

HOW MUCH IS LEFT?

Luke 21:1-4

Other texts: Psalm 24:1-2; Malachi 3:6-10; Luke 12:16-34; Matthew 19:16-22; Romans 6:16-18; 1 Corinthians 4:7; 6:19-20; 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6-7

Introduction: Giving (tithing) is a very ancient practice and man like Abraham, Jacob tithed and then along came the Laws of Moses that made it mandatory for Israel to tithe.

- Israel was to give to provide for the Priests.
- They were to provide for the Priestly Tribe of Levi who had not possessions.
- They were to give to the Temple to maintain it and its services and rituals.
- They were to give every third year to the poor.

The New Testament Covenant does not require tithing for the Christian is not under the law, but under Grace. However, this requires MORE of the believer than the Jew, for the believer is "not his own, but has been bought with a price." All that the believer "has" he is only the steward of for all things are subordinate to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is Lord, therefore all things are His.

The Old Covenant required a person to give to God a tithe, a tenth, but the rest (90%) was the person's to use as he/she wanted to. The New Covenant believer has nothing of his/her own to begin with for all belongs to the Lord.

1. People have always twisted God's Word.

- People are always trying to explain away or simply ignore God's Word such as:
 - "turning the other cheek" or "giving away one's cloak to a thief" or "forgiving someone 70x7 times" or "loving one's enemy."

2. Giving to God is another area that people refuse to carry out God's Word.

- A person naturally thinks that he/she is his/her own boss and master and is entirely free to do as he/she pleases.
- Of all mankind, the Christian, should know better. No person is ever independent of God.
- God, as creator, has a natural right over mankind and all things that exist are His anyhow.
- The Christian has been redeemed by God, bought and paid for. The believer has turned over to God body, soul, spirit and all things.
 - Sadly, however, most Christians violate their vows of faith and surrender by refusing to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus and still claim ownership to themselves and things.

3. The Example of the Widow's Mite.

- This was an offering after the tithe had already been given.
 - In man's eyes, her offering was:
 - unnecessary - surely God wouldn't ask anything from such a poor woman.
 - useless - of what good could 1/2 cent do for the Temple expenses?
 - presumptuous - having given all she had and no savings, this might force God to have to support her completely.
 - In God's eyes, her offering was:
 - great - it exceeded all the accumulated gifts of the rich man who had given only a tiny amount of his stored-up wealth and the widow gave her last 1/2 cent

leaving her nothing whatsoever.

- good - because the widow gave out of love and respect to God and God knew all about her motives, resources and income.

4. How does one estimate giving?

- How much do you have? What do you have? How much do you have left? Why are you giving?

5. How does one give?

- Not expecting applause or even recognition.
- Gladly, delighted to give back to God that which is already His anyhow, realizing how indebted you are to God.
- Liberally, it isn't yours anyhow, glorify God and recognize His ownership.

CONCLUSION:

1. Christian giving is most often similar to the man who took his weekly check, cashed it, went outside, threw it up into the air and shouted "Here it is God, take what you want and I'll get by with what falls to the ground..."
2. Take an inventory. Has your past record of giving brought honor to God?
 - Has your giving been honest, responsible, have you been a good steward?
 - Have you misused what God entrusted to you? Have you been calling HIS, yours?
3. Christian, of all people who should accept the truth, it should be US. All things are the Lords. Nothing of this world is ours. If we love the things of the world, then we can have no part of God.
4. Just what did God mean by "hilarious giving?"
5. God knows all about us. We can hide nothing from Him. God wants us to give graciously, generously, even hilariously. Shall we?