

**Tithes and Review**  
**May 8, 2011**  
**Lynchburg, Virginia**

**EXHORDIUM**

This is the last in a series of sermons on work, calling, debt, gifts and tithes. I didn't say too much about tithes and will touch on that subject a bit today. The last sermon in this series was to be a sermon on an eschatological hope based upon God pouring out His blessing in the Church.

While I am still hopeful that God will do this, I do not presume to know how and when, or even, if, He will do so. I know that God will bless His Church and is doing so now in a magnificent way. But what I don't want to presume on is a sort of health and wealth doctrine. There is clearly some truth that if we obey God, then He blesses us. But we have an enormous amount of evidence in the history of the church that many of God's most obedient saints suffered greatly and many were martyred and that God used these means to advance the Kingdom of Christ in the Earth.

I do believe the Lord blesses us and gives us wealth to build His Kingdom but He certainly hold the prerogative as to what is the best way to build His Kingdom with us individually and with us corporately. So, let us do what is right today and leave the future details up to God.

My main emphasis is obedience. God calls us to do the things that are revealed in His Word. It seems to follow that if we are obedient to Him, then He will indeed pour out His blessings on us.

But it is not quite as simple as that. We can faithfully tithe and even give over and above the tithe but still do it with ill motives. We may embrace all this obedience stuff because we have figured out how to manipulate God into giving us everything we desire.

And so our so-called obedience isn't. I spent one of these sermons preaching on a right heart. Our hearts must be free from the love of money. But if we are free from the love of money, we will not even desire a great financial blessing.

But are we truly free from the love of money? Does not the fact of our consumption show that we still have the disease? Yes, it does. And so, that is why we cannot presume upon God. We must be obedient today. As

we do this, day by day, we trust the Lord will grow us up into a people that can handle His blessings. Until we can, we need the restraints of parenthood upon us. The Lord knows what we need and when we will be able to handle more freedom and more blessing. We will leave that up to Him.

And in the mean time, we will be diligent to learn His ways and to do what He calls us to do, today.

## **EXEGESIS**

### **Tithes**

**Deut 14:22-29 22 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. 23 And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks;**

**that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always.**

The tithe is so that you learn to fear the Lord God always.

**Prov. 9:10 The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Prov 15:16 Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.**

**24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee: 25 Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose:**

The Lord is gracious and kind, understanding our frame and capacities. He made a way to convert the tithe of produce into money to bring it to Jerusalem. The tithe is not to be a great burden that we dread. It is a blessing to us to give the Lord's tithe.

The Lord's tithe and your offerings.

**26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or**

**for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,**

God's requirements are not burdensome but joyful. A portion of the tithe was spent on eating and drinking before the Lord. This is what some call the party tithe. This is part of what we did last week in our parish feasts.

**27 And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.**

A portion of the tithe is to go to the Levite, those who take care of the Tabernacle and later the Temple. These are churchmen.

**28 At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: 29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied;**

A portion of the tithe goes to the stranger and to the poor, widows and orphans.

**that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.**

That the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

It is clear, if we do this, the Lord thy God will bless us. If not, He will not bless us.

### **Blessing to God's People**

**Deut 24:19 19 When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow:**

God's blessing means that we have more than we need. The law of gleaning reveals this. The farmer did not need every sheaf in the field. He had plenty and more. He could leave a portion of his increase for the orphan and the widow.

This is not unlike modern charity. Most large corporations and even many smaller businesses are active in giving a portion of their increase to charity.

**that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.**

**Again, he says, “That the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.”**

Being obedient in the tithe, in ministering to orphans and widows, and also to the stranger that is within thy gates, are necessary components to being blessed by the Lord. The sort of blessings mentioned here is not merely spiritual blessing. No doubt, it has that component. We feel good about doing what is right and God strengthens us in this. But he is talking about blessing the work of our hands. He gives us more increase. We actually gain wealth.

This is one of those many seeming paradoxes in Scripture. The more we give the more we get. It is not possible to out give God but it is a good thing to try.

And we must not think that this is for the wealthy only. Many people in our circumstances want somebody else to do it. They may think the government should tax the wealthy more so that they can give us some of their money. Or, you may think that your own needs are not met, so how can you give to others. But the Lord is not interested in a bunch of excuses. He is more interested in obedience.

This is an obedience issue. Until you are faithful tither, you should have no expectation that the Lord will truly bless the work of your hands.

Furthermore, you should be seeking to live within your means so that you have enough and more to share. It is disobedient for you to spend what is the Lord's, what is for the orphan and widow and what is for the Levite, the church.

Many of us have got it in a lot of trouble through debt, purchasing much that we could not afford, thus spending before we ever even had the money. It is no wonder we struggle, especially in times when the debts are called in.

But there is a way out of this dilemma. First, as was mentioned from Proverbs 22, get your own heart in order. Do not desire gold or riches. Have a heart free of greed and the love of money. In another one of those Biblical paradoxes, if you have a heart free from the love of money, then the Lord can safely give you a lot of money. Start killing the love of money by giving first what belongs to the Lord, 10% of your increase.

I do not want the Lord to give a lot of money to anyone here if that money means that your heart will be corrupted. If you are ensnared by the love of money, then I would rather have you in debt, struggling from day to day. **10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.** But that is not your only option. By God's grace, you can repent, change and be set free. Then the money will not be a problem to you.

So, the means the Lord will use to advance His kingdom mightily in the Earth, is the sanctification of His people. Once we learn obedience, then He can entrust us with His wealth in order to bless the Earth.

## **EXHORTATION**

**Eph 4:28 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.**

I mentioned in a previous sermon that I was a redistributionist of sorts. That is true. But I do want to make it clear that I also do not think the government should do the redistribution through taxation.

God calls us to give to the church, to the poor, to the widow, to the orphan and to the stranger. Many churches, saints and wealthy persons are already doing this. They have the capacity to do so more and more. We live in a prosperous age where we do not actually need any government social welfare programs.

All social welfare could be 100% financed by families with the Church making up for those folks that find themselves without family, the widow, indeed, and the orphan.

The Church and church people should fully embrace a world in which the civil government not only makes cuts to these sorts of programs but eliminates them entirely. We should call upon our people to be obedient; obedient to the tithe, obedient to taking care of old parents, obedient to taking care of the truly needy and poor among us, obedient to the hard work of holding them accountable and assimilating them into the life of Christ's Church and also taking care of the stranger within our gates. As we do this, we see that the world will turn to their true Savior, Jesus Christ, who has blessed them so wonderfully.

So, the issue in all of these sermons is not such a mystery. How do we find what work we ought to do? By working, now.

How do we know what our calling is? By doing the very thing that is set before you today.

How do we know what our gifts are and how to use them to advance the kingdom of God? Again, by working today that work the Lord has given you to do. What are you drawn to do? What do you do well? Then, do that thing.

How do we advance the kingdom of God in the Earth? Of course, through the preaching of Jesus Christ. But how is that accomplished? How are preachers called and sent? By God's people being obedient. We tithe. We are not consumed by the love of money. We work hard and have extra so that we can give to the one in need. When we do this, God gives us more and we keep giving it away.

We preach Christ crucified for sinners. And we live as sinners transformed by the crucified and risen Christ. By these means, God will subdue all the world beneath the feet of Jesus.