe is 10%. But then, you don't stop there, and you have the offerings that are over and above on top of the tithe. And if you don't tithe, you're going to be under a curse.

But if you start tithing, the curse will go away, but you won't necessarily be blessed. So, if you want to be blessed, then you have to give the offerings, right?

And usually, the person you're giving the offerings to is the one who's giving you the message, or the church that's providing the message. This is, you know, I've heard this, I've heard, you know, there are others that teach tithing, I guess, more than just what you might call the prosperity preachers, or things like that.

Some just teach that, you know, you get a general blessing from tithing. I don't know what the percentage is of churches that would teach tithing.

I know there's plenty that don't. I'll ask this question. How many people here have attended a church during their lives that taught tithing in some kind of way?

[ 18 : 48 ] Wow. So, I'm looking at over half. Probably well over half. Maybe three quarters. So, people will teach tithing as a way to honor the Lord, as a way to worship the Lord.

That you'll get a general blessing, even if some churches don't necessarily teach that you're going to get rich or something if you tithe or give offerings. They'll at least say that you'll get a general blessing. But at the very least, if you don't, there's going to be guilt and condemnation that comes with that.

I remember going to hear a Christian businessman speak and he talked about how, in fact, is anybody familiar with U.S. Plastics up in Lima? I think this was the guy that started that company.

And he said, he was a neat Christian guy, but he said he was a reverse tither. Have you ever heard that? And I've heard a few other people say that. That he gave away 90% and only kept 10. And then I've heard other churches that I know specifically don't teach tithing, but they still use the word.

So they'll talk about giving your tithes. But what they just mean is, you know, giving financial gifts. And I think that can be confusing. And looking up statistics, I read that somebody did some research and they found out that about less than 5% of church-going Christians, so not just somebody who calls themselves a Christian, but somebody who actually goes to church on a regular basis, less than 5% say that they tithe of their income.

[ 20 : 26 ] So my question is, what percentage of Christians think they have to tithe, think that's required of them, but don't do it and just feel guilty about it?

I don't know. Is it 50%? 30%? I don't know. I'm sure it's many. I know that's where I was at one point in my life.

And I belonged to a church where this came up, there was always a message every single Sunday on giving, every single Sunday. And tithing was a big part of it, but also other types of giving and offerings.

And I always felt compelled that I had to give at least that 10%. No matter how much I was struggling financially, I had to give that 10% in order to be faithful to God.

I wasn't necessarily concerned about cursings or anything like that. I just wanted to please the Lord. And I think a lot of people are that way. You want to please the Lord in your life. And so you feel like, well, that's what God expects and so that's what I should do.

[ 21 : 36 ] It was later on, years later, that I was actually reading the Bible which, again, I think I mentioned last week, is a dangerous thing reading the Bible, right? And I started to realize and see, well, what is this whole tithing thing?

Because I'd heard this verse in Malachi plenty of times, but that was about it. And I knew in general that the Jews tithed, right? But I didn't know any details.

I mean, the Old Testament's a pretty thick book, right? And it's hard to get through it all. And there's a lot of details in there, especially in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. But as I started to dig in, I'm like, wait a second, this tithing thing doesn't sound really like what we're told we're supposed to do today in church.

So, what is tithing? What is this tithing thing anyway? Tithing, the word tithe in the Bible is just simply a word that means one-tenth or ten percent. That's all it means.

But in the context, when that word is used, talking about money or specifically the law, it's about giving ten percent of something to someone.

[ 22 : 48 ] That's what we're going to talk about this morning. Now, in a typical modern church setting, that ten percent is going to be from people in the congregation, typically to the attendees of the church, and it's ten percent of your income.

Let's say you have a job and you get a certain salary. You take ten percent. Now, there's always a debate. Is it ten percent before you pay taxes or after you pay taxes, right? Because those are very different numbers, aren't they?

Depending on what tax bracket you're in. And then, who does the tithe go to? And I've heard people say, well, you give your tithe to your church. Don't give it to the guy on the radio or some other ministry.

You give your tithe to your church. That's where it belongs. So that's kind of the modern teaching. We're going to go into the Old Testament here and look at what the Old Testament actually says.

Malachi was referring, when he was talking about the tithe, to the Mosaic Law. We're going to turn to the book of Numbers, Numbers chapter 18. To provide a little bit of context before we jump in, when God gave the land of Israel to the people of Israel, to the Jews, he divided up the land for the people of Israel.

[ 24 : 14 ] They were each given sections of land, divided up Israel into different lots for the different tribes. But there was one tribe in particular that was a very special tribe.

In fact, God said in the scriptures that he set this tribe apart to be a holy tribe, set apart to him for a special purpose. And to them, he gave no land.

He didn't give any land. And that was the Levites, the Levite nation. They were set apart for a special purpose, to serve God in his worship.

Through the tabernacle, through the temple. And there were all kinds of different jobs. All the way from kind of the top job was the high priest. You had to be a Levite to be part of the priesthood. And then you had other priests.

And then you had just different other workers. You had people who were professional singers who would sing, whether it's in the tabernacle or in the temple. And they would sing day and night. That was their job.

[ 25 : 13 ] And they had a rotation. You'd be part of the temple choir. You had people who were gatekeepers or guards around the outer courts or parts of the temple.

And then other things as well. But that was the part, that was the job of the Levites. A whole tribe among Israel whose job it was to take part in really the spiritual aspects of worship.

Especially regarding the temple. But you can imagine that if you, especially back in that day, if you didn't own land, how do you support yourself? Right?

In a mostly agrarian society, the way you support yourself is you raise crops or you raise animals to provide both for yourself and, you know, if you do really well, you can provide for others as well.

But if you don't have any land, you have a lot fewer options. So God provided for the Levites through something we call the tithe.

[ 26 : 18 ] So we're going to look at Numbers chapter 18. We're going to start in verse 21. Numbers 18, verse 21. 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.

Hereafter, the children of Israel shall not come near the tabernacle of meeting, lest they bear sin and die. So up until this time, you had the tabernacle. It was a temporary tent that was used as a place to worship God.

And anybody, really, from any tribe could come. But God said, now I'm changing that. It can't just be anybody that comes and helps out with the worship. It has to be somebody from the Levite tribe.

And so, he's saying, I gave, as these other tribes, an inheritance land. land. But to the Levites, their inheritance is not land, but it's actually a tithe.

Verse 23, But the Levites shall perform the work of the tabernacle of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations that among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

[ 27 : 32 ] And again, no inheritance of the land. For the tithes of the children of Israel which they have offered 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. So, this tithe was something that was an inheritance specifically for a certain tribe, for the people of the tribe of Levi.

If we continue on we'll see a little bit more detail here. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, this is verse 25, saying, Speak thus to the Levites and say to them, When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given to you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the Lord, a tenth of the tithe.

So, this is a tithe of the tithe. So, anybody good at math? What is that? That's 1%, right? And we'll find out what that is used for here in a second.

And your heave offering shall be reckoned and a heave offering, well, what is a heave offering? Anyway, that sounds weird. A heave offering is just an offering that was, it was not consumed, it was not burned up.

[ 28 : 48 ] A lot of the offerings were put on an altar and burned with fire. A heave offering was, the idea was you just kind of, you know, heave it in a certain direction towards the altar but it's not placed on the altar so it doesn't get burned up.

What good is the tithe? If it just turns into ashes, right? So, these heave, the tithe was a heave offering, one that was not consumed by fire so you'd put your wheat or barley, you'd kind of just say, hey, this is for our gift but we're not going to actually burn it up on the altar.

And your heave offering, verse 27, and your heave offering shall be reckoned to you as though it were the grain of the threshing floor and as the fullness of the winepress. Thus you shall also offer a heave offering to the Lord from all your tithes which you receive from the children of Israel and you shall give the Lord's heave offering from it to Aaron the priest.

So, these Levites, they would receive a tenth from Israel, from the other tribes and then from that, then they would in turn, they had their own tithe and where would their tithe go to?

It would go to the priesthood, those who were part of Aaron's descendants who were the priests. So, the priests received 10% from the Levites and the Levites received 10% from the rest of the rest of Israel.

[ 30 : 15 ] Let's see, where are we at? Verse 30, therefore you shall say to them, when you have lifted up the best of it, then the rest shall be accounted to the Levites as the produce of the threshing floor and as the produce of the winepress.

So he says, once you offer to the priests their part, then the rest, it's just as if you harvested it as if you harvested it yourself, as if it was from your land or your garden or your trees or your vineyards.

Treat it as if it belongs to you because it does. This is a gift from the Lord. You may eat it in any place, you and your households, for it is your reward for your work in the tabernacle of meeting.

And you shall bear no sin because of it when you have lifted up the best of it, but you shall not profane the holy gifts of the children of Israel lest you die. Now there's a warning here. He's saying this gift that you receive from others, you can eat anywhere.

You can eat in your home, wherever you want. But there's a little warning. Well, why would he say that? Where else are you going to eat this stuff, right? Well, because there were other gifts that were given to the Levites that were to be offerings, things that were to be burnt on the altar.

[ 31 : 23 ] And those were different. And don't just eat those in your house. Don't just treat those as just regular food. Those are different. Those are other offerings and things, sacrifices.

And the Old Testament describes all those things. But when it comes to this tithe, then those things you can just do with as you want. It's as if you grew it yourself. So tithing in Israel was like taxes today.

It was just a tax. Think about it. We have a government that serves us in some ways, some ways better than others. But we pay taxes to support that government.

And, you know, there's all kinds of government officials and government bureaucrats that need our support. right? And again, some of them probably need to get a different job, but we won't go there.



But the Levites were kind of like the government officials. This was like a church-type government. What do they call it?

[ 32 : 35 ] A theocracy, if you will. And so the Levites needed to be paid for the work that they did. But I will say that unlike our way of paying taxes, our tax code, by the way, it's that time of year, isn't it, to pay your taxes?

I just finished like gathering all my stuff like last week, like three days ago, to hand over to my accountant and he can figure, see if he can figure out all the details that I missed.

Anybody else done with their taxes? Nobody. Okay, oh, we got a few. Okay, good job, everybody. And it's pretty easy, right? You just have to fill out a couple lines on a form.

Is that right? It's just, it's a complete and total headache, isn't it? And you know you're missing something and you know that the government's kind of getting your money that they probably shouldn't, but, you know, that's why we hire accountants and all that.

Or use tax software and hopefully it figures everything out for us. But I think we'll find with this tax code in the Old Testament that's much simpler than what we have to deal with today.

[ 33 : 42 ] And so let's, let's look at a little bit of it. Leviticus chapter 27. So Leviticus, it's right after Numbers.

No, right after, before, thank you. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus. Leviticus chapter 27. And verse 30.

If I can find it. Last chapter of Leviticus. Verse 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, or set apart, to the Lord. If a man wants to at all to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. And concerning the tithe of the herd of the flock, or whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord.

He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it. And if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy. It shall not be redeemed.

[ 35 : 00 ] And he finishes up the whole book with this. These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai. And so, this is just a few verses, but really it explains a lot about the nature of the tithe.

So we've talked about who's supposed to give the tithe and who is supposed to be given to, but what are you supposed to give? Are you supposed to give, like, your paycheck, you know, part of your paycheck that you get, or some of the gold and silver that you might have on hand?

Well, what's described here is really two categories. One is your crops, fruit from the land. He describes it as, what, seed, seed of the land, where is it?

Tithe, whether the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree. So those are just both two things that describe things growing out of the ground. You have the wheat that grows out of the ground, the barley, whatever it is.

You also have vineyards that grow out of the ground. Then you have trees, like fruit trees, right? So, the fruit trees would be included as well. So, these crops that you would have would be part of the tithe.

[ 36 : 13 ] And how would you measure that? Well, I imagine, you know, you might have, you might have baskets maybe. And for every ten baskets, one would be set aside for the tithe. Or maybe you had a way of weighing things.

And so, you'd do the calculations to weigh things. And then you had your livestock, what is called here herds and flocks. And the way that you, that you measured your tithe from the herds and flocks was a little bit different.

Like, if you have a bunch of cows or bulls or oxen or goats or sheep, you know, did you just, like, measure them all or, you know, divide them up into pieces. You have large and small cows and large and small sheep.

And how do you do that? Well, he said, the way that you do it is, he mentions this rod. And what they would do is usually they'd have some kind of pen with a little gate.

So, only one animal could go out at a time. Right? And so, you have all these animals in a gate. And as they go out, let's say it's sheep, right? And the sheep go out. And you count one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and then ten.

[ 37 : 19 ] And that tenth one, that's your tithe right there. And he says right here, he says, don't worry whether it's, you know, like a good sheep or a bad sheep, whether it has blemishes or not, whether it's sickly or healthy, don't worry about it.

Whatever that tenth one is that comes out, basically randomly, that's what you're supposed to give for your tithe. So, I think that guards against what? Giving the Levites your, right, your leftovers, basically.

And so, you can imagine that that might be people's propensity. Well, I'll give, as my tithe to the Levites, I'll give them all my runts, you know, in my livestock.

But another interesting thing about this, what if you're, what if you're poor, you don't have a lot of land, let's say, for whatever reason, and all you have is two milking cows and maybe 25 laying hens, like today, right?

So, somebody, you know, I have friends who have a couple of cows and some laying chickens. So, if you have two milking cows, how many do you give to the Levites?

[ 38 : 30 ] zero. You don't know anything, right? Because you count one, two milking cows, they go under the rod, and you didn't get to a tenth one, so there is no tenth one to provide.

So, in that case, what's your tithe on the cows? Zero. Zero percent. Now, if you've got 25 chickens and they go through the gate and you count them, I'm going to see who's really good at math.

How many chickens do you give for your tithe if you have 25? Two, right? You don't cut one of your chickens in half, right?

Those don't last very long. They didn't have refrigerators back then, so you only gave whole animals to the Levites because they didn't want half animals, they didn't want meat that was going to rot.

They needed to be able to hold on to these things for a while. And so, you just give every tenth. So, if you had 25 chickens, you only give two to the Levites. And let's see, is it in here?

[ 39 : 43 ] He talks about, and he says also, you shall not exchange it. And if he exchanges it all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy or set apart.

So, if you exchange it for something, and that's kind of confusing. I was looking at the commentaries and not a lot of people really have ideas on what that means. But one of the important things to note is tithing is not cash.

It's not silver, it's not gold, it's not shekels. Tithing was only done with livestock and crops. And that's all. So, if you were a servant or you didn't own land, well, let's say you were a Jewish carpenter and that was the way that you made a living.

What was your tithe? How much did you pay? Zero. You paid nothing. Because what the gifts that were given to the Levites were only, basically, the fruit of the land.

There's an interesting note. This is in Matthew chapter 23, verse 23. There's two mentions of the tithe in the New Testament. This is one of them. But, if you're familiar at all with Matthew 23, it's the woes chapter.

[ 40 : 57 ] where Jesus gives lots of woes and most of them are geared towards who? The Pharisees. This is another woe verse. Matthew 23, 23 says this, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone.

There's an interesting passage where Jesus says, hey, some matters of the law are weightier than others. They're more important. He says, you guys focus on the less weighty things, things that are not nearly as important, and you forget the really weighty ones about justice and mercy and faith.

But, he does mention tithing. And does he say, well, you don't have to worry about the tithe. Is that what Jesus said? That's in the Old Testament. Don't worry about that. No, he said, you should do this. You should do it all.

That was what Jesus taught. Now, of course, as we've mentioned before, that was, Jesus was teaching to who? To the Jews under that dispensation of the law.

[ 42 : 12 ] And so, they couldn't just forget about the law and decide that they were going to do whatever they wanted. But isn't this interesting? It doesn't say that these Pharisees were tithing on their silver coins.

What were they tithing on? Herbs. Well, why herbs? Well, because they didn't have, they weren't farmers. Right? And so, if you're a Pharisee, you might live in the city and, you know, you might have a windowsill, right, where you put a little, a little box garden, right, a little box, and you're going to, you're going to grow your mint and your, your other herbs that you can just add to your salad or your dinner or whatever, right?

And these guys were very faithful and they were going to obey the law and so even, everything that comes out of the ground must be tithed to the Levites and so they are going to give even of these little herbs to make sure that they are following the law.

Of course, doing it hypocritically. The last thing to note and we'll kind of go, go a little bit more quickly because of time is, what do you do with this tithe?

I mean, did you just hand it to the nearest Levite neighbor that you have? One of the interesting things about the Levites is they didn't have their own land so where did they live? Well, some of them served in Jerusalem which is where the temple was but they actually had, there were, there were 48 cities specified in the law, 48 cities that were specified as Levitical cities that were specifically intended for the Israelites or the Levites to live among the rest of Israel.

[ 43 : 41 ] Now, it doesn't mean that these cities were dedicated to only Levites. These were just cities of these different tribes but they were specifically designated as places where Levites could live and serve among the rest of Israel and they actually, and we won't look at the passages but there's actually indications about having common land that was available to the Levites to keep their animals and where did they get their animals?

From the tithe. So you'd imagine they get all these animals every year as part of their tithe and they needed some place, you know, stick them in your living room, right? So they needed some place to put the tithe and so these cities were designated with a certain amount of land around the city to store their animals.

In Deuteronomy chapter 12 and this is the last, well this is, I'm not going to make any promises here, I think we have one more passage we'll look at. Deuteronomy chapter 12, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy chapter 12 verse 5 says this, but you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses out of all of your tribes to put his name for his dwelling place and there you shall go.

There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your free will offerings and the firstborn of your herds and flocks and there you shall eat before the Lord your God and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households in which the Lord your God has blessed you.

[ 45 : 20 ] So just to summarize this, he's talking about what do you do with all these gifts? Now the tithe was just one gift out of many. There were other offerings, sacrifices, you had, what does he mention, burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, the heave offerings, vows, vowed offerings, free will offerings, things that weren't required but you could just freely give and then there was the firstborn that were supposed to be taken as well.

And do you just give it to the nearest Levite in your neighborhood? No. Where do you take the tithe? Well, it's interesting, he doesn't really give a name but he says, but you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses out of all of your tribes to put his name for his dwelling place.

You see, this was written at a time where, where was Israel at this time? They were wandering in the wilderness and the temple didn't exist. All they had was a tabernacle and so, this tabernacle was used for worship service but God said, in the future, I'm going to establish a location, a permanent location where worship will be done and will build a permanent structure called the temple.

And I'm going to tell you later where that's going to be, which tribe, which tribe's land it will live in and where did that ultimately end up being? In Jerusalem.

Yeah, among the tribe of Judah. And so, and that, Jerusalem was in Judea and it's called Judea because it's of the tribe of Judah. And so Israel, or excuse me, Jerusalem was the place where the temple was built and where this worship service was to be done.

[ 46 : 55 ] And so, what were you supposed to do with the tithe? You were supposed to take it to Jerusalem and give your tithe there along with your other sacrifices.

Now, there's a lot of debate about a lot of details around this. In fact, there are references in the Old Testament scriptures really about, I would say, four different kinds of tithes.

In fact, some people have said, well, the tithe wasn't actually 10% some people think it was up to 20, 23 and a third percent. So, there was a tithe that you were supposed to give every year to the Levites.

There's mention of also giving a tithe to the poor, a poor tithe. It was made, to be made available to widows and orphans and foreigners, aliens in the land, people who didn't live there.

And, oh, excuse me, and that was, excuse me, that was the, that was the third tithe. So, where does the, where does the three and one third percent come from? Well, there's a scripture where it says every three years you're supposed to give a tithe for the poor.

[ 48 : 09 ] So, every three years, so if you kind of divide the math there on a yearly basis that would be just a third. Others think, well, I think this is all talking about the same tithe, it's the same 10%, it's just kind of given in different ways.

People debate about that. I don't think it's necessarily important for us. But, again, going back to Deuteronomy chapter 12, here's the, one of the important parts.

Deuteronomy chapter 12, verse 12, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and your female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you.

Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see, but in the place which the Lord chooses in one of your tribes. There you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.

Don't just go anywhere, you've got to go to the place that I commanded you. Notice here, who are you bringing with you? You're bringing your sons and your daughters, your male and your female servants, so don't just go by yourself, bring the whole family, bring all your servants with you, and who else?

[ 49 : 18 ] And the Levite who is within your gates, there are Levites that are living among you, bring him as well. And then, what did you notice if you go back to, what is it, verse 11?

Or no, verse 7. And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice. What is that a reference to? You're supposed to have a big feast, and you're actually supposed to eat at least part of your tithe that you're bringing to Jerusalem.

You are supposed to eat it. You're supposed to have a celebration. And you're supposed to include all of your own household, but also your neighbor, the Levite, and have him join you in the feast as well.

So if you read through the Old Testament, you'll see all these different feasts designated, and people would make the trip out to Jerusalem. They would bring their offerings, all their gifts, all their different kinds of gifts, including the tithe.

And one of the things that they would do with their tithe, they'd have a big feast. Have you ever heard a preacher or a pastor teach that you need to make sure that you use part of your tithe to have at least one big feast every year?

[ 50 : 31 ] You ever heard that? I haven't either. One of the other interesting things, and this goes back to, is the tithe of our money.

There's a passage in Deuteronomy chapter 14 where actually this whole idea of some people, they had a lot of stuff, right? So they had a lot of animals, let's say, or crops to carry.

So there's a provision given if you had a lot of stuff and you didn't want to take it all to Jerusalem with you, have this whole big caravan, you could sell your tithe for money, and then it's lighter, right?

You just take money purses. You go to Jerusalem, and then once you give there, you give that money to the Levite. Is that what you do? No. It's so interesting. It says once you get there, then you use that money to buy more flocks and herds and animals and crops, and then you give that as your tithe.

So it was important that it was actually the fruit of the land that was given and not just money. so I'm going to, we'll finish up with this.

[ 51 : 45 ] I found, one of the questions I asked as I was, as putting this message together is, you know, what we read here about tithing and how tithing was supposed to be done in the Old Testament is very different from kind of what you hear about today.

And so I was asking the question to myself, what about Jews today? There are Jews who still, to the extent that they can, try to keep the law. Do Jews today, do they tithe?

And what does that look like for them? Because there is no temple, right? And in fact, who are the Levites today? Does any, nobody really knows what tribe they're from anymore because of, you know, what happened in Jewish history with the dispersion of the Jews and being led captive?

And so here's this interesting story and I'll read this. Let's see. I'm going to start halfway through so this might be a little confusing.

But in regard to this, it may be profitable to relate an event that happened to me over 35 years ago when I was just starting to study theology in college. A letter had been given to me to answer. It was from a woman who heard that modern Jews were not tithing.

[ 53 : 03 ] She wanted to know whether the information was true and if so, why the Jews seemingly violated the plain laws of the Bible which spoke of tithing as a law to be obeyed. Vis-a-vis Malachi, you need to make sure you tithe.

Having read the letter, I began to share her concern. To resolve the matter, I telephoned three rabbis in the Los Angeles area for their explanation. Much to my dismay, all three independently of each other informed me that no religious Jews should tithe today.

I was startled at their replies. This appeared to be evidence that the Jews were so lax with their biblical interpretation that they were abandoning even the simple words of their own scripture about the laws of tithing.

By the time I spoke with the last rabbi, my youthful indignation was beginning to emerge. But that rabbi then wisely began to show me my ignorance, not his, in this whole matter.

First, he admitted that none of his congregation paid one penny of tithe that was demanded in the Old Testament. He then said, if any member of my synagogue paid tithe in the scriptural manner, he would be disobeying the law of God.

[ 54 : 09 ] He would be sinning against God. I was staggered by his answer. He went on to inform me that since the Bible demands that the tithe be paid to Levites, he said it would be wrong to pay it to anyone else.

And further, because there is presently no official Levitical order of priests ministering at a temple in Jerusalem, this makes it illegal at this period to pay any biblical tithe. He went on to say, however, that the moment a temple is rebuilt with its altar in operation and with the priesthood officiating at that altar and the Levites there to assist them, then every Jew who lives in the tithing zones mentioned in the Bible will be required to tithe according to the biblical commands.

Jews today don't even tithe. Jews who are under the law, or at least consider themselves to be, they don't tithe because they can't.

It's impossible for the same reasons that they don't offer sacrifices. Because are you allowed to take a sacrifice and just sacrifice an animal outside your front door? No, that is against the law.

You are not allowed to do that. There's one place you take that sacrifice. It's to the temple, which is not in operation today. So, God gave his law and it's very detailed and you don't stray from it.

[ 55 : 34 ] You don't decide, well, God said to do it this way, but I'm going to do it my own way. He said to tithe this, but I'm actually going to tithe from my salary. Or he said to tithe to the Levites, but I'm just going to tithe to my local church or something like that.

Is that appropriate? No, we should never do that with God's law. But ultimately, this comes down to, well, what about us? Are we under the law?

Is the law something that we need to be looking to try to figure out how we're going to fulfill this law of Moses, this Mosaic law? Absolutely not.

We're going to end with this verse. And from Galatians, Galatians chapter 3, verse 10 through 14, Paul gets really heated about people putting themselves under the law.

Specifically with the Galatians, it was this concept of circumcision, that they need to be circumcised in order to be pleasing to God. But he says this in chapter 3, Galatians 3, verse 10.

[ 56 : 34 ] For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. As it is written, cursed is everyone who does not continue and all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them. And isn't that what Malachi said?

You've robbed me. You're not paying your tithes so you're under a curse. That was the law. That's what the law teaches. If you don't keep it, you're under a curse. Now there's also the blessings and those look really tempting.

Man, if I do all these things, I'll get really blessed. And so we might be tempted to do the same thing. Man, if we can try to keep all these things, we'll be really blessed.

But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident. For the just shall live by faith. Yet the law is not of faith, but the man who does them shall live by them.

Under the law, your life was in keeping the law. Not by just believing. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. Having become a curse for us.

[ 57 : 36 ] For it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

God has given us such a great deal. Right? Just trust in Him and we receive all the spiritual blessings in heavenly places it says in Ephesians. All of them. We don't have to do anything.

We don't have to try to keep this law. And isn't it kind of ironic that those who are trying to keep the law by tithing to their church are actually breaking the law by doing it?

Because you're not allowed to just give to anyone. You have to give to the Levites. You have to give in a specific manner. So those who are trying so hard to keep the law to please God through these things are actually failing in every way.

And so we should just give up, right? Give up trying to keep this law. Trying to obey all these commandments that were given to the Jews not to us anyway.

[ 58 : 40 ] And just rest in the righteousness that we've received through Christ. So all that to say well then what? Does that mean that we as Christians should don't have any way of giving?

We don't know I mean we don't know what amount or prescription of who exactly to give it to so I guess we just don't give anything. well that's a message for next week.

So we'll end there and I'll go ahead and take any comments or questions if there are any. any raised hands?

Anybody interested in asking a question or giving a comment? All right Scott you see him Isabella? Yeah there he is. I guess my my only comment is Sheila and I went to see Jesus Revolution.

Oh did you? Yeah and it is really good we both enjoyed it I didn't know how many others in the church had seen it but I would recommend it. Okay. Anybody else seen it? Okay.

[ 59 : 55 ] I'd like to we'll see if I can make it happen. So but I would I would recommend it looks like a neat movie. Okay. Anybody else?

Comments? Questions? I always I always add debates. No. Yes. Polly. We have a friend Ruthie that lives in Israel.

Yeah. And she claims that she's from the tribe of Judah. Okay. And she's living in the hills of Judea and she said she has a teaching heart and she says that some do know the tribes they're from and they're often the Levitical tribe because of that priestly duty they pass that down orally.

Okay. Well yeah there's there's debate about that. In fact I think people have tried to do like DNA type things to try to figure figure these things out but like was mentioned in this article in the future in fact one of the things I didn't mention was there are actually two times where the whole temple service was restored.

One time was during the time of Hezekiah King Hezekiah he restored temple worship and as part of that restored the practice of tithing because if you're going to have a temple you got to pay for it right?

[ 61 : 19 ] So along with restoring the temple and renewing it and cleaning it up it was just it became a garbage heap during the time before him and so he cleaned it up and restored the worship service and as part of that needed to fund it so restored the practice of tithing and then again later on after the temple was destroyed and then it was rebuilt during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah again they rebuilt the temple and restored the practice of tithing then.

In the future and this is a little bit about eschatology the temple is going to be rebuilt again and they're going to have to provide for it and they're going to have to do it the biblical way and so they're going to have to know who the Levites are because the Levites are going to be the ones they're the ones prescribed to serve in that temple and so there's going to have to be some way to figure out who those Levites are so they can receive the tithe and they can serve in the service of the temple.

Anything else? Alright Lynette? Do you think that some people like the Greeks they call their church a temple? Do you think that people today feel that they should give to their church because their church is considered their temple and it doesn't have to be I mean they probably don't even know about the Levites and all that but You're talking about Christian churches?

Yeah Christian churches. Yeah like there's Baptist temple out in Dayton and things like that. that they would consider that you know well everybody didn't just give to the one temple there. In fact this whole kind of thread of kind of taking the nation of Israel and kind of merging it in with our modern day church people say oh this is the house of God right?

This is not the house of God this is just a building. The Holy Spirit does not rest on this building like he did the temple or the tabernacle. Where does the Holy Spirit rest?

[ 63 : 13 ] In us. In us. So when we come together the Holy Spirit is here of course he's with us wherever we go. So there's lots of things like that that I think the church tends to kind of meld together and so yes the church is the house of God it's where we go to worship because you were only supposed to worship in Israel you couldn't just worship anywhere.

Remember Jesus met the Samaritan woman and she says well we like to worship here in Samaria but you guys worship over there in Jerusalem who's right? Well the Bible actually spoke to that.

You're supposed to worship in Jerusalem. You know if we're trying to keep the law we can't worship here. They built synagogues where they would pray and maybe have teaching but they didn't call it worship and they had synagogues.

So anyway I think like you said Lynette people kind of use similar language and so I think it causes some merging of things that shouldn't be merged.

All right one more. We'll stop with this last one. Up here darling. It's your grandma. Run run run run run as fast as you can. I was wondering what you believe as far as supporting the church you're going to.

[ 64 : 34 ] We snowbird and we go to a church different church in the winter and then do you give to the church that you're at physically or do you give to the church that you're a member of?

So what is your take on on how do you decide that and is that a different type of giving than supporting your local church? I would never call that tithing.

I wouldn't call anything tithing just to avoid confusion right. Sometimes I know what people mean. They don't mean tithing but they use the word. I try to avoid it to make sure there's not a mixture there. I think that is a matter of wisdom and it's a matter of wisdom that's going to be different for everybody.



How much you give, whether you give 50% do you only give to one church while you're there and stop giving to the one where you're not or do you continue to give part to them or do you just not give at all?

I think that's totally up to your wisdom and your heart. And that's a lot of what, I mean, I don't know that we'll specifically get into that detail but next week we're going to talk more about how do we give as Christians?

[ 65 : 42 ] What do we do? Do we do math equations and try to figure out who we give to or is it more of a really where our heart's at and using wisdom?

So I hope that helps a little bit. Okay, yes, Caleb? Do you have one more? Okay, one more. Daddy's, his stomach is starting to grumble so he's going to wrap it up.

For the fair? Yeah. How long is each time slot? Oh, okay, good question. So that's a great way to end the service. Sign up for the fair if you'd like to and you're signing up for like a three or four hour shift, something like that.

And just put on there how many shifts you might be able to do whether it's all in a row or over the week's time and that'll help us to figure out how many people we have. Let's end in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you so much for your word. Help us to grow each and every day, Father. Father, like we talked about revival today to, Father, revive our own hearts. We want to be excited each and every day about what you have for us.

[ 66 : 50 ] And sometimes just the things of life cause us to, for that excitement to kind of grow dim. We ask you to revive our hearts even today that we would sing to you, that we would love you, that we would talk to you and tell you how much we love you each and every day.

In Jesus' name, amen.