

### **Sermon 3: The Misuse of Money, Legalistic Tithing, and the Warnings**

**Place:** St John, Prospect Ky

**Date:** 11/19/23

**By:** Rev. Dr. Alvarez

**Bible Verse:** 1 Timothy 6:10 (NIV)

- "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

#### **Opening Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, as we gather today, we seek wisdom and understanding as we explore the principles of financial integrity and the warnings about legalistic tithing and the love of money as highlighted in the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. Grant us the insight to apply these teachings to our lives with humility and grace. In your name, we pray, Amen.

#### **St. Augustine:**

**As our Church father, St. Augustine, once said, "Hoard not, save what you need; what do not need, given to those who need it."**

#### **Introduction:**

Dear congregation, today we come together to reflect on the dangers of greed and the misuse of money, as well as the warnings about legalistic tithing and the love of money as emphasized in the Bible. These teachings remind us of the profound impact of our attitudes and actions toward money on our faith and spiritual well-being.

#### **Jesus and the Apostles' Warnings:**

In **Luke 11:42**, Jesus issues a warning about legalistic tithing, saying, "Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone." This admonition emphasizes the importance of justice and love of God over rigid adherence to tithing laws.

Furthermore, in **Luke 18:12**, Jesus highlights the danger of self-righteousness in tithing, "I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get." This cautionary tale serves as a reminder to avoid pursuing righteousness through outward displays of religious observance, including tithing, without genuine love and compassion.

In **Acts 15**, the apostles provide guidance on the observance of the Mosaic law, emphasizing that believers should not be burdened with legalistic requirements. Instead, they state in **Acts 15:29**, "You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell."

**Galatians 2:9-10** James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that **we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised**. 10 All they asked was that **we should continue to remember the poor**, the very thing I had been eager to do all along."

The warnings from Jesus and the apostles about legalistic tithing and the love of money align with the dangers of greed and **the neglect of faith addressed in 1 Timothy 6:10**. It reinforces the importance of prioritizing **justice, love of God, and compassion over rigid adherence to tithing laws**.

Our understanding of these warnings guides us in realizing that living under the requirement of the law made sin our master, as mentioned in **Romans 6:14**. It helps us recognize the true essence of the teachings of Christ and the apostles, which liberate us from fear and guilt associated with legalistic practices.

As we reflect on these teachings, it becomes clear that tithing, often considered an Old Testament practice (**Leviticus 27:30**), should be approached with a spirit of genuine generosity and compassion rather than as a means to seek blessings or avoid curses. **Acts 15** further directs us to remember the poor, shifting our focus from legalistic tithing to a compassionate, generous mindset.

The insights provided by these texts give us a comprehensive understanding of the warnings about legalistic tithing and the love of money, emphasizing the importance of aligning our attitudes and actions towards money with the overarching principles. The teachings of Jesus and the apostles embody the values of justice, love, and compassion.

## **Key Principles:**

### **1. The Dangers of Greed:**

As highlighted in **1 Timothy 6:10**, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves

with many griefs." This stark warning serves as a reminder of the potential harm that the love of money can cause, leading to spiritual bondage and neglect of one's faith. Just as the story of Robin Hood illustrates, the misuse of wealth and the pursuit of riches can result in spiritual poverty.

## **2. Legalistic Tithing and Compassionate Giving:**

Jesus addresses the issue of legalistic tithing in **Luke 11:42**, cautioning against neglecting justice and the love of God in favor of rigid adherence to tithing laws. Instead, believers are called to prioritize justice and the love of God, moving beyond legalistic practices to sincere and compassionate giving.

This aligns with the teachings in **Acts 15**, where the apostles provide guidance on the observance of the Mosaic law, emphasizing the importance of not burdening believers with legalistic requirements.

## **3. The Church is a House of Prayer, NOT a Marketplace**

**Mark 11:17** <sup>17</sup> And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a den of robbers.'"

**Acts 8:19-20** <sup>19</sup> and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." <sup>20</sup> Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!"

The biblical application of **Acts 8:20** can be connected to the warning against using money to manipulate God. In **Acts 8**, there is a story about Simon the sorcerer who tries to use money to obtain the power of the Holy Spirit. He sees the apostles laying hands on people and the Holy Spirit being given to them, and he offers them money, saying, "Give me also this power so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:19).

**This passage serves as a warning against the wrong motivation and misuse of money when it comes to matters of faith, spirituality, and God's blessings.** It highlights the importance of genuine faith and a sincere heart in seeking God's gifts and blessings rather than **attempting to manipulate or buy them with money.**

**The story in Acts 8:20 teaches us that the Holy Spirit and the gifts of God cannot be bought or manipulated with material wealth.** God's blessings, including the power of the Holy Spirit, are freely given by His grace and are not something that can be acquired through monetary means.

#### **4. Financial Integrity, Contentment, and Eternal Investments:**

##### **The Prosperity Gospel and the Indulgencies**

"Indulgences" refers to the remission or forgiveness of the temporal punishment for sins granted by the Catholic Church. Indulgences were historically associated with actions such as charitable acts, prayers, or pilgrimages, which were believed to reduce the time spent in purgatory.

Hebrews 9:27

<sup>27</sup> Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

Cultivating financial integrity and finding contentment in what we have are essential aspects of our faith. We are called to avoid the temptations of materialism and excessive consumerism. Similarly, we are reminded to seek eternal investments, prioritize spiritual growth, and invest in activities that have a lasting impact rather than solely pursuing temporary earthly possessions.

##### **Call to Action:**

As we reflect on these principles and warnings, let us evaluate our own attitudes and actions toward money. Let us embody the spirit of compassionate giving and selfless generosity, shifting our focus from legalistic tithing to sincere, heartfelt giving and extending a helping hand to those in need.

The warnings about legalistic tithing and the love of money are echoed in the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. **Luke 18:12 and Acts 15** highlight the dangers of self-righteousness in tithing and provide guidance on the observance of the Mosaic law, emphasizing the importance of justice, love, and compassion.

##### **PRAYER:**

**Heavenly Father,**

As we strive to be holistic givers and embrace radical generosity in the kingdom of God, may we remember that our time, talents, and treasures are entrusted to us by the Lord.

Let us use them wisely and generously, knowing that our giving reflects our love for God and our commitment to serving His people.

Let us commit to living as radical givers, embodying the spirit of generosity not by the letter of the law but by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Benediction:**

May we depart from this place with hearts filled with integrity, contentment, and a renewed commitment to seeking eternal investments. May we embrace the teachings of our faith, remember the warnings about legalistic tithing and the love of money, and extend a helping hand to those in need. As we go forth, may we be beacons of generosity and compassion in our communities. **Amen.**