

Transcript

What is Tithing?

So the stewardship committee has asked me to give a little talk this week about what tithing is and to define it because there's a lot of misconceptions and misinformation out there about what tithing is. So speaking strictly from the Bible, the word tithing first is used in Genesis 14. After Abram rescues Lot, he gives a tenth to King Melchizede as an offering of thanks. It's also used later on in Jacob's story in Genesis 28. It's formalized in the law in Leviticus 27 30-32. It says, "All tithes from the land, whether the seed from the ground or the fruit from the tree, are the Lord's; they are holy to the Lord. If persons wish to redeem any of their tithes, they must add one-fifth to them. So that's kind of a basic idea. A tenth has to come back to the Lord because everything is God. So what God is asking is for a tenth of that back, whether that be livestock or money. It's also referenced a bunch of other places in the Bible.

Typically, when we think about tithing today, it's turned into a four-letter word, for better or for worse. Typically, when we are talking when we talk about tithing today, we we're talking about money and giving 10% of what you make in your salary back to God, back to the church. A lot of people ask, should I be tithing 10% of my gross or should I be tithing 10% of my net salary? I think if we're asking that question, I think we're doing it wrong. Rather, I think the better thing to think about tithing is as a spiritual discipline like we talk about in Lent. Different spiritual disciplines such as giving up meat on Friday or reading a book help to deepen our faith. Tithing is supposed to deepen our faith and trust in God. Because what we're saving saying is when we tithe, I am trusting in God to provide for that 10% that I am giving back to God. I'm only going to live on 90% of what I have. The rest of it has that has to come back to me from God. That that is how we how we develop our faith.

I think, if if we're thinking about tithing in a purely legalistic way, it's not going to deepen our faith. It's just going to make us angry and and and hate giving. What God wants us to be is cheerful giver. I rather you treated tithing as a spiritual discipline. How is my tithing, my offering helping me deepen my faith in Jesus Christ? Start there. Tithing also doesn't happen overnight. For a lot of us, it's really difficult and hard. It requires us to do a lot of planning and and that can be difficult. So as we talk about in Lent, know that you're allowed to fail to spiritual discipline because that teaches you a lot about your faith too. You're allowed to fail at tithing too. It is a good discipline because it teaches us to rely on God, not just ourselves. And that is a big part of stewardship is attending to what we have been given which is all from God. Being good stewards and tending to that being being good faithful members of the body of Christ, using what God has given to us to care for the needy for the world around us and for ourselves.

And so as you think about tithing, start small, have grace with yourself, work up to it, if you need help at any time about tithing, you can always talk to Pastor Diane or I. We're very happy to help you on on your journey with tithing. It is a good discipline. It's something that my wife and I have been doing for a few years. But I will tell you, it was very hard to start when we first got married. So, take that time, learn from your mistakes, and build upon it. But it is a good spiritual discipline if you can get into that. Start small and work up from there.