

**SIGNS OF A MATURE CHURCH**  
**Laying Up Treasures in Heaven**  
**Text: Matthew 6:19-21**

**Key Word:** Treasures

**Key Thought:** Do We Need to Be Convinced to Lay up Our Treasures in Heaven?

\*\*\* In 1971 I met a beautiful young girl who was 17 years of age. Within a short time, I began to believe this girl was special. We soon began to see each other on a regular basis. As time went on we began to "get serious" about each other.

The big night arrived when I proposed to marry her. We prepared for the marriage years in advance. Sharon started her "hope chest" with many practical and beautiful items for our new life together. The chest soon became quite full.

We then started to put money in our savings account to store up for our wedding day. Just prior to the wedding we had a bridal shower. We sure appreciated our friends and relatives who helped us "**lay up treasures**" for the upcoming marriage.

On April 26, 1975, we were joined together in a holy matrimony in Cornwall, Ontario. Again, we were showered with gifts and cards. I still chuckle at the four rolling pins we received. I think some relatives were giving Sharon too much ammunition if I got out of hand. One thing was sure; we had prepared our treasures for our wedding day. \*\*\*

God has also chosen to prepare us for a special wedding day. We must realize that everything we own is provided by God. Some of God's blessing are put away in trust until the marriage supper of the Lamb.

We can usually tell how much we really love someone by how much we value them. We show how much we value them by doing our best to please them. I believe one of the greatest signs of spiritual maturity can be found by evaluating our treasures. If we tell someone we love them but never share the things we have with them, they will question our maturity.

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

*Matthew 6:19-21*

**What I kept, I lost; What I spent, I had; What I gave, I have.**

**I have learned that we cannot out give God.** If we are faithful to Him, it doesn't go unnoticed. God expects His Bride to give.

\*\* A pastor was talking to his farmer friend, and he asked the farmer, "*If you had one hundred horses, would you give me fifty?*" The farmer said, "*Certainly.*"

The pastor asked, "*If you had one hundred cows, would you give me fifty?*" The farmer said, "*Yes, of course*"

Then the pastor asked, "*If you had two pigs, would you give me one?*" The farmer said, "*Now cut that out, pastor; you know I have two pigs.*" \*\*

God instituted giving of our finances with a manner that is widely known but often neglected called "**tithing.**" In the Hebrew the word is "**Ma aser**" while in the Greek it is the word "**dekate.**" It simply means "**the tenth.**"

Tithing was not brought in under the Mosaic Law. When Melchizedek, the king of Salem met Abram returning from victory in battle, he blessed Abram.

*"Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything."*

*Genesis 14:20*

A few generations later Jacob had a dream at Bethel ("**House of God.**") He made a vow to God if God prospered his journey. His conversation ended with these words . . .

*"and all that you give me, I will give you a tenth."*

*Genesis 28:22*

There are plenty of things that God requires of us outside of His law.

**I Believe We Can Become Doers of God's Word in the Area of Finances If We Answer Three Simple Questions.**

**I. WHAT WERE THE JEWS REQUIRED TO TITHE OF?**

**II. TO WHOM WERE THE TITHES BROUGHT TO?**

**III. WHERE WERE THE JEWS TOLD TO BRING THEIR TITHES?**

## I. WHAT WERE THE JEWS REQUIRED TO TITHE OF?

*"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.*

*31. If a man redeems any of his tithe, **he must add a fifth of the value to it.***

*32. **The entire tithe of the Lord and flock - every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod - will be holy to the Lord.**"*

*Leviticus 27:30-32*

The children of Israel were required to tithe on their crops, fruit trees (oil & wine), herds and flocks. In other words they would RETURN one-tenth of all their income to the Lord. They were not allowed to give preference to the animals they tithed upon. **Every tenth one that passed under the shepherd's rod belonged to God.**

**If someone exchanged the grain or fruit for money and spent it elsewhere, they had to add 20% to the sum they originally were required to offer to God.** This manner of tithing would strongly oppose any cheating.

A **declaration of honesty** was required to eliminate any deceit.

*"Then say to the Lord your God; have removed from my house the sacred portion (tithe) and have given it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the widow, according to all you commanded. **I have not turned aside from your commands, nor have I forgotten any of them.**"*

*Deuteronomy 26:13*

No one was allowed to cheat the Lord on His sacred tithe. God expected to receive 10 % in full of all the years increase. 9% was considered a theft from God. The tithe was AND is the Lord's. This was not to be complicated.

Lets say they made \$70,000 per year gross, then their tithe would be \$7,000 for that year. On top of the **general tithe** there were offerings collected for the alien, fatherless and widows. As the needs grew, an additional tithe was collected for the temple. It was called the **second tithe**. A **third tithe** was received in the third year for the Levites and the poor. Therefore, there were many times that the Hebrews gave at least 20% of their total income to God.

## II. TO WHOM WERE THE TITHES BROUGHT TO?

I have heard people say . . .

"I'm not tithing to my church because I don't like the decisions the leadership makes."

I can simply respond to that childish action by saying,

"If you don't like the decisions of the church your attending, then get into a church you can support."

Never use God's tithe to take a holiday, fix up your house or pay your bills.

\*\*\* Three ministers were discussing how they divided the weekly offerings between the immediate needs of their local church and God's work in long-term efforts in missions and elsewhere.

The Anglican said that in his church they drew a straight line on the floor, threw all the money up in the air, and what fell on the right side of the line was for home use, and what fell on the left was for God's work elsewhere.

The Presbyterian minister said they drew a circle on the floor, tossed the money, and what fell inside the circle was God's long term, and outside the circle was theirs for here and now. But he confessed that the size of the circle was determined by the size of their immediate needs.

The Baptist minister protested that these methods of financial planning were entirely too ad hoc and happenstance.

"Why, the way we do it," he said, "we just throw the money, way up in the air, and whatever God wants for the future He keeps, and what He wants us to use right away, He throws back." \*\*\*

Douglas Mantz  
Let There Be Laughter  
p. 6

The Bible tells us that the whole tithe was to be brought to the Levites.

*"Now the law requires the descendant of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people."*

*Hebrews 7:5*

## II. TO WHOM WERE THE TITHES BROUGHT TO? (Contd.)

Paul made it clear to the Church at Corinth as well . . .

*"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made."*

*I Corinthians 16:2*

### Why were they to give the tithe to the Levites?

*"I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting."*

*Numbers 18:21*

I was told by a woman many years ago that she doesn't believe in giving money to support a pastor. She said, *"He should get out to make a decent living for himself."*

God said, *"Be careful not to neglect the Levites as long as you live in your land."*

*Deuteronomy 12:19*

The people eventually did neglect the Levites. It forced the priesthood to work outside of their priestly duties. The temple began to be neglected. **The Lamp of God went out.** The spiritual level of the people declined. The doors of the temple were closed. **The nation lost all it had worked for as the neighboring armies stripped them of all their wealth.**

You might argue because so many spiritual leaders have broken the trust of their people, **how can I trust them?** In the days of Nehemiah the temple had been neglected until the Word of God was read openly for every family to hear. The temple was sanctified and the tithe came in.

*"All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and oil unto the storehouse. I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah their assistant, **because these men were considered trustworthy.**"*

*Nehemiah 13:12,13*

Nehemiah threw Tobiah (an Ammonite official), out of the storehouse. God is continuing to remove from the Church those like Tobiah who cannot be trusted.

## II. TO WHOM WERE THE TITHES BROUGHT TO? (Contd.)

Paul names them for what they are . . .

*"men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and **who think that godliness is a means to financial gain** . . .*

*9. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction."*

*I Timothy 6:5,9*

*"You are not to do as we do here today, everyone doing as he sees fit."*

*Deuteronomy 12:8*

## III. WHERE WERE THE JEWS TOLD TO BRING THEIR TITHES?

All the tithe was to be brought to the Lord at Jerusalem and left at the temple of God.  
They were not to consume their tithe in their houses.

*"You must not eat it in your towns the tithe of your grain and new wine and oil, or the firstborn of your herds and flocks, or whatever you have vowed to give or your freewill offerings or special gifts.*

*18. Instead, you are to eat them in the presence of the Lord your God at the place the Lord your God shall choose."*

*Deuteronomy 12:17,18*

*"And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: **and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house.**"*

*Nehemiah 10:38*

Anyone who tries to convince God that His tithe should go to someplace other than the local church is walking in disobedience and immaturity before God. **READ: Malachi 3:6-8**

### III. WHERE WERE THE JEWS TOLD TO BRING THEIR TITHES? (Contd.)

If we not only want to lay up our treasures in heaven but also want to be God's treasured possession we have no choice but to tithe (10%) on our first fruits to the local church. We cannot fool God on this matter.

**Anyone who continues to pay 21% on their credit card debt should ask themselves why that is okay while they don't anything left over for God and His work on earth. Remember that God doesn't need our money! He not only expects but he also demands our obedience.**

\*\* An old miser called his doctor, lawyer and minister to his deathbed. *"They say you can't take it with you,"* said the dying man. *"But I am going to try. I've got three envelopes with \$30,000.00 cash in each one. I want each of you to take an envelope, and just when they lower my casket, each of you are to throw in the envelopes. I want you to check on each other after to make sure you've followed my last request."*

At the funeral, each man tossed in his envelope.

On the way home, the minister confessed *"I needed money for the church, so I took out \$10,000.00 and threw only \$20,000.00 into the grave."*

The doctor said, *"I, too, must confess. I'm building a clinic. I took \$20,000.00 and threw in only \$10,000.00."*

*"Gentlemen, I'm ashamed of you,"* said the lawyer. *"I threw in a cheque for the full amount."* \*\*

Douglas Mantz  
*"Let There Be Laughter"*  
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### 1850 LeTourneau's Bitter Experience

\*\*\* R.G. LeTourneau, the Christian earth-moving machinery manufacturer who died in 1969, failed often in the earlier years of his career.

Ironically, though, he made \$35,000 profit one year in the middle of the depression. Puffed up with pride, he withheld the payment of his \$5,000 annual pledge to the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in order to reinvest it in the business and give the Lord an even greater share the following year when he anticipated a net profit of \$100,000. \*\*\*

(Contd.)

### III. WHERE WERE THE JEWS TOLD TO BRING THEIR TITHES? (Contd.)

\*\*\* God was not mocked by LeTourneau's withholding of his tithe from the storehouse. Within a year, his anticipated \$100,000 profit was turned into a \$100,000 loss, and brought the erring servant to his knees. It was a thoroughly chastened and repentant LeTourneau who by much courage and faith pledged not only \$5,000 to his church for the year he skipped, but also the same amount for the following year - in the face of \$100,000 debt and no money for payroll. On top of that, his bookkeeper was ready to quit.

From that point on, LeTourneau's fortune changed and within four years, he and his wife founded the LeTourneau's Foundation comprising 90% of the stocks of LeTourneau Corp., the earnings of which financed evangelical Christian work worldwide. At one time, this foundation was worth \$40 million.

LeTourneau often said: *"It is not how much money I give God, but how much of God's money I keep for myself."* \*\*\*

I've had people tell me that they give to the work of God and they are still in debt. I personally do not believe that anyone who has been faithful in giving at least a tithe to the LORD will remain in debt. Once we follow God's commands in giving, THEN we will apply those same principles in our personal finances whether it is easy or not.

God has already given us the 100% of His blessings AND MORE. Perhaps we've squandered some of the 90% blessings and now are in debt with God in our nations and in our churches. I've often said *"I don't believe in tithing."* What I should have been saying was that it was a shadow of things to come. It doesn't eliminate the OT it fulfills it and makes sense of it in the NT. **The NT is always abundantly more the OT in both giving and receiving.**

Will unfaithful people hurt those who have been faithful? No! God will always provide for the faithful ones in His kingdom. Those who continue to choose to be unfaithful need to understand that the faithful ones will not always be there to bail them out. Will unfaithfulness keep you out of heaven? Just be careful not to allow unfaithfulness to grow and become total disobedience and anger against God for Him NOT acting in a manner against His Word.

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Date: Sept 18/22

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: All of Me



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Persian Proverb

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*"Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything."*

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*"and all that you give me, I will give you a tenth."*

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**II. TO WHOM WERE THE TITHES BROUGHT TO?** - *Hebrews 7:5; I Corinthians 16:2; Numbers 18:21; Deuteronomy 12:19; Nehemiah 13:12,13; I Timothy 6:5,9; Deuteronomy 12:8*

**III. WHERE WERE THE JEWS TOLD TO BRING THEIR TITHES?** - *Deuteronomy 12:17,18; Nehemiah 10:38; Malachi 3:6-8*