

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

**Date** : 30 Jul 2023  
**Sermon Title** : Splitting Hairs  
**Speaker** : Rev Eddie Ho  
**Text** : 1 Chronicles 21

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Today is Pledge Sunday when we pledge our commitment on how much we will be giving to God. Although many of us know that when we give to God we can be giving as tithing or offering but do we really understand the meaning of tithing, offering and pledging?

## **Tithing**

Let us consider our tithing our time to God

We may have an impeccable or outstanding understanding of tithing which is giving 10% of our time, money, talent, other resources and everything we have to God. We can even meticulously set aside 10% (2.4 hours of 24 hours) of our time each day, down to the very second for God. However, we need to be reminded that:

- The time we have on earth does not belong to us, it belongs to God and God can take it back anytime.
  - Everything belongs to God, and all things were created by his power.  
(Hebrews 2.10a, CEV)
  - The earth and everything on it, including its people, belong to the Lord. The world and its people belong to him.  
(Psalm 24.1, CEV)
- We do not split hairs with God on things that belong to Him.  
If we dedicate 10% of our time to God, it does not mean that the remaining 90% of our time can be squandered on sinful purposes like cheating, lying, stealing or other ungodly activities.

Just like time, everything we have including our talent, resources and possessions do not belong to us but belong to God. God gives them to us to steward and enjoy them so we do not split hairs with Him on things that belong to Him.

- Whether you eat or drink, whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.  
(1 Corinthians 10:31)

**100% of what God has bestowed upon us should be used for His purpose. For us to live according to His will and His ways, for us to bring glory to Him, in all aspects of our lives.**

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*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

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## **Offering**

Let us examine the story of king David in 1 Chronicles 21 and 2 Samuel 24

In the Bible, king David is known as a man after God's heart. However, in 1 Chronicles 21 and 2 Samuel 24, King David ordered Joab to take a census of Israel's army. While this might have been a wise management decision, it was a reprehensible decision because by taking the census, David considered the army as his own assets and attempted to quantify their worth without asking for God's permission when the army actually belonged to God. It was like David was checking on God's "account balance" without His permission. His own pride, arrogance and vanity lured him into trusting his own might rather than God. Joab knew this and questioned why king David would want to bring guilt over Israel. Unfortunately, Joab was overruled, and the census was performed. (1 Chronicles 21:3–4)

- King David's command was seen as evil in the sight of God because it was inappropriate of him to ask for a count of the fighting men that did not belong to him.
  - This command was also evil in the sight of God; so he punished Israel.  
(1 Chronicles 21:7, NIV)
- Upon realising the foolish nature of his command and the sin he had committed; king David then asked the Lord to take away his guilt.
  - "I have sinned greatly by doing this. Now, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."  
(1 Chronicles 21:8)
- As consequence of his transgression, the Lord gave king David three options:
  - (i) 3 years of famine
  - (ii) 3 months of destruction by his enemies
  - (iii) 3 days of disease.

King David chose the last option because he knew that salvation belongs to God, and he chose to be dependent on God rather than the mercy of neighbouring nations to help him out of the famine or the sword of his enemies.

- "I am in great distress. Let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is very great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man." (1 Chronicles 21:13)

God then sent a plague upon Israel and 70,000 men fell dead. He subsequently sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. King David pleaded with the Lord to punish him and his family instead of the people of Israel as he was the one who had sinned. (1 Chronicles 21:14–17) To mark the occasion of God's mercy upon David, the angel ordered Gad (King David's seer), to tell him to build an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (which later became the temple of Solomon).

- Although Araunah offered to give king David the site for free, and also provide oxen, wood and wheat for sacrifice, king David insisted on paying the full price

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and declined to sacrifice a burnt offering that cost him nothing. (1 Chronicles 21:22-24)

- But king David replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing.” (1 Chronicles 21:22)

**King David did so because he learnt three things: 1) everything he had were from God, 2) even his salvation was from God and 3) his stewardship was his worship.**

## **Pledging**

God wants us, He wants us to worship Him. His wish is for us to pledge not just our time, money, resources or possessions but ourselves to Him and we should not offer anything that costs us nothing.

## **CONCLUSION**

Everything we have: time, money, gifts, talents, and resources, all belong to God and as His people, we ourselves belong to the Him. In acknowledging that all these things belong to God, we should not split hairs on things that are rightfully His in the first place! God has given us so much on this earth to enjoy and steward. He even gave us the ultimate gift of salvation by sending His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins. Such that even when we are no longer on this earth, we are still saved and receive the gift of eternal life. Let us not fall prey to being calculative with God by trying to determine what exactly we owe Him but remember that everything we have is from God and He wants us to worship Him with all we are and have.

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# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

## **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?
  
- 2a. Have a few volunteers read the following portions of scripture 1 Chronicles 21:1–7, 8–15, 16–21, 22–24 and 25–30 slowly.
- 2b. Take some time to meditate on God's Word that has been read. In your relationship with God, which of the following do you resonate with most strongly:
  - i) Taking a "census" of what belongs to God.
  - ii) Being made to choose your punishment.
  - iii) Experiencing an act of mercy.
  - iv) Called to make a sacrificial offering.

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

- 3a. Describe an instance you checked God's 'account balance' by counting what He had entrusted into your stewardship? Why did you do this?
- 3b. How do you think God feels when you did 3a?
- 3c. What is one thing you can do to overcome the desire to check God's "account balance"?
  
- 4a. Have you been "splitting hairs" with God in your tithing?
- 4b. How does knowing that God can take back what He has given to you to steward, anytime He wishes, impacted you?
- 4c. What is one change you can make to better reflect God's ownership of everything you are and have 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, Prayers and Action**

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

5. Share your testimony on an occasion where you felt it was difficult to give yourself to God but was spurred and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do so.

OR

Give thanks to God for His mercy and compassion as we continue to try to live our lives as a worship to Him.

6. Take time to pray for each other especially in areas of our lives that we find challenging to surrender to God. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and opportunities to dedicate our time, gifts, and resources for the glory of His kingdom and to serve His people.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Great Are You Lord – All Sons & Daughters  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpb02shcAis>
2. A Thousand Hallelujahs – Brooke Ligertwood  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vR\\_sl9lkowA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vR_sl9lkowA)
3. Offering – Paul Baloche  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmgzBrYw5Nk>

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