



**Sunday, Feb 15, 2009: The Family and the Kingdom
Part VI (Giving)**

Scripture: Matthew 23:23-24

Sermon Notes:

1. Tithing is part of the Christian view of life and reality that is concerned above all with faith, justice, and mercy. Because we believe that the earth is the Lord's and all it contains, ALL we have belongs to God, and He requires that a small portion of that be given back to Him to extend His righteousness, His justice, and His kingdom.
2. The tithe is from the principle of the first fruits. To bless His people, the Lord instructed the Israel to give 10% of their increase, or net income, back to Him.
3. The purpose and effect of the tithe is our blessing, the establishment of God's justice and mercy, and the victory of our faith. We are called to give to the Lord so that His kingdom will be capitalised and His work and gospel will spread to the discipling of the nations.
4. The function of the tithe is to support those who labour in the Lord. We must therefore wisely assess and weigh the faithfulness of the church or agency to whom we contribute, to discern whether they are truly and faithfully working for the Lord.
5. Throughout the history of the Church, the tithe has often been used to support not only the local church, but also schools, hospitals, orphans and widows, foreign mission work, poor immigrants, agencies and ministries, and much more.
6. When we give to God, we can be assured that not a cent is in vain because He has promised that His word cannot return to Him void; it will accomplish its ordained purpose (Isaiah 55:11). So our giving to God is ALWAYS effectual.

Application Questions:

1. Statistics suggest that only 2% of North American Christians tithe. In what ways has the neglect of the tithe contributed to the declining influence of the church in our society?
2. How is the tithe a tool for extending the kingdom of God and His justice and mercy?
3. Do I personally recognize that all belongs to God and give cheerfully back to Him a portion of what He has given to me?
4. How can we encourage other Christians to give to the work of the Lord? What Scripture verses can we give them to show that God intends to use the tithe to bless us and not to impoverish us? (e.g., Deuteronomy 14:28-29)