

~ God's Method for Supporting Missions Work ~

Text: Deuteronomy 12:11

Theme: God's work is to be supported by the giving of God's people.

Intro:

1. In light of the fact that today is our Focus on Missions Sunday, we will be looking at the need to support missions work both locally and abroad.
2. This morning we will be considering God's method for supporting missions work and tonight we will look at God's method for carrying out missions' work.

Main:

I. The Precedent for Tithing (Gen 14:11-20)

There are those who say that tithing was something that was ordered under the Old Testament law but is not necessary for Christians today.

A. Tithing preceded the Mosaic Law

1. Abraham tithed before the Law was given (Gen 14:18-20)
 - a. The occasion for the tithe
 - i. Genesis chapter 14 records the occasion when five kings attacked Sodom and its sister cities, and Lot was taken prisoner out of Sodom.
 - **Gen 14:11-12** *"And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed."*
 - ii. When Abraham heard about this, he took his 318 servants and went to rescue Lot. He attacked the enemy at night, taking them by surprise, and rescued Lot along with all the goods that had been stolen out of Sodom.
 - **Gen 14:16** *"And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people."*
 - b. The worship in the tithe
 - i. Abraham gave tithes of all everything to the king of Salem.
 - **Gen 14:18-20** *"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of*

heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all."

- Abraham gave tithes of all that he had to Melchizedek, because he was the priest of the most High God who had delivered his enemies into his hand.
- This was very clearly an act of worship.
- ii. Abraham returned all the earthly good to the king of Sodom.
 - **Gen 14:21** *"And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:"*
 - Abraham's refusal to take any of the spoils of battle was also an act of worship in recognition that God had delivered the enemy into his hand and that he was not entitled to the spoils since they really belonged to God.
- 2. Jacob tithed before the Law was given (Gen 28:20-22)
 - a. Genesis 28 records Jacob's encounter with God at Bethel, while he was on the run from Esau.
 - i. Once again, we find a man of God committing to tithe out of recognition for the fact that God had given him everything he had in the first place.
 - **Gen 28:20-22** *"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."*
 - Once again, before the giving of the O.T. Law we find mention of God's people giving back to him a portion of what he had bestowed upon them in material wealth.
 - In Jacobs case, this giving is closely tied to the place of Bethel becoming the house of God.

B. Tithing continued in the New Testament

1. The endorsement of the Lord Jesus (Mathew 23:23)
 - a. The Lord Jesus endorsed the giving of tithes in his challenge to the religious leaders in Mathew 23.
 - i. Mathew chapter 23 records the strongest rebuke of false, empty, and hypocritical religion in the Bible. It comes directly from the Lord Jesus and was spoken against the most outwardly religious people of his day.
 - **Mat 23:23** *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”*
 - ii. Before you say, “Ah hah! The religious leaders WERE tithing and the Lord Jesus was rebuking them for it!”
 - No! The Lord Jesus was rebuking them for being so careful about their tithing while ignoring the principles of judgement, mercy, and faith.
 - In fact, at the very end of the verse he states that they ought to have upheld these principles and then not left the tithing undone either. In other words, he said do both. Get your heart right first, and then bring your tithe.
2. The confirmation of the Apostle Paul (I Cor 16:2)
 - a. The giving spirit of the local N.T. churches
 - i. Firstly, it is important to note that the New Testament does not give a specific amount that a person must give in order to be obedient to scripture, however, the principle of the tithe was still practiced in the New Testament.
 - **2 Cor 9:7** *“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”*
 - Every man was to purpose in his heart what the Lord would have him to give, but his mind set was to be one of cheerful giving, not grudgingly.
 - ii. The giving was to be done in proportion to the blessing God bestowed upon the individual, much like the tithe. This is a major part of the reason we tend to emphasise the tithe today.
 - **1 Cor 16:2** *“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”*
 - As God prospers us financially, we ought to give accordingly.

II. The Practice of Tithing (Gen 28:20-22 | Prov 3:9)

A. What is a tithe? (Gen 28:20-22)

1. The first mention of tithing in the Bible is Genesis 14:20.
 - a. The Law of first mention tells us that the first time something appears in scripture is usually the time it is best explained or understood.
 - i. When Genesis 14:20 says Abraham gave “tithes” that is from the Hebrew word ‘*áśâr* (*aw-sawr*)’ which means “tenth; or a tenth part.” Today we understand a tithe to be 10% of the whole.
 - ii. When someone gives a tithe of their income to God, they give 10% of their total income.
 - b. Tithing is also seen as a fulfillment of the command in Proverbs to honour God with the first fruits of our increase.
 - i. **Pro 3:9** *“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”*
 - ii. The principle of firstfruits is also the reason why we encourage people to tithe on their total income before the government takes their portion. Who gets the firstfruits of your income, God or the government?

B. How should we tithe?

1. Cheerfully (2 Cor 9:7)
 - a. The Christian who is giving to the work of God should not be doing so grudgingly but cheerfully.
 - i. It is interesting to me that we live in such a wealthy and affluent society in which the average person today is far wealthier than their counterparts were 100-200 years ago and yet God’s people have probably never been more reluctant to give and to talk about giving than they are today.
 - ii. There are some churches where the preacher can’t talk about giving because it upsets too many people and it threatens to split the church, so they just don’t talk about it.
 - That sort of attitude reveals a wrong mentality toward money. Our mentality ought to be that all our possessions belong to God and we are stewards of his wealth. When we see ourselves as stewards of God’s wealth there is less temptation to see it as a personal loss when we give out of that wealth.

- By the way, even our children belong to God. They are lent to us for a time so that we can train them in the way that they should go, but our goal is supposed to be to prepare them to stand on their own two feet so that one day God can take them and use them in his work. They are a heritage from the Lord and the fruit of the womb is his delight. They don't belong to us.
 - iii. So, we ought to be able to give cheerfully out of the possessions that God has made us the stewards of.
2. Purposefully
- a. The giving of God's people ought to go to the work of God, not to the local Salvo's.
 - i. I understand the feeling of wanting to help the poor and needy, and those things are good to do, but our gifts to God are to be brought into the house of God and used in the work of God, not given to a charity that will feed peoples bellies but never seek to save their souls.
 - ii. As a church, we don't believe in parachurch organizations that are not under the leadership and governance of a local church.
 - I encountered one such organisation when I was in Adelaide and they had this outreach program going on but the problem was that, even among the small group that was there, they couldn't agree on some pretty fundamental things. This is the biggest problem with parachurch organisations is that they are not being governed by a local church and so they end up cooperating with all sorts of people with all sorts of ideas because there is no authority structure to guard against that and they don't have a solid statement of faith by which to test and instruct prospective members, and they end up turning into ecumenical groups, which are a mixed bag of all kinds of false teaching.
 - b. The biblical method for the Christian is to find a local church that they agree with in matters of faith and practice, seek to become a member of that local church, and then support that local church through the giving of both your time and your money.
- C. Why should we tithe?
- 1. To support the local church
 - a. Local mission
 - i. The monetary gifts of God's people are the method God has ordained for supporting the local work of the gospel.

- **Malachi 3:10** *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”*
- If God’s people don’t give to God’s work, who will? How will the work go forward without the financial support that is necessary?
- ii. The local church needs funds in order to continue to exist and proclaim the gospel.
 - The hire of the Gumblossom Hall requires money.
 - The running costs of the church from insurance, to purchasing a piano and hymnals, and even milk for morning tea all cost money.
 - Gospel tracts for the work of proclaiming the gospel must be purchased.
- b. Local pastor
 - i. The local church needs to have a pastor and, if that pastor is going to give himself to the work of the ministry, the church will need fund to support the pastor.
 - **1Timothy 5:17-18** *“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.”*
 - The Apostle Paul said that the elders / pastors who laboured in the word and doctrine are labourers worthy of their hire. It is appropriate for the local church to financially support the pastor who is seeking to faithfully minister the Word of God to them.
- 2. To support missions abroad
 - a. This is where the rubber meets the road for our Focus on missions Sunday.
 - i. The tithes and offerings of God’s people are the way we help to support missionaries as a local church.
 - Without monetary support from local churches like ours, the Herringsons, the Otuteis and the Harrises would not be able to effectively do the work of spreading the gospel in their local area of the harvest field.

- The Biblical pattern for missions' work is for missionaries to be trained by local churches, sent out by local churches, and supported by local churches.
- ii. This church recently voted to tithe out of the church's increase toward missions.
 - That means we now put 10% of all tithes toward the missions' fund which is used exclusively for the support of our missionaries.
 - So, as you give of your tithes to the local church, the local church then tithes to the broader work of the gospel around the world.

III. The Offering Beyond Tithing (Vs)

A. Love gifts to speakers / missionaries (Phil 4:14-17)

1. The Bible speaks of tithes AND offerings which are gifts that are given in addition to the tithing of God's people.
 - a. The tithe of God's people is not the only way in which we can worship God through giving.
 - i. Many Christians view the tithe as their minimal giving and offerings as anything that goes beyond the tithe.
 - ii. The point is that, freewill offerings were given by God's people to support specific parts of the work of God.
 - For example, when we have guest speakers come and preach for us, we often put the little wooden offering box up the front of the church for those who wish to give an offering to the guest.
 - We have the opportunity to give extra love offerings to our missionaries and that is something you can do at anytime by putting money in an envelope or small plastic bag and writing the missionaries name on it. The treasurer will take note of that when the offering is collected and will ensure those funds go to the missionary specified.
 - iii. Again, these freewill offerings are not given as part of your general tithe, but are given to help specific areas of God's work.

B. Faith promise missions

1. Faith promise missions is a specific and organised way in which we can give offerings to God above and beyond our regular tithing to support the local work.
 - a. The Faith Promise Missions is where we, as individuals, commit to give a certain amount per month above our usual tithe.

- i. For example: If I was earning \$100,000 a year, I would tithe 10% of that which is \$10,000. And then I might decide to commit to give another \$100 a month to faith promise missions as a way to directly support the missionaries this church has taken on.
 - The \$100 a month is given on top of my tithe and does not replace the tithe which I give to support my local church.
 - The idea is that you take a step of faith to give above and beyond your tithe, trusting that God will take care of your needs.
- b. Next week, we will be renewing our faith promise giving.
 - i. I will explain more about it next week but it is something that is between you and the Lord.
 - There is no obligation for you to give to faith promise missions. You will remain anonymous whether you choose to give or not.
 - If you haven't begun to tithe out of the increase God gives you, then that is the place to start. Faith Promise Missions is something further that we do because we want the work of missions to go forward.
 - ii. Please take the time this week to pray on the matter and see if God would have you to commit to Faith Promise Missions and how much God would have you to give on a monthly basis.
 - Even if it's just \$10 a month, it all goes to supporting our missionaries. Not a single dollar of the missions fund is spent on our church, it all goes to the missionaries, so that is one way you can ensure that you are investing in God's work around the country and around the world.

Conclusion:

1. It is important to remember that we are stewards of what God has given us. Everything belongs to God but he has given us possessions which we are to use for his glory.

Psalms 24:1 A Psalm of David. *"The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."*

2. The Lord loves a cheerful giver.