

THE NEW LAW OF GIVING

Hebrews 7:4-10

- Last week we introduced Melchizedek, and how the writer of Hebrews uses him as an illustration to teach us more about Jesus
 - And we saw just how interesting of a person that Melchizedek was because he was the only person in the Old Testament that was ever both a king and a priest at the same time.
 - We read about him in Genesis chapter 14:
 - If you weren't with us last week, for context:
 - At the beginning of the chapter, we see that 4 kings had joined forces to go to war and take over the region of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - Whenever they were successful in their endeavor, Abraham's nephew Lot, who was living in the region, found himself caught in the middle of it and he and his family and all

of their possessions were taken into captivity by the victorious kings.

- Abraham heard about it, and went out to battle with 318 of his trained men, to go and recover his nephew Lot who had been captured
- And by a miracle of God, he and his small militia, defeated the combined forces of the 4 kings and he got his nephew and his family back.
- After Abraham returned from his victory, He was met by the King of Sodom, and by Melchizedek and Genesis 14 says:
 - ***“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!” And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.” -Genesis 14:18-20 (ESV)***

- The writer of Hebrews goes on to say:
- ***“See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.” -Hebrews 7:4-10 (ESV)***
- READ & PRAY
- How many of you have ever had a season of life where you drove a straight up beater?
- Now my wife will tell you that I still drive a beater, but I’m in a luxury sedan compared to some of the cars I used to drive.
- My first car was a 1989 Volvo Station Wagon. I loved that car, never had anything with that good of a turn radius
- But that car didn’t last long, because our neighbors had given it to me since they hadn’t driven it in 3 years. And when you give a car that hadn’t been driven for that long to a 17 year old that’s gonna drive it like he stole it, it’s not going to last long
- However, my 2nd car was a 2003 Ford Focus, my parents had gotten it for me when I was a freshman in college and it was a nice car, 5 speed manual, it was fun to drive I loved that car.
- However, at one point I had gotten into an accident, I hydroplaned on the interstate and

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hit a guard rail, and by the grace of God I and my car survived.

- But we both had some bumps and bruises, the car more so than me.
- So as a result of that accident and insurance being no help, I went on throughout the next few years of college driving this car that had:
 - A hood shifted out of place, and rattled while I drove.
 - The rear windows were duck taped shut in order to stay up.
 - The passenger door didn't open without a loud screech.
 - The drivers side door didn't open from the outside, so I would have to go to the back seat and reach around from the inside to open it.
 - It was officially full beater.
- But I was content! The car rode fine, it got me from point A to point B. It had good gas milage

and no car payment. That was all I asked for! I was good with it!

- However, one summer I was working for a church in Columbus, GA and one day the pastor came to me and said, "Give me your keys." I said, "Oookay," and he traded me for the keys to the church van and said I would be driving that for the next couple days.
- When I asked why, and he told me that someone from the church had anonymously offered to have my car fixed.
- Now, I had looked into this before and it was going to be about a \$2500 job. The car was not worth \$2500. And honestly I had a hard time with this.
- That day I was home venting to my dad about it. I said, "Dad, I'm having a hard time with this. The car runs fine, its not worth that, we could use that money to help with the kids ministry, send students to camp, theres so many areas the church could use that money, it doesn't need to be spent on my car..." Then my dad

interrupted me and said, “Kenny, shut up....”
And I did. Then he told me something that I will
never forget. He said, “Don’t rob them of a
blessing.”

- That statement shifted the way I saw giving,
generosity, and blessings for the rest of my
life.
- You see, I thought that that anonymous person
getting my car fixed, was about me.
 - I was sorely mistaken: It wasn’t about me,
and it wasn’t about them, it was about God
- I had to learn that whether I am showing
generosity or receiving generosity it’s never
about me
 - Whenever I am showing generosity, it isn’t
about me giving, it’s about God blessing the
other person.
 - Whenever I am receiving generosity, it isn’t
about me getting, its about another person
being blessed by God for what they gave.

- Paul says in 2 Corinthians, **“You will be
enriched in every way to be generous in
every way, which through us will produce
thanksgiving to God.” -2 Corinthians 9:11
(ESV)**

- WE GIVE AS A SHOW OF THANKS TO GOD

- I believe that here in Hebrews 7, as the writer
is using the illustration of Melchizedek, to
show Jesus’ superiority...he gives us some
powerful principles about our giving as well.
- Because, in Genesis 14 whenever we see
Abraham and Melchizedek’s interaction, we
see the first instance of the tithe in Scripture
- Now the question is, why does Abraham tithe
to Melchizedek?
 - He had won this great battle, he had taken
control of all of the spoils of war, he was
blessed by Melchizedek, and then he gave
him a tenth or a tithe of all that he had
gained.

- In doing so, Abraham was placing the credit where the credit was due
- You see, he wasn't really tithing to Melchizedek, he was tithing to God
- Melchizedek was the avenue in which he was tithing to God because he was Priest of the Most High God
- And in giving the tithe Abraham was acknowledging His thanks to God
 - He was signifying that the only reason he had anything to tithe was because it was given to him by God
 - The only reason why he had that victory in battle is because God had given him the victory
 - Therefore he gave the first and best of the spoils that he had won, and he set a precedent for the generations that would come after him.
- The next time that we see the instance of a tithe was in Abraham's grandson Jacob.
 - In Genesis chapter 28, Jacob has a dream where he sees this ladder connecting Heaven to earth and angels were ascending and descending on it.
 - Above the ladder he sees the Lord and God reiterates the promise to Jacob that he had given to Abraham, saying that the Lord would give him the promised land and that his offspring would be as the dust of the earth.
 - Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it."
 - And then in verse 20, it says: ***"Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that You give me I will give a full tenth to You." -Genesis 28:20-22 (ESV)***

- You see the principle of the tithe was always about displaying thankfulness for the blessings of God
- Then later on, whenever the tithe was instituted as a part of the law of Moses, we see God's for it heart
- In Deuteronomy 14, the people are instructed to give a tithe of all of their harvest.
 - They lived in an agrarian culture so their tithes were more so about the giving of their crops and goods more so then it was about physical money.
- The exact instructions being in verse 22 when it says: **"You must set aside a tithe of your crops—one-tenth of all the crops you harvest each year. Bring this tithe to the designated place of worship—the place the Lord your God chooses for His name to be honored—and eat it there in His presence. This applies to your tithes of grain, new wine, olive oil, and the firstborn males of your flocks and herds. Doing this**

will teach you always to fear the Lord your God." -Deuteronomy 14:22-23 (NLT)

- This word **"Fear"** is the Hebrew word **yārē'**: which means: **to stand in awe of, be awed**
- The purpose of the tithe was to be able to lead the people to be so thankful for all that God had blessed them with that they would be left in Awe of His great faithfulness to them.
- And that Awe and Thankfulness was to lead them to worship and celebration.
- God did not want this to be burdensome
- He even made provisions: In the next few verses they are given instruction, saying if their tithe is too large to carry or if the journey is too far to make with all of those goods and cattle, then they can sell off the tithe of their harvest, put the money in a pouch, then travel to the place of worship
- When they arrived, they were to use the money to buy any kind of food or drink they wanted... **"Then feast there in the presence of**

the Lord your God and celebrate with your household.” -Genesis 14:26b (NLT)

- I love this picture of worship happening in the place of God by families simply coming together to feast with one another
- I saw a great picture of this this week
 - On Monday when I had done my preliminary studies on this, I had this passage fresh on my mind when I went to Momma K’s for her end of the year cook out with the college ministries
 - And when all of the students were gathered together for some holy tacos...Momma K got up to say a few words. And she said, I love being able to come together and to worship, and she said, “I really do see this as a time of worship!”
 - And it absolutely was! The family of God coming together to feast and celebrate in the presence of the Lord is pleasing worship to God!

- And he wanted the tithes of the people to go towards making the place go God a place of communal celebration
- So if you look at the context of Number 18 and Deuteronomy 14, we see that there were 3 main tithes that the people of God were to observe
 - They had a tithe that went to help with the function of the place of Worship
 - They had a tithe that went toward communal feasts and celebration in the place of Worship
 - And every 3rd year there would be a tithe for the needy: Specifically the orphans, widows, and foreigners among them
 - (23%)
- And the promise was, if they were faithful in this: ***“Then the Lord your God will bless you in all your work.” -Deuteronomy 14:29 (NLT)***
- In Malachi, it says that all of this was set up to: ***“The purpose of My covenant with the***

Levites was to bring life and peace, and that is what I gave them. This required reverence from them, and they greatly revered Me and stood in awe of My name.” -Malachi 2:5 (NLT)

- So God designed the tithe in this way:
 - He blesses the people
 - The people stand in awe of His blessings
 - They tithe the first and best back to Him out of a place of thankfulness for His blessings
 - The tithes go toward a celebration of the blessings
 - And then God blesses them again
 - It's a beautiful cycle!
- However, like with so many of God's laws and ordinances, His plan gets distorted by sinful men
- In Malachi, we see how the people had lost their reverence and awe of God:

- The people no longer gave God their first and their best, instead if they had a diseased animal or bad crops, they would give those in the place of worship as their tithes
- And the priests didn't care, they just accepted whatever
- The people living immoral lives and just giving their tithes and offerings as a “get-out-of-sin” card
- Therefore there was no awe of God, there was no thankfulness toward God, there was no celebration (because who would want to eat diseased meat)
- ***“Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated Me! “But you ask, ‘What do You mean? When did we ever cheat You?’ “You have cheated Me of the tithes and offerings due to Me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating Me. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in My Temple. If you do,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, “I***

will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put Me to the test!" -Malachi 3:8-10 (NLT)

- This is the only time in scripture we ever see people given permission to test God in something!
 - God is showing His deep desire to bless them!
 - It's not that God is placing this curse on them, they are placing this curse on themselves!
 - Because if there is no awe of God, there will be no thankfulness to God, then there will be no celebration of God, therefore there will be no blessings from God
 - And my personal definition of a curse, is the absence of God's blessings in your life
 - God can't give a blessing to someone that won't accept or acknowledge it

- Now, did the people put God to the test in this, turn it around and receive the abundant blessings from Heaven??
- I don't know
- But probably not, because this was the last time that God spoke to His people for 400 years
- And that silence was broken by John the Baptist who prepared the way for Jesus. And the first thing that Jesus does to publicly announce His ministry...is He goes to the Temple during Passover week and He overturns tables
- Why? Because remember God set up this system in order to be a time of worship and celebration
 - People would bring their first and their best of their crops, goods, and cattle to God, if it was too far to travel they would sell it off and bring the money to the Temple and spend it all there

- Now, at the time of Passover, there would be people from all over the known world coming to Jerusalem to celebrate and bring their tithes and their offerings
- So the Priests found a way to take advantage of this
 - Whenever the people brought their offerings, the priests would inspect them to make sure they were without blemish....but 99.9% of the time they just so happened to find a fault with them and made them buy something else
 - They had also developed their own temple currency, so that those who brought money to the temple would have to exchange it and the exchange rates would just so happen to sky rocket during the Passover
 - Then they set up all of these vendors for the people to spend their money in the court of the Gentiles, so now the foreigners had no place to worship and celebrate the blessings of God
- But God always wanted them to be able to be a part of worship, and even instituted that a portion of the tithes would go toward them every 3 years!
 - That's why there was a court of the Gentiles in the first place!
- So there is no Awe of God happening, there is no Thanking of God happening, there is no blessings of God being acknowledged
 - It had become a greedy, corrupt, money racket and Jesus wasn't having it!
 - He made a whip of chords and drove all of the vendors out! And He would do the same thing 3 years later on what we now call Palm Sunday
- The Levitical System was beyond repair, and it was time for Jesus to institute a New Covenant and a New System
- And the writer of Hebrews is intentionally letting his readers know that there indeed has

been a new system put in place, with Jesus as the true and better High Priest

- And this is a bit of speculation, but I do not think that it is far off to assume that these readers who are being pressured by their surroundings to revert back to Judaism, are also being pressured to pay their tithes to the corrupt Levitical system
 - These are very powerful and manipulative people, who were the ones that got Jesus arrested and crucified, and they are using scripture passages like Deuteronomy 14 as their ammunition
- But the writer of Hebrews is over and over again proving the point that Jesus has brought about a new era and a new age!
- And in chapter 8 he says, ***“In speaking of a new covenant, He makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”***
-Hebrews 8:13 (ESV)

- And dealing with the issue of tithes specifically, the writer points to how great Melchizedek must have been, that Abraham would pay tithes to him
- ***“But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.”***
-Hebrews 7:6-7 (ESV)
- Now, to the Jewish person, the greatest human being to ever live was Abraham. He was the Father of Israel, The Patriarch of the Hebrews, The Man of the Promise!
 - However, the writer is pointing to a scriptural account of Abraham acknowledging that there was someone greater than he was, and that person was to give us a Picture of Jesus
- Jesus is the Priest who has no beginning and no ending, He holds that office forever

- And if He is greater than Abraham, then He is definitely greater than Levi and the Levitical system
- And because His office has been confirmed by the resurrection and the ascension, the writer is telling the people, “You are no longer bound by the commandments of earthly priests!”
- He explains further in verse 12, ***“For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well... This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.” -Hebrews 7:12, 15-16 (ESV)***
- Jesus as our Great High Priest provides a new and greater way to God, He provides a new a greater way to forgiveness, He provides a new and greater way to life, and He provides a new a greater way to tithe as well.
- Now that Jesus has fulfilled the law and taken over the office of Priest forever, God’s purpose for giving has a chance to be restored in our lives.
- And the primary principle that we need to understand about our giving:
 - **WHEN WE GIVE: WE GIVE TO JESUS**
 - *We always want to give Jesus our first and our best, because He gave to us first and He gave us His best*
 - And we want to give our first and our best of our Time, Treasure, and Talents
 - Whenever God has blessed us with a Talent, we want to use that Talent first and foremost for the Glory of Jesus
 - The very fact that He has given us Time on this earth, we want to give Him our first and our best of it

- That is why we have church on Sunday Mornings
 - Because we want to start off each and every week, by having a time of cooperate worship and celebration of Him
 - And in doing so we are giving Him the first and the best of our week!
 - We want to be a generous in all areas of our lives, because we serve a generous God!
 - For God so loved the world that He GAVE
 - He is the first and greatest giver
 - So when we give, we are giving as a response of thankfulness for all that He has blessed us with
 - And we have to understand that whenever we give, (especially whenever it comes to financial giving) we are not giving to an institution, we are not giving to people, we are giving back to Jesus
- That's why the writer says in verse 8, "***In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives.***" -Hebrews 7:8 (ESV)
 - Now, the argument is that "Tithing," was an Old Covenant Command and since we are in the New Covenant, we are not expected to tithe anymore
 - Well. Yes and No.
 - You see, the tithe was not just an Old Covenant Command, it was a scriptural principal that preceded the law (as seen in Abraham and Jacob) and continued to exist after the law
 - However, the truth is, we do not see a specific command in the New Testament to give a tithe of 10%...but we are called to give, we are called to be generous people
 - *And the percentage is not the point because we aren't called to give a certain percentage we are called to give from a certain heart.*

- So the next principle of New Testament Giving we need to know is:

- **WHEN WE GIVE: WE GIVE TO JESUS FROM THE HEART**

- In reality, a lack of generosity is not a financial problem, it's a heart problem.

- The heart is very fickle
- (Jer. 17:9) The heart is deceitful
- (Prov. 4:23) Guard your heart

- The heart is not something we follow but rather something we guard and direct

- ***“For where your treasure is, there your heart WILL BE also” -Matthew 6:21 (ESV)***

- Which is to say: Your money doesn't follow your heart, your heart actually follows your money
- Don't put your money where your mouth is, put your money where you want your heart to be

• Do you want to have a heart for the Church?
Give to the church

• Do you want to have a heart for missions?
Give to missionaries

• Do you want to have a heart for the unborn?
give to the Pregnancy Care Center!

• Because where you treasure is, there your heart WILL BE

- God isn't after your money, He is after your heart

- He doesn't want what you have, He wants you!

• He doesn't want us to be possessed by our possessions

• He doesn't want cash to be our king

- And whenever we live open handed lives, we are confident and content that everything we have comes from God, He will supply our every need, and He can effectively give to us, so that He can give through us

- Giving is still very much a requirement of the Christian life. However, we need to know:

- **THE NEW LAW OF GIVING**

- I believe the best passage of scripture we see in the New Testament is found in the book of 2nd Corinthians
 - And in chapter 8 Paul is telling the church in Corinth about the extravagant generosity of the church at Macedonia
 - He talks about how even in the midst of their severe affliction, and their poverty, they still begged Paul to be able to be a part of sending financial support to the church at Jerusalem.
- Paul even says, ***“..and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.”***
-2 Corinthians 8:5 (ESV)
- So they were giving to God, and by the will of God the apostles were just the means by which they gave to God

- And Paul encourages the Corinthians to follow their example: he says, ***“But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of [giving] also.”*** -2 Corinthians 8:7 (ESV)

- **Giving and Generosity has to be Practiced**

- Because it doesn't come naturally to us
 - We naturally think everything I have is mine because I earned it, I deserved it
- Therefore I need to practice, generosity because I need to remember that I would have absolutely NOTHING with out Him!
- ***“The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,”*** -Psalm 24:1
- There is not a single thing that we have that God hasn't either given us Himself, or allowed us to have

- Whenever we give our first and our best of what we have received we are acknowledging that everything we have comes from Him
- And I have to intentionally practice generosity to remind myself of that, because if I don't, my natural tendency is to become entitled and then everything I have will never enough
 - I'll never be satisfied, *we always want what we don't have so therefore we try and get everything we can*
 - We naturally think that the more we get the happier we will be, but in fact you're not really looking for happiness you're looking for *purpose and for meaning*
- And the more we give the happier we are because we take part in something bigger than ourselves and in turn find purpose
- *That's why Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive*
- Paul goes on to say in chapter 9: ***"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."*** -2 Corinthians 9:6 (ESV)
- So in the new covenant: **Giving is NOT a Matter of Duty and Judgement. It's a Matter of Sowing and Reaping**
 - He doesn't say, if you only give a little then God will reap judgement and curses on you!
 - He doesn't say anything about robbing God by giving less
 - That was the Old Covenant.
- *Blake's Story*
 - We are not under the law, we are under grace. There is no condemnation for us in Christ Jesus anymore
- *Dad's Story*
- You see I think the primary principle of Giving that we need to understand is:

- GIVING IS NOT TO BE A BURDEN, IT IS TO BE A BLESSING

- *“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” -2 Corinthians 9:7 (ESV)*
- “Must give”
- He doesn’t say how much. Because what we give, isn’t as important as how we give
- We give as we as have “decided” in our hearts
- More accurately, what we have “Purposed in our hearts”
- This word is so unique, and it is the only time that this greek word is used in scripture.
 - And I’m not even going to try and pronounce the word, but it literally means: To bring forward
- So Paul is saying, Each one must give what they bringing forward from their heart.

- You can see in these instructions how our giving is supposed to be so intentional. It is to be a careful, thoughtful process from the heart.
- So much so that we’re told how: **NOT TO GIVE**
 - DON’T GIVE IF YOU ARE RELUCTANT
 - If you have a hesitation or a reluctancy about giving, especially giving to our church. Don’t give!
 - Instead you should take the time to go through some prayerful consideration as to why you have a hesitancy, why you are reluctant
 - Are you discerning something from the Holy Spirit, is He leading you to give elsewhere? Or are you afraid, and just don’t want to let go of some of your finances? Take the time to allow the Lord to help you search your heart before you give
 - DO NOT GIVE UNDER COMPULSION

- If you feel any sort of pressure or manipulation, don't give!
- God is the only One that should compel you to give. Not peer pressure from Christians, not guilt trips from Pastors... because your giving is between you and God, because you give your first and your best back to Him!
- And why are we to be so careful and considerate about our giving, because **GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER**
- Giving is supposed to be a joyful experience for us
- That's why He blesses it so much
- And whenever we give from the joy of our hearts, God's original design for giving is brought back.
- ***“He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in***

every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.” -1 Corinthians 9:10-12 (ESV)

- It's God's design for giving!
 - He blesses the people
 - We stand in awe of His blessings
 - We give the first and best back to Him out of a place of thankfulness for His blessings
 - We celebrate the blessings of God together, “overflowing in many thanksgivings to God”
 - God blesses again
- Now I want to be very clear. The purpose of a message like this is not to try and get more tither's for our church.
 - If you have any bit of hesitancy about giving to this specific church, please don't give
 - If you don't want to give, please don't give

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- I don't anyone giving if they feel reluctant or under compulsion
- But I will encourage you, to find somewhere to give. Find some sort of kingdom work that you can sow your first and your best back to God through
 - Because I want you to experience the blessing of God-designed Generosity
- Church Story
- You can't out give God
- Those are the types of stories I want you to be able to have in your own life
- I am not trying to twist anyone's arm into giving to our church
- I'm not here to guilt trip anyone about robbing God of anything
- I'm simply encouraging you. Don't Rob Yourself.
- In the same way my dad told me to not rob others of their blessing, don't rob yourself of a blessing
- Don't Rob yourself of the blessing of being Awed by God
- Don't rob yourself of the blessing of being a part of His work
- Don't rob yourself of the blessing of having more of His Joy in your life