

The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.
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SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.
Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching
since 1969

MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia
Don Iverson.....India
Marc Veary.....Malawi, Africa
Graham McDonald..Scotland
J. Paguaga....Honduras, C.A.
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

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IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

New Testament Giving Versus Old Testament "Tithing"

Brian R. Kenyon

A preacher was once asked why he did not preach tithing. He responded by saying he could not afford to preach it because it would cut the contribution too much. His point was that where he preached, the members gave well beyond 10% of their income. However, not many congregations would fall into that category. Some have estimated that our brotherhood's contributions represent 5-7% of our collective income, while other estimates claiming to be more accurate say our contributions only represent 2-3% of our collective income (Gambill 49). In either case, it is not too difficult to see why many congregations do not have the funds to properly do the Lord's work. Contributions would probably double or even triple if members gave 10%. This often brings up the question, "What about tithing?" Thus, a comparison of Old Testament tithing with New Testament giving is profitable.

Old Testament "Tithing"

The practice of tithing existed long before the Law was given to Moses at Sinai. Many nations in ancient history tithed property, produce, and/or currency. Some Biblical examples are Abram, who paid a tenth to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:17-20), and Jacob, who promised to give God a tenth of everything (Gen. 28:20-22). According to some sources, when considering all the requirements under the Law of Moses, the Israelites may have given closer to 30% ("Tithe"). According to the Pentateuch, there were three different tithes. First, a tithe was to be given by the people to support the Levites who had no inheritance (Num. 18:20-32). Second, a tithe was to be given of the land that was "holy unto the Lord" (Lev. 27:30-33). Third, a yearly tithe was to be given to keep appointed feasts along with a special tithe that was to be given every third year (Deut. 14:22-29).

The first century Jewish historian, Josephus, wrote two relevant statements in *Antiquities of the Jews* concerning tithing. First, "Let there be taken out of your fruits a tenth, besides that which you have allotted to give to the priests and Levites. This you may indeed sell in the country, but it is to be used in those feasts and sacrifices that are celebrated in the holy city" (Book 4, 8, 8). Second, "Besides those two tithes which I have already said you are to pay every year ... you are to bring every third year a third tithe to be distributed to those who are in want" (Book 4, 8, 22). To say Jews always only gave a tenth may not be accurate.

As we examine the writing prophets, we note that God's people abused tithing in at least two ways. First, they "tithed," but with no intention of showing concern for justice, righteousness, or mercy (cf. Amos 4:4). Tithing was supposed to be motivated by genuine love and joy for God and one's brethren (Deut. 14:23, 26, 28-29). However, when given from wrong motives, tithing was an abomination to the Lord. Second, God's people withheld their tithes, thus "robbing" God (Mal. 3:8-10). This was also an abomination to God and would result in a withdrawal of God's blessings if continued. Under the Law, tithing gave Israel the following opportunities: (1) to declare they were giving back a portion of what already belonged to God (Deut. 8:18; 26:10-15); (2) to remember the blessings God gave them by imitating Him and His care for those in need (Deut. 14:28-29); and (3) to serve God sacrificially, at a cost to themselves (Deut. 14:22). These same opportunities are also available to us in our giving.

New Testament Giving

We are no longer under the Law of Moses (Gal. 3:24-25; Col. 2:14), including God's law of tithing. However, to say that we are not under the Law does not mean our responsibility to give is somehow lessened or that it does not matter (Black 39). The New Testament teaches that we are to give liberally (Rom. 12:8; 2 Cor. 8:2; 9:11-13). New Testament examples show that our giving can exceed 10%. Jesus set forth the poor widow as a good giver because "she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood" (Mk. 12:44). Note what Jesus required of the rich young ruler before he could inherit eternal life: "Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me" (Lk. 18:24). The Lord approved of Zacchaeus because, among other things, he said, "I give half of my goods to the poor" (Lk. 19:8-9). The Jerusalem church, recognizing that everything they possessed was not their own, sold their goods and "brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet" (Acts 4:32, 34-35). The churches of Macedonia gave liberally out of far greater affliction and poverty than any of us will likely experience in our lifetime (2 Cor. 8:1-5). All these examples reflect great sacrifice on the part of the giver. Can we expect any less of our giving today?

Scriptural Giving Today

Let us conclude by noting some principles that must govern our giving (adapted from Brannan 22). First, perhaps the Lord has not set a definite percentage to our giving for the purpose of proving the sincerity of our love (2 Cor. 8:8). How sincere does our love for God prove to be when measured by what we give? Second, God does not want us to give reluctantly or merely out of duty, but cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7). Do we give cheerfully or "Just because I have to"? Third, acceptable giving requires sacrifice on the part of the giver (2 Cor. 8:5). David exemplified this by saying he would not "offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing" (2 Sam. 24:24). Do we sacrifice or just give God the "leftovers"? Fourth, we are to give as God has prospered us (1 Cor. 16:2). Do we increase our giving when our financial prosperity increases? Fifth, God requires us to give liberally (2 Cor. 9:11, 13). Does God consider what we give now to be liberal or are we robbing Him? Giving is a serious matter, both for our soul's salvation and for the well-being of the local church! Let's give as the New Testament directs!

Works Cited

- Black, V. P. *Rust as a Witness*. Chickasaw, AL: V. P. Black, 1968.
- Brannan, E. R. "Should Our Giving Exceed the Tithe?" *Gospel Advocate* April 1994: 21.
- Gambill, Steven J. "Should a Christian Tithe?" *Gospel Advocate* Dec. 1992: 49.
- "Tithe." *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1988 ed.

Blessings & Examples

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ²that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ³For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, ⁴imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. (2 Cor. 8:1-5)

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Virginia Walker's out-patient throat surgery went well. Also remember Wanda Bruno, Ginny Hamby, Jim Turner, Brenda Mask, Cheryl Barker and Margaret Coone in prayer.

Shut In Members: Virginia Plumlee, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Don Starks, Evelyn Wyatt, Sharon Edler.

Others: Lynn Stevens, Bob McAnally, Jerry Cole, Greg Bowman, (friend of Tim Croson), Joyce Stearsman, Jack Pinckert and Jamie Tobias, (friend of Brenda Mask).



Coffee and Conversation

We are starting Coffee and Conversation before morning services every Sunday at 9:00 a.m. What a great way to get to know everyone better!

Upcoming Events

Saturday Jan. 20th: Men's breakfast at the Orange St. church of Christ at 8:00 a.m.

Tuesday Jan. 23rd: Seniors (or others interested), there will be a Crime Prevention presentation at 10:00 a.m. Donuts at 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday Jan. 23rd: F.S.O.P. ladies class at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday Feb. 3rd: Ladies Day at the Sebring Parkway church of Christ at 8:00 a.m.

Placed Membership

Ciera Edwards and her family have requested to place membership with our congregation. Her children's names are Caelen Bailey, Cam'ron Bailey and Moriah Edwards. Let us please welcome them all into our family.

Visitors

Tiffany Hash, Sam and Megan, Bitsy Thomas, David & Susan Stearsman and family, Rick & Mary Shur, Keith & Cheryl Cozort, Butch & Arlene Carr, Ty Rymes, Will & Autumn Vann and family, Tom & Judy Neal, Jerry & Denise Martin, Wadu Khoury, and Mildred Estrella.

 Tune into AM 1330 (station WWAB) with your friends and neighbors every Monday from 5:00-5:30 p.m. for the "Way of Truth" program. This is a joint effort to evangelize involving Terrance Brownlow-Dindy (6th Street) and Hiram Kemp. Let's point our community to the Bible!

Watch . . .



In Search of the Lord's Way

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

January

Frank Hamby **Table** Fred Strickland
John McShane **Assist** Bobby Simpson

Sunday, January 21, 2018
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Kyle Bingle
Prayer Josh Estridge

10:30 A.M.

Announcements David Williams
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Charles Paulin
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Tim Croson
Sound Booth Casey Paulin

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Tucker Sweeney
Opening Prayer Stacey Paulin
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer David Deal
Sound Booth Casey Paulin
Greeters Williams
Att. Cards Willcut boys
Open & Close Building Jason Hendrix

Wednesday, January 24, 2018

Song Leader Casey Paulin
Opening Prayer Bobby Sheumaker
Closing Prayer David Deal

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - (863) 602-9005

Sunday, January 28, 2018
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Jim Turner
Prayer C.J. Grimes

10:30 A.M.

Announcements David Williams
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Bobby Sheumaker
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Tucker Sweeney
Sound Booth Paul Sweeney

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Tucker Sweeney
Opening Prayer David Anderson
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer C. J. Grimes
Sound Booth Paul Sweeney
Greeters Bingles
Att. Cards Paul/Ian
Open & Close Building Jason Hendrix

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Song Leader Matt Wilcut
Opening Prayer Jason Hendrix
Closing Prayer Bobby Simpson

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Dec. 24 \$5,210.55
Dec. 31 \$6,927.43
Jan. 07 \$6,026.20
Jan. 14 \$5,421.19
Contribution Average \$5,723.70
2017 Weekly Budget \$4,716.51

Restoration

What do we think when we hear the word “restoration”? Old furniture? Antique cars? Simply put, restoration is bringing something back to its original condition. Spiritually, whenever there is a departure from God’s will, there stands a need for restoration. Sometimes, even people need restoration. Humanity was created to glorify God (cf. Isa. 43:7; Eccl. 12:13; 1 Cor. 10:31), but “all have sinned,” and have fallen short of that glory (Rom. 3:23). From the first sin (Gen. 3:6), accountable human beings have needed restoration. The fulfillment of this need began very shortly after the first sin. It was in the promised “seed of woman” (Gen. 3:15). The remainder of the Old Testament shows the coming answer to real restoration. The New Testament reveals the reality of that answer. Thanks be to God who provided his image-bearer, mankind (Gen. 1:26-27), with a way to be restored (Jn. 3:16). Jesus Christ is the one who “washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Rev. 1:5). Thus, Jesus Christ is “the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Heb. 5:9). For restoration to be a reality, the word of God must take precedence (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Restoration can only occur when the Bible is learned, respected, and applied. When the right attitude is present along with a proper understanding of God’s word, restoration will take place (cf. Acts 8:30-31; 10:33). May we all “hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Mt. 5:6), taking advantage of the opportunities we have to hear God’s word. Let us examine ourselves, for we might find that we stand in need of restoration. ❤️ *Brian*



South Florida Avenue
CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Return Service Requested

The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .

“Fellow workers for the truth”

This bulletin is being received by many in the midst of FSOP lectureship week. Two great sermons are set for tonight, and a written, audio, and video record will benefit many for years to come. This would not be possible without the Lord and the help of faithful brethren who love the truth! Thank you, SFA church, for your help in this great work!

Save the Date

Feb. 23-25, 2018

YES Weekend

Forrest Park, Valdosta



If you would like to attend YES Weekend, see Hiram or Brian so we can work on accommodations & travel logistics!

Think souls! Let's Invite our friends and neighbors to church assemblies and/or to one-on-one Bible studies!



Food Gifts Should Always Be Appreciated, But ...

In order to maximize the usefulness of our benevolent food pantry, please bring “pop-top” cans. Lately, most of the people needing food are transient and have no practical way of opening cans or cooking food. This is different from times past, when there were a lot more families who would take the food home to store, prepare, and eat. Church members here have always done a great job donating food. As times change, the type of cans we donate must also change in order to maximize our benevolent food pantry. The more people helped, the more people will learn about Jesus through the action of His church.