

Sunday School Lesson for the Month of October 2012

Offering Time In The Temple

Mark 12:41-44

Matthew 6:21

(Sunday, October 7, 2012)

There were other vacant seats in the Temple, but Jesus occupied a seat over against the offering table where He observed the givers and their gifts. The text says, “And Jesus sat over against the treasury to behold the people as they cast money into the offering plate.” The Old Testament and the New Testament have much to say about giving of money for the Lord’s work or returning to the Lord His share. In Malachi 3:10, God said, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse.” In this passage of scripture, God is directing His people to give to Him what belongs to Him. Leviticus 27:30 says, “And all the tithes of the land whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree is the Lord’s. It is holy unto the Lord.” When we pay our tithes, we are simply giving to God what already belongs to God. It is sad that we have people in our congregations that have been members for 35 and 40 years and have never committed themselves to tithing. We cannot give God something that is already His. If we desire to give an offering to God, it must be a gift over and above the tithe. Among the money events of the Apostolic Church, God has seen fit to single out Ananias and Sapphira’s withholding their true income from the Lord. We read about it in the 5th chapter of Acts. God strikes them with death because there must not be any hypocrisy when it comes to the matter of giving to God. Every Christian should reexamine the stewardship of their money and re-ask the question, “What is my relationship with God?”

(Sunday, October 14, 2012)

If a person continues to rob God by withholding the tithe after he has been taught, you have the right to question his/her relationship with God. One statement from our text jumps out and stand before us boldly, “Jesus sat over against the treasury and beheld the people casting money into it.” Jesus puts himself in a position to see who the contributors are and how much the contributors are putting into the offering plate. Jesus was sitting by the

temples' treasury into which people placed offering for the upkeep of the Temple. Jesus saw many rich people; He also saw how much money they were putting into the offering plate. He was in a position to see a poor widow who did not have much in a material way, but she gave all she had which was not enough to maintain the temple, but Jesus said, "*she had given more than the rich*" not just her gift to Jesus, but she gave herself. Jesus knows each individual's salary; He knows the number of mouths you feed in your house, and the number for whom you must provide clothing. He knows how much you spend for health insurance. He knows how much you spend for gasoline; for recreation and for entertainment. It's no need for us to make excuses for what we give, for Jesus knows our income. Someone may say, "I really don't have it to give," but I want to remind you that Jesus knows our financial status. From this standpoint, we need to be very careful when it comes to our stewardship in giving, lest we do as Ananias and Sapphira. We shouldn't hold back for ourselves that which rightly should be used for the Lord's work. It is a sad thing for a Christian to die spiritually in the church. Yet this is what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. God's word solved the problem of how much to give. God's word says, "give liberally and sacrificially." Give from the heart and you will be giving according to Matthew 6:33.

I am grateful that our church has moved beyond the stage of raising money to the point of giving money. It is my objective to encourage and motivate our members to be committed to giving God's way.

Jesus sees the spirit in which our offering is made. II Corinthians 9:6-7, "*he which soweth sparingly should also reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully should also reap bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity for God loveth a cheerful giver.*" It must be miserable for people who lack the heart to give to the Kingdom work. For Jesus said, "where your money is there your heart will be also."

Tithing And The Church Budget

Malachi 3:10

(Sunday, October 21, 2012)

The word “budget” originally was a French word that meant ‘a leather wallet.’ Since then, the British government used the word to mean a statement of estimated revenue. The United States government used the word budget in a similar tense. Budget is not a very exciting word. It lacks the spirit of faith; it fails to arouse worthwhile enthusiasm and devotion. It suggest a distasteful duty to be performed. The word budget alone fails altogether to raise our vision, and stir and stimulate our devotion, but when you say church budget, it reveals the measure of our faith in God; or faith in Christ and our faith in the church. The budget of the church tells of our passion for the glory of God in the salvation of lost souls of those who have not known Christ before. The budget of the church provides money to underwrite the cost of promoting the ministries of the church. There are many worthwhile causes that receive financial support from the church budget. It is possible for the sanctified believer to become so efficient and precise in planning the church budget that the spirit of Christ will be grieved. The planning of the church budget, therefore, must become a spiritual matter, in which faith, love, and grace must have their place. Those who serve on the church budget ministry must fully understand what Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, “if any man will come after me let him deny himself.” A church member who is self-centered is disqualified from serving as a member in the church budget ministry. All individuals who serves in the church budget ministry must recognize and understand fully Malachi 3:10. Tithing is a spiritual matter. God said in Malachi 3:10, “*Bring all the tithe into my storehouse that there will be meat in my house.*” To meet the challenge facing our people today, who live in a corrupt society, meat churches are desperately needed. While money raising projects made a vital contribution to ongoing ministry of the church yesterday, money raising projects fall short of providing adequate funds to maintain the church today. Never before in the history of the church are so many people turning to the church for financial help. Churches today are challenged to encourage and motivate members of the church to accept God’s plan in financing the budget of the church. Malachi 3:10 will provide adequate financial support for the church to meet the needs of suffering people. We must take the church of Jesus Christ out of the begging business, for nobody respects a beggar.

(Sunday, October 28, 2012)

What money projects will do and what money projects have done over the years is to produce money raisers. Money raisers are not needed in the Lord's church. We need more money givers! There is a word generally lacking in our stewardship emphasis; that word is SACRIFICE which means to give up something of value for the benefit of others. Jesus tells an exciting story in the 6th chapter of John, which will exemplify the fact of self-sacrifice. The lad's lunch in the hands of the lad was sufficient to provide food for one person, but the lad's lunch in the hands of Jesus provided enough food to feed 5,000 men plus women and children. Christian stewardship is a vital part of our Christian life, and no professing child of God has claimed to have found the way to have a good relationship with Christ without tithing. Malachi 3:10 is the word of God. If we fail to obey the word of God, we will find ourselves out of the grace of God. There was an attempt on the part of some of God's children to disobey God by not giving to God what belonged to Him and found themselves under a curse, Malachi 3:8-9. In Malachi 3:10, lay the principle, which prevails here as in every aspect of our relations to God. It is the principle of faith. There are far too many Christians in the church who do not have faith in the word of God. Faith honors God and God honors faith. In no other way is it possible for us to honor God than having faith in His eternal word. We have nothing to offer God but faith. We have nothing to lay upon His altar but our faith in His word. So the budget of our church will meet the financial need, if the membership will obey the word of God by becoming tithers. It is not our money itself that God accepts. He has no need of anything we have but faith in His eternal word. God said in His eternal word, "Bring the tithes' into my storehouse, and I will pour out blessings from the windows of heaven to satisfy all human needs." God will keep His word!!