



NEW YEAR SERIES

gracepoint NEW YEAR SERIES 2011

DEVOTIONS

Monday 31 January 2011

Tithing is an act of worship

Scripture readings:

Proverbs 3 vs 9

Matthew 6 vs 19-21

Jesus taught about money a great deal. Approximately one out of every six verses in the first three Gospels, and almost half of Jesus' parables, deal with money. Why? It is because Jesus clearly says that our money is followed by our hearts. He is primarily concerned with where our hearts lie and giving is an acid test of where we stand with Him and where He ranks in our priorities.

We were created to worship God – to ascribe worth to Him. When we tithe and give we are making a decision to value Him more than our finances or the things the world values. When we give with a willing heart, out of love, gratitude and obedience, we are really giving not just our money, but our hearts, to the only One Who is worthy of them in an act of worship that moves the heart of God.

*“The purpose of tithing is to secure not the tithe but the tither,
not the gift but the giver, not the possession but the possessor,
not your money but you for God.”*

- Anonymous

Tuesday 1 February 2011

Tithing is an act of holiness

Scripture readings:

Leviticus 27 vs 30

1 Peter 1 vs 15-16

1 Peter 2 vs 9-17

We were chosen as a royal priesthood and a holy nation who have been called out of darkness into God's marvellous light. We are called to be holy – set apart for God.

When you consider your finances and your giving, can you say that they reflect holiness – both in obedience to God's commands and in the fact that they are set apart for God's use and purposes?

We are called to a life of holiness; of becoming and being like God. The way we choose to spend our money *will* influence our spirituality. It will challenge us to examine and to shift our priorities, to set our eyes on things above and not on things on the earth and to live with an attitude of humility and submission before God. If we want to grow spiritually and become the people He created us to be, we must be willing to open all of our lives – even our wallets – to God.

“There are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, mind, and the purse.” – Martin Luther

Wednesday 2 February 2011

Tithing is an act of obedience

Scripture readings:

Malachi 3 vs 7-18

John 14 vs 15

Philippians 2 vs 1-8

Romans 8 vs 32

Tithing is a command and giving is not an optional extra for a Christian. If we are to follow Christ, we must be willing to obey what He has commanded, even and especially when it is difficult. We need to strive to follow the example of Jesus – and we will not find a more generous and obedient giver. He humbled Himself and was obedient to death, even death on a cross. How can we withhold anything from the great Giver who freely gave us His own Son?

God, in His infinite grace, attaches a promise to those who obey the command to give. He says that we can test Him on it – that if we obediently tithe and give to God what is His, He will throw open the storehouses of heaven over our lives.

If we love Him, we must display it by obeying His commands; and when we do, the rewards will *always* outweigh the cost.

Thursday 3 February 2011

Tithing is an act of love

Scripture readings:

Deuteronomy 16 vs 17

2 Corinthians 9 vs 7

Giving obediently and generously should come naturally to those who give out of hearts filled with love and gratitude. It is not difficult to give our time to or spend our money on those we love. We want to shower our gifts and blessing on them because we want to please them and we want them to tangibly experience our love. It is not difficult to give to God when we do so out of a heart overflowing with love for Him.

God wants us to give to Him out of love, with cheerful hearts. He does not want us to give begrudgingly to avoid condemnation or out of just a sense of duty or obedience. He wants us to remember that all we have comes from Him and that we are simply giving back what is already His because, we love and trust Him... because we want to pour out a trickle of blessing on Him from the fountain He cascades over us.

*"Whatsoever I thankfully receive, as a token of God's love to me,
I part with contentedly as a token of my love to Him."*

- Theophilus Gale

Friday 4 February 2011

Tithing is an act of evangelism

Scripture readings:

Matthew 5 vs 42

Matthew 8 vs 10

John 17 vs 14-21

James 2 vs 14-16

Those who follow Christ are called to be different from the world. We are called to a different way of thinking and being. While the world fights and strives to see how much it can get, we are called to see how much we give. While the world desperately clings to wealth and power, we are called to live in humility with open hearts and hands before God, clinging to nothing but Him.

Giving is an act of evangelism because when we give to God, we are enabling His Kingdom to come on earth. It is a spiritual kingdom, yes, but it cannot be practically implemented without money. We need to fight injustice and oppression with our prayers, our words, our actions *and* our pocketbooks. We need to tell others about Jesus by preaching the word *and* by feeding and clothing them - by lifting them out of poverty and fear. We need to be a light in the world for others by living a life of love *and* by practically displaying it in the way we generously give.

May we be brave enough to pray today, that God's Kingdom will come through us – through our work, our love, our words, our time and our resources.

Saturday 29 January 2011

Tithing is an act of faith

Scripture readings:

Matthew 6 vs 8

Matthew 6 vs 24-34

Philippians 4 vs 19

One of the primary things that keep Christians from giving is worry. We worry about our physical needs, about providing for our families and about getting and staying afloat or ahead. The Bible makes it clear that God knows what we need before we ask Him. He is committed to providing all our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus and He promises not to let us down.

Tithing is a journey of faith. When we step out, with confidence and trust in God; when we believe that He is a good and gracious Father who will provide for our needs and who will not let us fall, then we are freed to release our fearful grip on what we have and to give to God.

God never intended for us to live in worry and fear. He longs to liberate us from our prisons of anxiety so that we can live in the freedom of His promises and faithfulness. When we choose to walk by faith, we make a declaration that we will trust God, and not ourselves, that He alone is our Provider and that He will make a way for us. Allow Him to release you from the burden of self-sufficiency and rest in the arms of your gracious Father, Who is the giver of life and all good things.