

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 31 Jul 2022
Sermon Title : Good Measure
Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng
Text : Luke 6:38

INTRODUCTION

On this Pledge Sunday, as we continue in our 2-part sermon on the topic of “Stewardship”, let us consider what our giving means to us. Do we give out of fear, because we think God demands it or do we give cheerfully?

God in His infinite wisdom through the Holy Spirit, moved the writers of the Bible to write down about 2000 verses concerning the topic of money. That tells us that God is interested in how His people handle finances - whether we are a people who blesses others or keeps the blessings we receive for ourselves and whether we know who the source of all that we have is.

Returning to God

Malachi 3:7 – “... *Return to Me, and I will return to you,*...”*”But you say, ‘How shall we return?’” (NASB 1995)*

- When God says ‘return to me’ to His people, He was not speaking about a physical distance where the people have moved far away from Him. He was speaking about something invisible, something spiritual because there is no way anyone can escape God's presence physically since He is everywhere.
- He was speaking about the state of the heart - spiritual and invisible, not physical and visible. He was saying that they had strayed, were distracted or veered away from His path and their hearts were far away from Him or turned away from Him and not tuned in to Him.

Robbing God

Malachi 3:8 – “*Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.*” (NASB 1995)

- God moved from the invisible and spiritual thing (the heart) to a visible and physical act to illustrate how the people had strayed from Him. They had robbed Him through the withholding of their tithes and offerings.

One might ask if God is really interested in our hearts (the spiritual and invisible) or if He is only interested in our money (the physical and the visible). But, if we even ask

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that question, we would have started on the wrong footing because everything that we have belongs to God and the only way we have anything is because God is our source and our provider.

God is always interested in the state of our hearts. When He calls us to return, He is calling for the invisible and the spiritual. Yet God moves to the visible because it is from the visible that we can tell whether what we claim in the invisible is indeed true, or it can bring us to a realization that we have strayed away from Him.

Tithe, offerings and pledge

In the Old Testament, God gave the commandment to tithe in order for His people to acknowledge and remember that God is the source of all we have, and He is our provider. It is easy to think of our bosses, the banks, our shares, and our investments as the sources of our income. They are really the channels that God, the source, is using to bless us and provide for us.

- A tithe refers to a tenth. It is the amount that God wants His people to put aside and bring to Him so that they will always remember to worship and acknowledge Him as the source of all that they have.
- An offering refers to whatever amount (beyond the tithes) that we are capable of bringing and contributing to God's purpose. It is above and beyond something that we put aside to say that God is our source and provider, for blessing others as God's channels of blessings.

When we withhold our tithes and offerings, we have forgotten God is our source and provider. We have also forgotten to be a channel of blessing to others.

- Even if we have given our tithes, we should never make anyone else who is unable to tithe feel guilty.
- Neither should we think that just because we have tithed, we have met God's requirements and God should never ever ask us nor prompt us to do anything else regarding finances or giving.

Tithe is not an insurance to being accepted by God, nor should it be a barrier to us giving more to God's purposes.

- The word pledge may not be found in the Bible but it speaks about our intention to dedicate an amount to God. It is a top priority item in our budget, rather than being the leftover amount or a tip that we give to God. Hence:

1) To Retain is to Rob God.

How do we return to God? (Malachi 3:9-10a)

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- a) Stop robbing Him
- b) Bring God's tithe in – and you will not be short-changed. This is God's promise and challenge to His people to test him.

Malachi 3:10b – *“if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.” (NASB 1995)*

Malachi 3:11 – *“Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,” says the LORD of hosts. (NASB 1995)*

- When God's people did not bring His tithes and their offerings, they were affected by this entity (called the devourer) that came and affected what they had.
- When God's people stray away from Him, they also stray away from His protection.

When God's people start bringing their tithes and offerings back to Him, they return to His protection and God will rebuke the devourer and what they hope to grow will grow.

2) To Tithe is to Trust God.

To tithe is to acknowledge that God is our source and provider, and by placing Him as our top priority, He will make sure we have enough for everything else.

Luke 6:38a – *“Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure – pressed down, shaken together, and running over....” (NASB 1995)*

In the New Testament, Jesus said, “...give, and it will be given to you.” One of the Hebrew words for “give” is “NATAN” (a palindrome - a word that reads the same from either direction). This reminds us that whenever we give, it will be given to us in a good measure; pressed down, shaken together and running over; a blessing that is packed to the brim and in excess.

This means that our giving is a two-way movement, as our faithful God will never short-change us; never failing to meet our needs and desires.

CONCLUSION

We are called by God to return to Him by aligning what we claim in our hearts with our actions in tithing and offerings. Tithing is the intentional setting aside of a portion of our income for God's purpose. It is to remind us that God is the source of all that we have. Our offering above God's tithe is a free will contribution which enables us to bless others, having ourselves received abundantly from God. Let us not give as a requirement to be fulfilled, but out of a cheerful heart, as we have been given; not to get, but as a trust in God. Our generous and faithful God will never short-change us as we place our trust in Him.

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A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk!?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Appoint someone to read Luke 6:38 slowly.

a. What is encouraging about this verse?

b. Reflect on your current heart condition towards God.

(i) How is the 2-way flow of giving between God and you?

(ii) Is there a need for your heart to return to God so you may experience the truth of this verse in your life?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

3. To Retain is to Rob God.
 - a. (i) What are some things you have retained?
 - (ii) What would it mean for you to “bring the whole tithe into God’s storehouse”?
 - b. How can you give with a cheerful heart in the current high inflation, increasing interest rates and great financial uncertainties?

- 4a. To Tithe is to Trust God.
- 4b. Consider the different meanings of Tithe, Offering and Pledge.
 - (i) What is your attitude towards each of these?
 - (ii) How does it reflect your trust in God?
- 4c. What changes do you need to make to be a good steward of God’s blessings you have received in your life?
- 4d. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 4c. above in the following week(s), till your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies, Prayer and Action

Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.

5. Share your testimony on how you have experienced Luke 6:38 in your life.

OR

Give thanks to God for His generosity in His provisions for your life and the abundant and overflowing blessings in good measure that He has promised to all who trust in Him.

6. With a prayer partner, seek the Holy Spirit's leading in living out God's purpose in your daily life with what you have received from Him. Pray for God's wisdom and obedience to be good stewards of what you have and to encourage and support one another as you aim to be channels of blessings to others.

As a group, pray that our church will live Spirit-filled lives, that through our giving, we will display God's generosity to the wider community around us so His name may be glorified.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

- 1) Take My Life and Let It Be – Hymn <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQ93HVuYd5Y>
- 2) I Offer My Life – Don Moen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-rntNG0xm0>
- 3) Resurrender – Hillsong https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deH_PPqgX38

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