**Wednesday Night Bible Study**

**Wednesday 1 February 2023 – Spring Semester**

**Queens Chapel UMC \* 7410 Muirkirk Road \* Beltsville, MD 20705**

**Instructor: Rev. Dr. Will Butler**

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**The Gospel of Luke**

**Luke 6:38 (NKJV)**

\_ 38 Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

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**Last week**

Q = How did Tithing begin and why was it important to the community God delivered from Egypt?

* When Moses brought God’s Law to the Israelites, tithing was a more complex system
* They were responsible for three types of tithes
* **1st tithe was the Lords**—**Leviticus 27:30-32**

30 “One-tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain from the fields or fruit from the trees, **belongs to the Lord and must be set apart to him as holy**.

31 If you want to buy back the Lord’s tenth of the grain or fruit, you must pay its value, plus 20 percent.

32 Count off every tenth animal from your herds and flocks and **set them apart for the Lord as holy**.

* This 1st tithe was collected to help and/or finance the nation—much like paying taxes to the government
* The Israelites lived in a **Theocracy** [ government by divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided.]
* The Church today should be considered a theocracy—why?
* We’re governed by the principles of God’s Word

**Today’s Lesson:**

* **The 2nd Tithe**—Levites Tithes

***Note:***

***Levi was the third son of Jacob and Leah. His name means “A joining or Connection.”***

* Levites were in charge of the Tabernacle of God and they assisted the Priest **(Numbers 3:5-10)**
* The Tribe of Levi didn’t have an inheritance in the Promised Land

**Numbers 18:20-24**

20 And the Lord said to Aaron, “You priests will receive no allotment of land or share of property among the people of Israel. **I am your share and your allotment**.

21 As for the tribe of Levi, your relatives, I will compensate them for their service in the Tabernacle. Instead of an allotment of land, I will give them the tithes from the entire land of Israel.

**Joshua 13:14**

  Moses did not assign any allotment of land to the tribe of Levi. Instead, as the Lord had promised them, their allotment came from the offerings burned on the altar to the Lord, the God of Israel.

* God appointed the other eleven tribes to take care of the Levites
* The tithe consisted of corn, oil, wine, animal sacrifices, and other materials for their needs
* The tithe also took care of the singers, musicians, and those who ministered in the temple under the supervision of the Levites.

***Remember:***

***Theocracy [ they were governed by God’s divine guidance, officials, and priests who were divinely guided.]***

* The church, from its conceptions, still operates under the same system
* Pastoral Ministry
* Music Ministry
* Staff, etc.
* **The 3rd Tithe**—Charity Tithe
* Every 3rd year a tithe was given for the purpose of taking care of the widows, strangers, and those who had legitimate needs
* **The three tithes were to finance the Theocracy [God’s Kingdom]**
* Some scholars have determined that 40 to 60% of their annual income was returned to the Lord.

* God blessed them to plant seeds which produced an abundant harvest for them.
* Some believers today wonder how they were able to give up to 60% of their annual income
* God’s Kingdom operates under the *Principle of Reciprocity*
* The principle of reciprocity is activated when we give a certain amount to the needs of the Kingdom of God and the needs of people.
* God raises up people to bless us and provides the same amount of financial resources we gave

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* After a while, as people became abundantly blessed and wealthy from their crops and animals, and slaves [employees], they became self-centered
* **God commanded His people to tithe as a means of worship and thankfulness to God**
* If God’s people failed to give out of their love, worship, and appreciation to God, it revealed the spiritual condition of their heart and love towards God.
* They started giving their 2nd best—**Read** **Malachi 1:6-8**

6 The Lord of Heaven’s Armies says to the priests: “A son honors his father, and a servant respects his master. If I am your father and master, where are the honor and respect I deserve? You have shown contempt for my name! But you ask, How have we ever shown contempt for your name?

7 You have shown contempt by offering defiled sacrifices on my altar. Then you ask, ‘How have we defiled the sacrifices? You defile them by saying the altar of the Lord deserves no respect.

8 When you give blind animals as sacrifices, isn’t that wrong? And isn’t it wrong to offer animals that are crippled and diseased? Try giving gifts like that to your governor, and see how pleased he is!” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.

* When God’s people give God their second best, God considers that robbery

**Malachi 1:6-8** **(NIV)**

  8 “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ “In tithes and offerings.

9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me.

10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

***What’s the point of all this?***

* Some believers will argue and are convinced that we’re no longer under the Law of tithing. But consider these final points:
* 1) Jesus never lowered the standard of the Old Testament—**Matthew 5:17 (NIV)**

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

* Jesus raised the standard for all believers by declaring “You have heard that it was said…but I say to you…” **(Matthew 5)**
* Jesus held the people of his day and the church of today to a higher standard regarding our obedience to God’s Law.
* Since we can’t keep the Law, we place our trust in Jesus Christ who was able to keep God’s Law for us
* The Old Testament standard of giving is the tithe. The New Testament standard of giving is to give according to how God prospered us.

***What does this mean?***

* When God provides us with an income (fixed), 10% belongs to God. When God blesses you to obtain over and above your needs, we should give according to how prospers us.

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**2 Corinthians 9:6-8**

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work

* Even though Luke nor Paul mentions any amount, it was understood that both writers were speaking to believers who understood that the tithe belong to God.

***Note:***

***On Aug. 4, 1786, he wrote: "I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America.***

***But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out."***

***To Wesley, the most evident threat was the growing wealth of the Methodists. He believed that Christianity has within it the seeds of its own demise. Discipleship makes us more diligent and frugal, and as we become more diligent and frugal, wealth increases.***

**https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/john-wesley-on-giving**

* Wesley believed a disciple should:
* Gain all you can – Work
* Give all you can – Generously Give
* Save all you can – Take care of yourself and your family
* A Kingdom Focused and Disciple Strong believer
* Gives generously of their time, talents, and finances
* We are not our own source—God is the source of our time, strength, and financial resources
* God rewards our generosity done in the name of Jesus Christ with spiritual as well as physical blessings

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**Home Work—Genesis 14**

What did Abraham have in his possession when he returned from rescuing his nephew Lot?

Who came out to meet Abraham, and what two offices did he hold?

To whom did Melchizedek give praise for Abraham’s successful venture?

What did Abraham do to honor the Lord for His victory?

What measure of integrity did Abraham display regarding the captured possessions? (Genesis 14:22-23)

**Read Luke 6:39-45; Matthew 7:1-5, 15-20**

“The Parable of The Blind Leading the Blind”