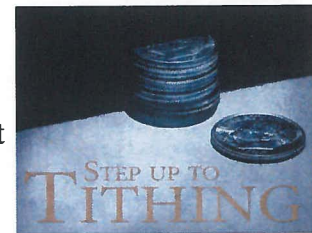


Sometimes people don't like it when pastors talk about stewardship. For some, it hits too close to home. It is easier to talk about bad people in Washington, in history, or overseas than it is to think about what our daily life in Christ is supposed to look like—how we are supposed to love our neighbor. The fact that we don't like hearing about stewardship certainly means we ought to face it. Here are a few simple and practical realities.



God calls us to first-fruits, sacrificial giving. This means we should give off the top. We should set a percentage of our income as a deliberate gift for the work of the Church and give that first. We write the check/set aside the cash/draft the amount to the Lord's work in the Church before we pay the mortgage or pay for our medicine or pay for anything else.

We don't pay for all the stuff we need, and think we need, and then give from what is left over. That is the first-fruits idea. It is hard because we think we need all sorts of other things first. But that is the point of "sacrificial."

Next, how could the starting point for Christian generosity and sacrifice really be anything less than a tithe—10 percent? The ceremonial law of the Old Testament was never arbitrary. In the Old Testament, the Levites received this tithe so they could be full-time ministers. Does the New Testament have a ministry that is larger or smaller? It is far larger: "Make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). And we are still to have a full-time ministry: "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

So, if 10 percent was needed in the Old Testament, and we have a bigger mission need in the New Testament, how can we expect the Lord's work to be done on less than a tithe? First-fruits, sacrificial, generous giving—that's the way. We shouldn't fool ourselves into thinking that we've out-given God's goodness or that we've given plenty.



We might be tempted to think so but consider—no one in the Church has given plenty because no one has actually given everything. No one has died for his sins. Only the sinless Son of God did that. Or, as St. Paul said, "I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For

you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:8-9).

As you can see, what the Bible commands about our stewardship can sting. It's Law, and the law shows our sins. It calls us to repentance. The Law is meant to expose and accuse for the sake of showing us Christ and His fulfillment of the law. If first-fruits, sacrificial giving has you squirming, that's the point.

He, who fed His people in the desert with Manna every morning, doesn't need their bread. But they need to give it. And what they give, however little it might be, however grudgingly they do so, He blesses it. He does all things well and works all things together for good. We don't give our tithe to Jesus because it is a good investment. We give it because He is good, we love Him, and we trust Him.

*Board of Stewardship*

**Financial Statement as of  
September 30, 2018**

Income:           \$ 96,982.36  
Expenses:         \$ 90,782.92  
\$+ 6,199.44

**January-September 2018**

- 115** Total Baptized Membership
- 92** Total Confirmed Membership
- 61** Average Sunday Worship
- 20** Average Sunday School Attendance
  - 4 Children & Youth
  - 16 Adults

