

## HONORING GOD WITH OUR SUBSTANCE

**Text: Proverbs 3:9-10** 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.

The book of Proverbs is about wise living. Written by the inspiration of God and penned by the wisest man to ever live outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word “honor” as a verb means to show great respect and admiration for someone or something, to fulfill a promise or agreement, or to accept and pay a bill or a debt. There are different ways we can and should honor God... with our time, with our talents and with our treasure. Here the verse says to honor God with our substance. Substance means our possessions and our living. Does God need our money? No, He doesn’t “need” anything, but we should honor God with our substance because everything we have is directly due to Him.

There seems to be two different approaches to this subject by churches. On one hand you can go to churches where giving is so prevalently spoken of that it feels like you’ve fallen among thieves. On the other hand, you can go to churches where they apologize for ever bringing it up. Today’s message will not be an attempt to manipulate you by any means, just an honest look at the word of God. Let’s talk about tithing...the word “tithe” means a tenth of a whole.

Tithing is word that makes people uncomfortable. This subject is charged because of the many who say, “all churches care about is your money” and certainly there are counterfeit ministries and wolves in sheep’s clothing fleecing people. But I want to say right up front that tithing isn’t about money, it’s about trust. It’s not about law, it’s about Lordship. It’s not about funding a building or keeping lights on in a sanctuary. It’s about a spiritual principle that goes far deeper than your bank account. It’s a matter of the heart and a test of trust. It’s about stewardship which is how well we manage the blessings of God for His glory. It’s a declaration of who is really in charge and when you tithe you are making a bold statement...you are saying God you are first!

All through scripture God claims what is first. **Exodus 13:1-2** And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and of beast: it is mine. This means that the first born among women or cattle was set apart for God and His purposes. Many people miss why Achan was destroyed in Joshua 7 because he took of the accursed thing. Before the conquest of Jericho, the Lord specifically said not to take anything in the city to themselves

because it was consecrated unto the Lord. All the silver and gold, brass and iron vessels were taken into the treasury of the Lord. Why? Because it was first...Jericho was the first city given into their hands after they crossed the Jordan. Achan took a Babylonish garment, 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold that weighed 50 shekels. God was angry because the city and everything in it was His, so Achan stole from God. The people stoned him and his family with stones and burned them with fire...why? Because what's first belongs to God. **Exodus 23:19** The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God.

It is true that under the law, tithing was a requirement. It served three purposes – it took care of the priests who did the service of God because they didn't have time to farm a land. It was done in appreciation for what God had provided, and a feast of celebration was held. It was done to have food to give to orphans, widows and strangers. They were to bring their tithes to the temple. God called it His storehouse, and they were to see that there were provisions in it so that the temple could be a place of blessing to society. We can glean two great truths from this even now...we honor the Lord with our substance to provide for the work of the kingdom and so that we have ability to help people in need.

#### **What tithing is really about:**

- **Lordship - Matthew 6:33** But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. When I was a boy, I used to hear people say in church that they wanted to keep God first in their lives. That is both admirable and biblical. This verse says that if we pursue the kingdom of God first and His righteousness, that all things would be added to us. What are the "all things" he means? **Matthew 6:31-32** Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. When we tithe what God gives us back to Him, we are saying we recognize that you gave us 100% and we honor you with the first 10%. The promise of this scripture is that you will have all that you need, if God is first.
- **Recognizing God as your source** - Source means anything or place from which something comes, arises, or is obtained. The beginning or place of origin – the Lord calls himself the fountain of living waters. When you see a fire hydrant on the corner of a street, it's pretty insignificant looking, but when the fire department takes the cap off and connects the hose up and turns the internal water valve on...an amazing amount of water comes out. Why? Because even though the hydrant is little and insignificant, it is hooked up to an inexhaustible amount of water. Listen to what Jacob said after God appeared to him in a dream at Bethel **Genesis 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. Jacob vowed this because he was recognizing God as his source. He was saying all that I eat, all that I wear, all that I grow and all that I gain is because of the LORD. I'd like to point out that he did this without a commandment and hundreds of years before the law existed.

- **Trust** – In our relationship with God, trust is a big deal. We are told repeatedly to trust in the Lord with all our hearts. God wants us to trust Him and take Him at His word. But God also wants to trust you, and the way He does that is by giving you a little to see if you will be faithful enough to handle much. **Luke 16:10** He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. Jerry Clower is in heaven today but when he was here, he was famous for being a Christian entertainer – a comedian. I loved listening to him because he was funny, and he loved the Lord. He was a deacon in his church and was what he called “a storehouse tither”. One day while he was on a talk show, a lady called in to the show and said, “Mr. Clower I’ve read your book, and you say you’re a faithful tither to your church.” He said, “Yes ma’am that’s true”. She said, “If I made as much money as you, I could afford to tithe to”. He said “Let me tell you something lady, I was tithing my income when I was a fertilizer salesman and owed everybody in Mississippi. If I had missed one payday I would have had to go to the penitentiary. But I tithed my income when I was a fertilizer salesman and God found me faithful when I had a little and now, He’s trusting me with a bunch”. If God can’t trust you with a little, He’ll never trust you with a bunch.

### **The blessings of tithing:**

- **Provision - 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.* All of God’s promises are true, but on this one He urges us to try Him. When we put God first with our substance, He promises to pour an overflow of blessing. That’s what He means by not having room to receive it. Dr Kidd has been a faithful tither of all his income, businesses, and everything he sells like cd’s dvd’s, books etc. When he began his tv ministry, he told the Lord he would do it but he wouldn’t beg for money to fund it or hound people to help. People he hasn’t ever met before have mailed him checks to support the tv ministry. One man sent him a check for \$20,000 dollars because he said God spoke to him about it in

his prayer closet. Dr Kidd was signing a deal to connect with a satellite in Florida to broadcast over South America. The satellite site reaches over 400 million people. Every broadcast costs \$6,200 dollars...the day he went to sign the contract, a man walked in he'd never seen and said "Hey, aren't you that preacher I see on tv? I like your preaching man. That's the kind of preaching I heard when I was a boy. How much are your broadcasts going to cost?" Dr Kidd told him \$6,200 per broadcast... the man told him not to worry about paying for it...he would take care of them!

- **Protection - Malachi 3:11** And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. If we honor God with our substance, then He has promised to divinely protect it. The devourer refers to forces both natural and spiritual that cause destruction, loss, and resource depletion. God said He would rebuke the devourer for our sakes if we're faithful to tithe. God dealt with me for awhile over this issue and it was hard to submit to it because I was afraid. But about a year after obeying God, I was working one day, and the Spirit spoke to me inwardly and said, "There will be a strike this year but do not be afraid for I will take care of you". A few months later we did go on strike for 40 days and during that time God brought amazing provisions to us. We got statements about utilities that said we didn't owe anything because they found they owed us credit for some reason or another. We got checks in the mail from random places. Tina was working at Walnut Commons at the time, and they were about to be fined because of a city decorative drainage ditch that hadn't been taken care of. Her company was about to pay a landscaper \$2,000 to clean it up. I jokingly said that I would do it for \$1,500 and they hired me to clean it up. God rebuked the devourer for us and I enjoyed those 40 days so much, that I was a little sad when the strike ended.

### **Isn't tithing just an Old Testament law?**

It's certainly true, as I mentioned earlier, that tithing was a requirement under the law. But what about Jacob promising to give God a tenth of everything he had when there was no law requiring him to or a priesthood or a church to support. It's also true that you can't find it in any of the New Testament epistles. Paul did write this in **2 Corinthians 9:6-8** But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so *let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work: *The truth is under grace we shouldn't need a law to require us to honor God with our substance or be generous seeing that He has blessed us beyond anything we deserve. If you are going to give with the wrong attitude, then just keep it...God doesn't want*

*it that way.* As I said earlier in this message, when God began leading me to start tithing, I made every excuse not to...I can't afford it (at that time we had 4 kids at home) and my number one excuse was that's under the law and we're not under the law. That doesn't apply to me. Then I came across this scripture **Hebrews 7:1-8** For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

Melchisedec is an Old Testament type of Jesus Christ because he was both a king and a priest. In scripture he is eternal because he has no written beginning or ending. When Abraham met him returning from a victorious battle, he set forth wine and bread (communion) and Abraham recognized that this man was worthy of honor, so he gave him a tithe of everything – he honored him with his substance. If Abraham gave a tenth of everything to an Old Testament type of Christ without a law demanding him to, then why shouldn't I give a tenth of all my substance to the real Christ because the last verse says that men here that die received tithes, but there (heaven) he receives them.

Does it mean that you're not saved if you don't tithe? Absolutely not! Does it mean that God will love you less if you don't tithe? Again, no. It does, however, mean that you can't call Him Lord over this portion of your life. It's still under your control, but if you submit to His Lordship and make Him first in your finances then you get the promises of the scriptures. **Proverbs 3:9-10** 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.