

## **The Impact of Tithing**

Good morning. We'd like to welcome all of our online members and those that are joining us from around the world to another Sabbath School Study Hour. We'd also like to welcome our visitors and our members right here at the Granite Bay Seventh-day Adventist Church. Now this quarter, we have been studying the biblical topic of stewardship. And today's lesson is lesson number eight entitled The Impact of Tithing, The Impact of Tithing. And with that, we also have our free offer that goes right along with this lesson entitled Thieves in the Church.

Now to receive this free offer, all you need to do is call our resource line at 1866-788-3966, ask for offer number 136 entitled Thieves in the Church. Now for those of you that are outside the United States, you can actually go to [AmazingFacts.org](http://AmazingFacts.org) and you can download this free offer right at [AmazingFacts.org](http://AmazingFacts.org). For those of you that don't have the lesson, you can also go to [AmazingFacts.org](http://AmazingFacts.org) and download lesson number eight and join in our study.

Sing the wondrous love of Jesus  
Sing His mercy and His grace  
In the mansions bright and blessed  
He'll prepare for us a place

When we all get to heaven  
What a day of rejoicing that will be  
When we all see Jesus  
We'll sing and shout the victory

While we walk the pilgrim pathway  
Clouds will overspread the sky  
But when traveling days are over  
Not a shadow, not a sigh

When we all get to heaven  
What a day of rejoicing that will be  
When we all see Jesus  
We'll sing and shout the victory

Let us then be true and faithful  
Trusting, serving every day  
Just one glimpse of Him in glory

Will the toils of life repay

When we all get to heaven  
What a day of rejoicing that will be  
When we all see Jesus  
We'll sing and shout the victory

Onward to the prize before us  
Soon His beauty we'll behold  
Soon the pearly gates will open  
We shall tread the streets of gold

When we all get to heaven  
What a day of rejoicing that will be  
When we all see Jesus  
We'll sing and shout the victory

Father in heaven, we thank You so much that we can sing praises to You as it warms our hearts as they began to open as we prepare them to receive Your Word. Bless Pastor Doug in a special way as he brings the Word to us as we study, truly may You be glorified in all things. We thank You and we praise You in the precious and holy name of Jesus we pray, amen. Our lesson today is brought to us by Pastor Doug.

Today, we are on lesson number eight in the study on stewardship. And in particular, we're talking about The Impact of Tithing. Now we started doing something a few weeks ago, we're going to continue that tradition. And that is that right now at the beginning of the lesson, some of you who are watching online, if you say, "You know, we got questions about that subject," and we're going to do our best to answer as many as we can. They'll be coming in to the third quarter so to speak of the lesson is chance for our people in the studio.

Read your questions online, I'll write them down, they'll put them up on the screen for me. And so send in your questions about the subject of the impact of tithing. And this is lesson eight in our quarterly. Stewardship's a very important study because really in life, so much has to do with what you do with the time you have and what you do with the means you have and the influence. And so this is going to be dealing with that subject in the very direct way. And we have a memory verse. Memory verse is from 1 Corinthians 9:13 and 14. Two verses there, if you'd say it with me, that'd be great. 1 Corinthians 9:13 and 14, and are you ready? "Do

you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel."

Now it's interesting when Pastor Ross and I do Bible questions on Sunday night, one of the most common questions we get is regarding tithing. They say, "Is the tithing principle or the teachings about tithing, do they apply to New Testament Christians?" And this is not a question of, you know, what the Seventh-day Adventist believe, what do other Christians believe, other Christians are divided all across the board on this.

You've probably heard it before if you've ever scanned through other religious programming, you've probably heard some preachers talking about the importance of paying tithe. And then you've heard others say, "We're not under the law anymore, we don't need to do that anymore." And I always think that's a very interesting discussion. But the practicality of it is that if you want people to be fully dedicated to the work of ministry and to preaching the gospel, it is not a part-time job.

My father used to tease me and he'd say, "Ah, Doug, well, you only have to work once a week. I got to work six days a **week.**" And so you're a pastor, you just get up and preach a sermon and you get to goof off all week long. But if you know and, you know, I got to say there are probably some pastors who do that. I know one of them, but I have met pastors that Friday night or Saturday night, they get online and look at sermon central and download a sermon, they preach it and the rest of the week you can find them, they'll be on the golf course or they'd be taking care of the kids so the wife could work, whatever they're doing. But I couldn't do that, my conscience would bother me too much and there's just so much to do. Ministry is a whole lot more than pastoring.

People need counseling, there's the hospital visits, there is time that goes into study and sermon preparation. All kinds of church functions, it's usually board meetings and there's just lots of activity. And I remember when, you know, I became a lay pastor before I was a regular pastor, so I was a self-supporting pastor. And I remember what it's like to, you know, work all week long here in a logging company and you're working... I was particular in the shop working on the trucks or did mechanic work, you're doing carpentry work, and then you're trying to also have your prayer meetings and get your studies ready for your church and sending out the fliers and doing the bullet, you know, one man pastor kind of does

everything, and it could be exhausting. And I've got friends that were pastors of... very hard working pastor of a Baptist church, worked as a welder all week long, and then during the week, as soon as he get home, you know, eats some food, then he goes off to prayer meeting, he goes off to board meetings, and have to study and wake up real early so he could not only get ready for work but then he'd have to be able to teach, study the teachers, Sunday school classes and then preach a sermon, and just working themselves to death.

What happens is something starts to suffer. A family starts to suffer, the job you're trying to maintain starts to suffer, or your ministry starts to suffer. This happened in the days of Israel. God designed, remember, I've told you this earlier, there is a trick question, how many tribes are there? Jacob had 12 sons, 1 daughter, but technically there's 13 tribes because Jacob told Joseph because your brother sold you and your young sons were separated from me, I'm going to give each of them an inheritance, their names were Ephraim and Manasseh just as though they were a tribe.

Well, doesn't that have to 13, yes, but it sort of went back to 12 because God said, "I will give an inheritance to the 12 tribes," but the sons of Levi, they don't get any one corner of the land, they are going to be dispersed through the land, and they are the ministers and everybody was to bring tithe into the storehouse and it would be distributed to the Levites so that they could be the ministers of the people. And there's a lot of ministry. They're teaching the Word of God and they were... The Levites were the doctors. That's right. You know, where the word parson comes from?

What do you sometimes call a pastor? Parson, he's called bishop, he's called pastor. But the word parson comes from... in the early English days, the pastor was the person of the community because not only did they look to him to help mitigate civil issues, they looked to him as the doctor in the community, and then they looked to him for as the spiritual leader, so they called them the parson. He was sort of **everything**. But the Levite was like that. Where did they go for judgment? They take things to the priests. They were sort of the Supreme Court and those things were delegated down.

Remember, during the time of Moses, what tribe was he from? Levite. And Aaron. And so they became... and when you had something if you were unclean and you needed to be declared cleansed, you'd go to the priests, the priests were like the medical office. And they didn't just declare people clean and unclean, they also would help administer medical care. And then there was the... there were the

religious leaders. It was a very important position and it was meant to be a fulltime position. And so they did not get the benefit of the inheritance that everybody else got, but everybody was to be paying a tithe. Now the Levites also paid the tithe and their tithe went to the sons of Aaron, to the High Priest and thing that comes out later in our study today.

All right, 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you unless indeed you are disqualified?" I think King James is reprobate. So it's a good idea sometimes to just evaluate, take inventory, and say, "Are we being faithful?" The idea that God doesn't care anymore if we pay a specific tithe, my question would be is giving in New Testament times, would it be better, more, or less than Old Testament times if you're going to make a comparison. When you read Hebrews, does it say that Jesus had an equal sacrifice as Moses or better? Is it an equal covenant or a better covenant? And so for New Testament Christians, should it be the same as tithe or if anything more?

So for those who are saying, "Oh, we don't need to pay tithe 'cause we're into the New Testament." Usually, they don't want to pay 10%. But really if you're going to be a New Testament Christian, you're getting yourself into a bigger problem. But the idea that now we're New Testament Christians and so we just give from love, we get from the heart. And my question would be, okay, well, how much is heart giving? Is there a percentage for heart giving or is it just whatever you feel? That's sort of a cop out. When they say, "Oh, I just give from my heart." When I said, "Do you know what your paycheck is?" "I just go with my heart, I don't look at it. I don't care, just whatever God gives me is okay."

No, you do, you know what it is. And if there's \$10 missing, you know why it's missing. And so all of a sudden, we become very spiritual when God mentions a percentage 'cause we don't want to be locked in. But if you want to go with a percentage, let's look at the New Testament giving. Turn with me in your Bibles the Acts 4: 32. God pours out the Holy Spirit. You're obviously now living in New Testament times, New Covenant times. Listen to how they gave. "Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul."

Neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common." Boy, that almost sounds like communism. And by the way, do you know one of the first socialistic countries was United States. The pilgrims tried to have this kind of government when they landed and they nearly starved to death because nobody wants to work in everybody's garden. People want

to work in their own garden. It's true, a lot of them died the first winter. And so they didn't do that for very long. But when the Holy Spirit was poured out, it's basically saying that everybody was freely giving, it wasn't required, it was offered, that's the difference.

When the government tells you, "We own everything." It's different than when you willingly choose to. No man said that all they had was his own what they had all things in common, "And with great power, the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on them all. Nor was there any among them who lacked," wouldn't that be nice if all the missionaries, and all the pastors, and all the evangelists, and all the teachers had all they needed to do all the ministry? Wouldn't that be wonderful? But, you know, the fact is today, in some countries including North America, some schools are closing, churches are closing, I see it.

Just in the conference where I happen to work where I've been for nearly 35 years now, I know there are pastors that used to have... one church used to have around two or three pastors, now there's one pastor and some churches have their own pastor, now they got to share a pastor, it's like there's a downsizing that's happening. And you wonder is it because people got poorer in the last 40 years. Some of it is financial, some of it are other issues, but that's a concerning trend. Listen, it says, "Nor was there anyone among them who lacked," I still in Acts 4, "for those who were possessors of houses and lands sold them, and they brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and they laid them at the apostles' feet, and they distributed to each one as they had need."

Well, here's a principle. They brought it to a common place where it was distributed according to the need. So we're going to get into a study later about what's the storehouse, and that's one of the tips right there that's going to help us understand that. Then it goes on and it says here, I'm still in chapter 4 of Acts, verse 35. "Laid it at the apostles' feet, it was distributed to anyone who had need. And Joses, whose name was Barnabas by the apostles translated Son of Encouragement, a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet."

So it introduces Barnabas in the act of his great benevolence that you see here. All right, well, we're going to talk now in the first section here about the idea of tithe is to fund the mission. We got a mission. We're going say what is that mission. Someone's going to read for me in just a moment Acts 1: 8. Now if you look at the Great Commission in Matthew, most of us know that, Matthew 28: 19. "Go ye

therefore..." how many of you have this memorized? "Go ye therefore, teach the gospel, and to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you, lo, I am with you even to the end of the world." So Matthew says, "We're supposed to go into all the world."

We got an international ministry, it's got to be funded. Now this is a... the gospel is a global enterprise bigger than Apple. Mark 16, here's Mark's Great Commission. He said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Almost makes it sound like he's supposed to be preaching to the dogs, and the cats, and the monkeys, preach to every creature. But he wants us... that was Jesus using that term to basically say, "Not just Jews," 'cause the Jesus used to think they were somehow more superior to the gentiles.

Jesus preached to every creature so they would never misunderstand, "You mean the gentiles too?" Now the gospel you find, you know, at the end of Mark and Luke, it's easy to find their Great Commission. You don't find the Great Commission at the end of Luke because Luke wrote two books that really all go together to someone named Theophilus, he wrote his gospel and he wrote Acts. You find the Great Commission of Luke, so to speak, in the first chapter of Acts. So you're going to read that for us.

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Okay, of course, that was Acts 1: 8, and there is your Great Commission. Go into... notice the ends of the earth. Now do you find the Great Commission in the Gospel of John? John says, "God so loved the world." And so, you know, he tells us John's just so profound, I think he ends his gospel by saying, "The world itself can't contain all the books that are written about Jesus," he said, this is just to give you the picture. But you see the gospel of John is really... the Great Commission is all the way through. But in John, He's often talking to the individual.

He's talking to the woman at the well, He's talking to the blind man, He's talking to Nicodemus. You'll find that John emphasizes the one-on-one ministry of Jesus which I thought was very interesting. So we have a mission. Can everybody quit their job and go out preaching? Well, we probably could for about a month. But then we probably start running into troubles getting the unbelievers to fund us because if they believe and they quit their job, can you see where you'd run into a

problem? And are there various gifts? Is pastoring sometimes called a gift? Yeah. By the way, our pastoring and evangelism are different gifts. Bible mentions pastors and evangelists as distinct. You can have pastors that are good evangelists and evangelists that are good pastors, but they're not always necessarily the same person.

Evangelists were often more itinerate, they would travel around. For instance, in the Bible time, Paul would appoint elders when he would establish churches, they would stay there and they often had jobs. But they would also pastor the church. Some who had the larger churches, Paul said that they should be given their worthy due. But the apostles and the evangelists like Apollos and like Philip, they often were going out on forays and itinerate and traveling, Jesus was an evangelist. He went from city to city, he was of course also a pastor.

Well, that needs to be subsidized. And so what is God's plan to do that? Turn with me to Malachi 3. Now this is the last book in the Old Testament, but you first find tithe also in the first book of the Old Testament, Genesis. In previous lessons, I don't even know if today's lesson gets into it, so let me just repeat 'cause I know there are first time listeners all the time. We discovered in a previous study that Genesis, it says, Abraham brought tithe and gave it to the High Priest Melchizedech. Jacob when he left home and he had that dream of the ladder reaching to him and he says, "Lord, if you watch over me, all that you give me surely I will give a tenth," and that's what a tithe, it means tenth, "to thee." And so you find the principle of tithe goes all the way back.

Now some people think that, you know, because ceremonial laws some things may have been nailed to the cross, you don't really see the Passover until the Exodus, you don't see the feast, the annual feast until the Exodus. Do you see a difference between clean and unclean food before the Exodus? Go back to Noah. Do you see tithe before the Exodus? It goes to Abraham. It's back in Genesis. And so these are principles that carry on. All right, and so then you go to the last book in the Old Testament, Malachi 3, and I'm going to start with verse 6. People often go to verse 8, but I think you need the context. "For I am the Lord," Malachi 3: 6, "I do not change."

Well, there is a little tip about tithe. People say, "Well, you know, tithe is not specifically commanded in the New Testament, so it shouldn't be observed," it's not true. We learned in Matthew 23: 23. Tithe is repeated in the New Testament. Jesus sort of does it in a roundabout way. He says, "You pay tithes of your mint and your anise and your cumin, and you've neglected the weightier matters of the

law just as mercy and faith. These you ought to have done and not leave the other, the pain of tithe undone." That's pretty clear. He says, "Don't forget to pay your tithe." Two men went to the temple to pay. One republican and the other a Pharisee, and the Pharisee stood and he prayed thus with himself, "Lord, I think be that I am not like other men. I pay tithe of all that I have and I fast."

There is anything wrong with fasting? Anything wrong with going to church? Is there anything wrong with tithing? The Lord was condemning him because of his hypocrisy not because of what he did, there is nothing wrong with tithing, the things he did were good, right? And so there's nothing in the Bible that says there's something wrong with tithing. And whenever you're in doubt, do the safe thing. Is anyone going to be in trouble in the Judgment Day, and God's going to say, "Can't let you in?" "Why not, Lord?" Because you gave 10% and you weren't supposed to give that much once the New Testament began, you're supposed to get less. So what would be wrong with it? So if you're in doubt about what's the best system, I don't see a second system mentioned.

Tithe is certainly a very equitable system. I think it was Dr. Ben Carson when he was running for president, they were talking about "What would your tax plan be?" He talked about something based on the Bible. He said, "It would be a flat tax just like the Bible where everybody doesn't matter if you're rich or poor, you pay the same percentage." Any of you remember that? I like that idea. So that's fair for everybody. Instead of say, "Well, you're rich, you got to pay a bigger percentage. And if you're poor, you don't have to pay anything."

I think everybody's got skin in the game, it's just fair. Anyway, but oh, well, that's a long way before that's going to happen. Okay. So back to Malachi. "I am the Lord, I do not change." Notice He introduces it with that. "Therefore, you're not consumed, O sons of Jacob." I don't want to change the morsel, well, that's why you're still alive. "Yet from the days of your fathers, you have gone away from My ordinances. And you've not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you..." Well he's saying, "Look, you drifted from what I've commanded you and I want you to return." And they're saying, "Well, how do we return and what way do we return?"

Then He gets real specific. "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, you have robbed Me, even this whole nation." Now that'd be pretty serious. I mean no one would want to be cursed, and no one would want to be found guilty of robbing God. And can you imagine, you wake up and you're

surrounded by police and they get flashlights in your face and say, "What's the problem?" He says, "Robbery." "Who did I rob?" "God." And they're hauling you off to jail. "Boy, I'm really in trouble. I've robbed God." And so, you know, this is the language the Lord uses to get their attention. And He says, "In tithes and offerings, you've robbed me, even the whole nation."

Here's a solution then, He wants to bless them. He says stop doing it, stop robbing me. "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house," is this food for God to eat? Or does it mean that there is resources to feed the ministry so that the spiritual means of the nation are not neglected? "That there may be food in My house and try Me now in this, He says, 'Test me' says the Lord. If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out of blessing that you will not have a room enough to receive it."

He wants to bless us. And He says, "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sake. 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 of hosts. And all nations will call you blessed for you will be a delightful land, says the Lord." And so that is a wonderful promise. It's one of the most powerful and clear promises that's given in the Bible. So let's talk for a moment. You want to talk about blessings? That's always fun. All right, so couple of things He mentions here.

He says, "Try me now in this, says the Lord." You know, when I was looking at some of the questions that were on Facebook last night related to the study, it's always heartbreaking. People say, "I am on a fixed income. And at the end of the month, I don't have enough for the basics. How can I give 10%? I won't be able to pay the bill." And then they'll, you know, "I get kicked out of my house, so they'll repossess my car and what..." And, you know, my heart goes like 'cause I know there are some people that they just really are struggling. But I can't explain it but God somehow works miracles. And they said, "But I've got fixed income, where is the miracle going to come from?" I don't know about you, have you had unexpected windfall because you've been faithful in your tithe?"

Amen.

I remember one time when I first started testing the Lord on paying tithe. I was selling firewood and back then, you know, \$65 a cord is very hard to cut a cord of firewood and then you deliver it, and you'd... a cord is 128 square feet of wood. And, you know, by the time you buy your gas for your truck and the gas and the oil things for the saw and then groceries, it's just like nothing left. And at that point, I

had a family with three kids. And I thought well \$6.50 is a lot out of \$65 but I'm just going to pay tithe. And I remember I was cutting wood with a friend Dave Boatwright. And all of a sudden I got this unexpected... in the general delivery, they did not deliver up in the hills back then.

General delivery got like, you know, \$1,500. I said, "Praise the Lord," I said, "Where in the world did this come from?" Turned out, my father, when I was younger, thought I was going to kill myself he took out a life insurance policy, made himself the beneficiary. "I was living so crazy, I won't get a life insurance policy on Doug, maybe I'll make some money." He was always trying to make money. And finally when I realized I settled down a little bit, he cashed it and sent me the money. I didn't expect that, praise the Lord. And so I mean, I didn't even know what was out there. And so I've had so many strange things happen.

Karen did a search online, someone called Karen up one time, she says, "They got website you go to where there's money that is in your name that is waiting to be collected." I thought, "Oh, that can't be real." And she said looked at me and says, "Well, they said they found money and it's in your name," and we looked up, sure enough there was money in our name at LA. We just contacted them and they sent it to us. And so I don't know how God is going to supply you a miracle, sometimes it's not always money.

You might say, "Oh, you know, if I pay my tithe, I won't have enough for groceries." I've got a friend that... There's a great building boomed around the pipeline in Alaska. And they went up there and they were doing very well and all of a sudden, it's stopped and the work stopped, there was a great economic burst and eventually they got so destitute, they had three kids, they had no food for the kids and they decided to pay their tithe, be faithful with their tithe. And some people would say, "You're crazy," and say God will feed us, we're going to trust Him. He said He would open the windows of heaven, we're going to trust Him. And that evening, before dinner and they didn't have I mean, they just had, you know, ketchup and rice, they ain't have much.

Someone knocked on the door. And it was a neighbor that was a flight attendant. And she had her arm full of airline meals and she said the plane was cancelled due to the weather because so here in Alaska, nothing else to do and they said these meals went over the due period for freshness and they said there is nothing really wrong with them, "So do you guys want some meals?" And the kids kind of believe in because they know they had just prayed for food. Now you wouldn't expect the airline to do it. But I mean, God has ways that we don't know about.

And so I just trust Him and see if he doesn't surprise you. We're going to take couple of questions that are coming in and I'm still going to get further in the lesson. "Please explain first fruits and should we do that now?" Well, you'll find first fruits mentioned in Leviticus 23, the idea and this was one of the feasts that was connected with the package of Passover fees that to dedicate, to demonstrate they believe that all of the produce of the land belong to God.

They would offer the first and the best to God. And so they had a special service where they would take some of the first of the grain and the first of the oil and they would bring into the Lord as an offering to show that we believe in all belongs to Him and they take it off the top. Also, do you know even the first born children technically were consecrated to the Lord. You weren't supposed to sacrifice them, but matter of fact, for your first born, you would make an offering as a substitute, but that was saying that the first born were in a special way consecrated to the Lord.

So whether it was of the field or of your flocks or even your own children, we were supposed to give everything of the first to God showing we recognize it comes from Him. So when it comes to tithe, after you pay all your bills and if you see there is anything left, then you pay your tithe. Do you want God to bless the remainder of what you have, then pay tithe first and you'll see how He blesses the remainder. If you wait until there is a remainder, before you pay your tithe you may find that you really get tested there on the tail end.

Matter of fact I got a quote, I told you some churches do and some don't practice tithe. Billy Graham said, "We have found in our own home as have thousands of others that God's blessing upon the nine-tenths, when we tithe, helps it to go farther than ten-tenths without His blessing." What did God do for the children of Israel when they were going through the wilderness? Did He make their sandals and everything last longer? He says your clothes have lasted on your back, your shoes have not worn-out. He said, "I've blessed you." And, you know, Karen and I've just discovered that He made things that we have had whether it's, you know, air-conditioner or refrigerator and we had stuff that just lasted for years and years. And I think God just was blessing it.

All right, another question came in. "Does the Bible teach the giving of a second tithe?" Yeah, there was a second tithe that was often reserved for the times of feasts. And there's some interesting quotes here in Deuteronomy 14:22 talks about the tithe and the land, and talks about that it could be given to the poor, it says it could be used for strong drink and the word strong drink that means concentrated

drink. That means that they would condense the grape juice that reconstitute and so use the word strong drink there. And He said they could turn that into money as they went up to the feast, they could also gift some to the poor, that was in the original tithe that went to the Levites.

So it was a second tithe for the feast. I want to get back into the lesson, I will take more questions here, but I want to keep going. Talking more about the blessings of God, 1 Peter 3:8 and 9, "Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another, love as brothers, be tenderhearted, courteous. Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, blessing," we had to bless others, "knowing that you were called to this that you may inherit a blessing." It is more blessed to give than received because when you do bless others, you will be blessed. Amen. So we've been called through inherit a blessing, eternal life is blessing.

Someone's going to read for me in a moment 2 Corinthians 8, 9 and I'm going to read 1 Timothy 6:18-19. "Let them do good that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life." So Paul was saying that believers ought to be willing to give and to share. And then he said but you've got a promise of eternal life. Good. Read for us please 2 Corinthians 8.

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

So have we been blessed by the Lord? I mean, He said blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven when we acknowledge our spiritual poverty, God blesses us with great riches. And you read in Mark 10:21. This rich young ruler comes to Jesus. Everyone remembers the rich young ruler because Christ said, "Take what you have, sell it, give it to the poor," and they forget the other part. It said, "One thing you lack," this is Mark 10:21, "Go your way, sell what you have, give to the poor, you will have treasure in heaven."

Now this wasn't talking about time, was it? He was talking about liquidating, giving to the poor. It says you'll have treasure in heaven. You will have treasure in heaven. Then the Lord says, "Do not leave for yourself treasure on earth," 'cause the treasure on earth doesn't last, you'll have a treasure in the heavens that lasts. And again, Luke 6:38, "Give and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." So God says, "Trust

Me, prove Me, be faithful in your tithes." And see if God takes care of you. All right, another question, "Should we pay tithes to our conference even if pastors are being downsized and those remaining have three or four churches?"

Well, not paying it to the conference is going to make it even harder and it would seem like that if you want to see better distribution, then you want to continue to support the work of the church. And, you know, I should say something here, some people say, we get letters, and you probably heard it before. Well, if you only knew that there is this person in our conference or if you only knew some of the ways that they're spending the money or some of the things we're doing and... If there is a bad person or if there is someone that is unconverted in the leadership, do you stop paying your tithes?

Did Jesus have a Judas in His group? Would you have still supported Christ? Yeah, but you would have given it to Thomas not Judas, right? So, you know, in the days of Christ, when that widow gave her two cents, her two mites to the temple, what was going on in the temple? Were all the priests converted? And Jesus, when she was about to drop her money in, He didn't say, "Don't do that. Give it to Judas." He didn't say that. He commanded her 'cause she was going to get her blessing even if there may have been some mismanagement in leadership, right? And so yeah, you want to be able to continue supporting the work, don't always judge individuals for that.

All right, back to the lesson here. Deuteronomy 28, talking about blessings again. "Now it will come to pass that if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, and observe carefully all His commandments that I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings will come upon you and overtake you because you obey the voice of the Lord your God.

Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. Blessed will be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground, and the increase of your herds, and the increase of your cattle, and the offspring of your flocks. Blessed you will be and your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed will you be when you go out." Wouldn't you all like to have that problem? It is blessed in every way by the Lord.

Did God want to bless them or did He want to curse them? Do you want to... How many of you spoil your kids 'cause you like to see them happy? Well, you don't do it deliberately but I know sometimes it's hard to say no 'cause you want to make

them happy, you want to surprise them, you want to have them have joy. God loves you, He wants to bless you, but He says if you're going to be blessed, you need to do certain things. You need to trust Him and you need to be faithful. All right, now someone is going to read for me in a moment Acts 20:35. And I'm going to read Jeremiah 17:7, it says, "Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord and whose hope is the Lord."

In the book Testimonies, volume 3, page 404, there you read, "The special system of tithing was founded upon a principle which is as enduring as the law of God. This system of tithing was a blessing to the Jews, else God would not have given it to them. So also will it be a blessing to those who carry it out to the end of time. Our Heavenly Father did not originate the plan of systematic benevolence to enrich Himself, but to be a blessing to man. He saw that this system of beneficence was just what man needed." We sometimes need a system, we need a structure, we need a way to say, "Am I giving faithfully?"

You know, we've discovered at Amazing Facts, we live on entirely on donations, and I'm not doing... I'm not trying to create confusion by even mentioning that with this. But the reason I say it is because we have people on the mailing list and we'll send them a note, we'll say we thank you for your gift last year. And they will write us back and say, "I thought I was giving every month." I will say, "No, we haven't had anything in a year." And they say, "Really? I had no idea." They said, "I thought, we were doing it every month." And you'd be surprised how often people write us back and say, "We had no idea." You know, if it wasn't for a system, people lose track.

We have a tendency to oil squeaky wheels, and if the wheels aren't squeaking, no oil is applied. And so unless you've got discipline, you say, "Oh, yeah, I pay tithe." "Yeah? When was the last time you paid tithe?" "Well, let me get my check register out." "Ooh. Oh." Some of you don't realize till the end of the year. And so that's why you want to, you know, wait till the end of the year, the needs of God's work are ongoing, you know, at least month later, when you get your check it should be right there off the top. Amen. All right, we have a verse you're going to read.

"I have showed you all things, how that so laboring you ought to support the weak and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Thank you very much. Acts 20, I got a little quiz for you, a little trick question. Acts 20:35, Paul is speaking in Acts 20:35. "Paul said you remember the words of Jesus, 'It's more blessed to give than receive.'" Where is that verse where Jesus said it's more blessed to give than receive? It's not in the Bible. It is in the Bible where Paul quotes Jesus, but that goes to show and you'll even see it's in red letter, but that will go to show you that not everything Jesus said was written down by the four gospels that Christ taught for years.

So Paul, remember, you know, that the disciples saw that Jesus often said, it's more blessed to give than receive. Now you read the beatitudes and, "He said blessed are the poor in spirit," there's lots of blessings that Jesus pronounced, but that exact phrase actually we get it about Christ from Paul. Okay, the purpose of tithe, let's talk about that for a moment, then I see some more questions that are on the screen. 1 Timothy 5:18, "For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain and the laborer is worthy of his wages."

So the purpose of tithe was to disperse the resources of people for the ministry. When God's people fail to pay tithe, the Levites wouldn't have having to go work in the fields, the teaching of the young people, and the teaching of the Word of God, and the judgment, and the medical things, and everything that was needed by the Levites and the priests was neglected. And have you also noted how many times in the Bible it says the house of God fell into disrepair?

Wasn't just the people, but the actual place of worship and other nations that would come and visit say, "Oh, that's what they think of their God." Look at that, it's just is... Stones are all crumbling and weeds are growing out of the cracks, they don't care for the house of God, it was really a bad reflection on what they thought about their God. Deuteronomy 25:4, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Who knows what that means?

You remember when Samson was captured by the Philistines, they plucked out his eyes, they put him in the grinding house. And what happened is... They would have a long stick that went through a wheel, the wheel rolled on top of a grain that was on a pedestal. And as they went around it was very grueling, you'd push this wheel, let's just pretend this is the grinding stones you're... You push this stick around and you're turning a wheel that's hooked on a central axis. And that wheel, big stone wheel is grinding out grain and they would shovel the grain in it.

What would it do is it grinds the flour. They'd shovel it out. And you kept... If you had an oxen that was grinding the grain, that was a long stick 'cause you don't want

the oxen too close to the food. Do I need to go to the detail? And so they had that like that, but inevitably as they were shoveling the grain in and shoveling the grain out, some of it would fall on the oxen's the path. And the oxen, he'd nibble it as he walked by eating the grain. And oxen like grain even more than grass. And if you have horses, they love it when you give them a bucket of oats. And so he's saying, look, if a pastor is spending all his time ministering to people, don't muzzle him if God is blessing you, share the things that God has blessed you with. And so that was one of the principles, the purpose of the tithe was to keep the people in ministry whether they're evangelists, they could be Christian teachers or pastors.

Who else was funded by tithe? Was it just pastors? People in the temple, did they have security in the temple? If I have time, I'll get to that verse, it shows even the... To your music ministers, the sons of Asaph were paid of the tithe 'cause music was part of the worship. All right, carrying on here. Told you I get confused when I turn it upside down. Luke 7:10, I'm sorry, Luke 10:7. And Jesus said when you go out preaching and go from town to town, but when you get to town, "Remain in the same house, eating and drinking the things that they give you, for the labor is worthy of his wages."

Now here's from Christ, He's saying, you know, if you're staying with a family and they're offering to host you while you preach in that town, accept it and be thankful for because you're working for the Lord, you're worthy of that. This is your work. And then one more, 1 Corinthians 9:14, "Even so..." And this is about as plain as it could be, "Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel."

You know, when I got my first official fulltime ministry call, I was so excited because I was a self-supporting minister. When I'm teaching our AFCOE class, I love to tell them. I said, "I started out as a lay evangelist, they hired me, and I was so excited I thought, 'You mean they're going to pay me to do what I was doing for free? This is the greatest job in the world.'"

I think it was Will Rogers who said figure out what you like to do and they get someone to pay you to do it. Said, "This is great! I'm getting paid to preach." It's not all great, I mean, I preach in part but... some of the stuff. I'm a pastor. I was telling someone just yesterday, I said, you know, "I wouldn't mind pastoring if it wasn't for people." I don't mind the preaching part. That's great. And some of it, you know, leading people to Christ, that's wonderful. Don't like marriage counseling. I'm not great at hospital visits, you know, every job's got its stuff you've got to deal with, right? All right, again, another question, "When we make a

sale and package the item to be shipped off and we ship it, we don't take out the business costs and then do we tithe on what the profit is or tithe on the whole amount?" In other words, if you're in business and you're doing things and you're selling, will you tithe on the increase? I think I used an illustration.

Let's just suppose hypothetically, I'm going to use the T-shirt illustration again, you're in a business and you sell T-shirts and you print them and you put Christian slogans on them and you sell T-shirts. And you buy the T-shirts and the T-shirts cost \$5, and then you print them in that cost, \$2. And, you know, you've got shipping and everything and so you end up selling these T-shirts and it costs you \$9 dollars, but you only get \$1 profit. All right, T-shirt started out... You sell it for \$10, it costs you \$9 to sell that, you get \$1 profit.

Now if you pay tithe, how much on \$10 dollars, what do you have left? Nothing. So you're paying tithe on what the profit was after the basic business expenses. Now it's different if you're in farming or something like that or if you're working and you get a paycheck, you pay on the gross, that's your increase. The expenses for the business are from the employer that's paying you, but you're being paid on your increase. And so doing that as a business is maybe a little different science than the average person who works and gets a paycheck. And then someone says, "Should we pay tithe on a gift?"

Well, if it's a gift of money, sure. What do you do if someone gives you a piano? Do you did take 10% of the keys and give it to the pastor? No, you know, you might give a thank you gift and figure out. Yeah, just, you know, I want to say thank you to the Lord and so you just calculate it in your mind into a thank offering in that respect. But yeah, God will be gracious to you. Whenever you're in doubt, just go a little too far, and you know what you'll discover, you cannot out give God. Can anyone here tell me that, you know, "I out gave God"? I gave so much that I had nothing left. He always blesses, doesn't He?

All right, again another question. "What if you make a promise like Ananias and Sapphira and you broke it," evidently you're still alive, so it wasn't exactly like them, "And there's no way you can pay it back?" Well, there are cases, you know, I've talked to people and come to the Lord and they said, you know, I was thrown in jail for extortion, I've talked to people, they said, I embezzled \$50 million, and it's all gone, and I'm never going to be able to pay it back.

I wasn't a Christian and now, you know, making up the number. But now I'm never going to pay it back. And I just say, well, you be a little more than faithful with

your tithe and show the Lord that you're trying to go the second mile, you may never do that 'cause you're not trying to earn your salvation by paying it back, your salvation is based on a gift of grace to you, but then if you love the Lord and if you realize that you took advantage of others, you do what you can to pay that back even if it's a little by little 'cause at least you're showing your intentions. Who knows what God might do for you?

Let me see, I want to get to... Tithe in the storehouse. How am I going to cover that in 30 seconds? Nehemiah 10:39, "For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storerooms where the articles of the sanctuary are, where the priests who minister and the gatekeepers and the singers are," see, it was for the gatekeepers, security, singer, music ministers, "and we will not neglect the house of our God."

Meaning the work of God's house and the people that were employed for that work. So it was sent to a common spot and it was then distributed from there. I want to close with this quote. Tithe and salvation by faith. And this is from Testimonies Volume 6, page 386. "So it is with God's claims upon us, He places His treasures in the hands of men, but He requires that one-tenth shall be faithfully laid aside for His work. He requires this portion to be placed in His treasury.

It is to be rendered to Him as His own. It is sacred and is to be used for a sacred purpose and for the purpose of those who carry the message of salvation to all parts of the world. He reserves this portion and that means may ever be flowing into His treasure house that the light of truth might be carried to those who are near and far off by faithfully obeying this requirement we acknowledge that all that we have belongs to God."

All right, friends, I want to remind you just in closing, we do have a special offer. It's kind of a scary title, but it's a good book called, "Thieves in the Church." You'll really enjoy it. Ask for offer 136 when you call, and the number is 866-7888-3966, that's 866-7888-3966, and we'll send it to you. I think you can even read it for free at [AmazingFacts.org](http://AmazingFacts.org). God bless until we study His Word together again.

Friends if you're scared of snakes, this may not be for you. I'm here at a reptile park outside of Durban, South Africa, and I'm holding my friend here who is a red tail boa. Snakes are found all over the world, and they come in all sizes. Snakes can be found through the trees, they crawl on the ground, they live under the ground, and they swim in the water, very interesting creatures. Some snakes are venomous, not my friend here, but the black mamba, very poisonous. Matter of

fact, their bite is often referred to as the kiss of death. They can grow 15 feet long and can travel up to 7 miles an hour, they don't call them black mamba because of the color of their skin but the interior of their mouth is black. Snakes also come in all sizes like this boa or python, they can grow to great sizes.

Matter of fact, in South America, they found some fossils of a snake that they call Titanoboa. They believe it was as big as 50 feet long and weighed as much as a car. Say cheese! A lot of people are scared of snakes, I used to live in a mountain in a cave and I ran into snakes frequently. They never bothered me unless I was bothering them. Within the Bible the snake is often a symbol of the devil. In reality, it's just a symbol, they're animals like other animals, but it says they were cursed to go upon their belly because they were the first medium that the devil used to tempt Adam and Eve.

In the Book of Numbers 21, it tells a story of how when the children of Israel were going through the wilderness they began to complain about God's manner and it says the Lord allowed these fiery serpents to go among the people and many were bitten and the venom was deadly. I should probably mention at this point that bread they were complaining about is a symbol for the Word of God. As many of the people were dying from this plague of serpents, they went unto Moses and they said, "What shall we do?" God told Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole and lift it up that whoever looked upon the serpent, they would be healed of their venom.

This is why it's so important because Jesus says in the Gospel of John 3:14 and 15, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of Man must be lifted up that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life." They needed to look in to live, you see those ancient shepherds when they would kill a venomous snake, they would carry it off on their staff and bury it.

So a serpent on a pole represented a defeated snake, that's talking about defeating the devil, friend. Have you been bitten by the serpent? We all have. The only cure for the venom of Satan is to look in faith at Jesus, He then defeated the devil, He took the venom of sin in His body to provide the antidote in His blood. So, friends, I encourage you to look today and live.