

Dt. 14:22-29 “Eating the Tithe”

For the Children: Little children don't always have enough money to buy presents for dad or mum. So dad might give the child some money to buy a present for mum, or get a present for the child to give to mum – as if the child had chosen the gift and bought it all by himself. Even if mum knows what has happened, she is still pleased and thanks the child. The Lord knows we have nothing to give Him as a “thank-you.” So He gives us the means to make gifts to Him – the good deeds we do in His Name, the offering in church, all the ways we try to honour Him. When we give Him these offerings in thankfulness for His Son, He is pleased. **Questions:** What is a “tithe”? How can “tithing” help us fear the Lord? How can it help us rejoice in Him?

Introduction:

First Point: The Significance of Tithing

- 1) An Ongoing Practice: Some say that tithing has ended with the sacrificial system and the Temple. While it is true that sacrifices for sin have ended, thank-offerings are a different matter. All our good works are now a kind of thank-offering (Phlp. 2:17, 2 Tim. 4:6). Tithing began before the Mosaic Law (Gen. 14:20, 18:22) and was never explicitly abrogated in the NT – though a legalistic view of it is condemned in the NT (Mt. 23:23, Lk. 11:42, 18:17). The poor widow in Lk. 21:1-4 is commended for giving *more than* a tithe! The main reasons for tithing still apply
- 2) To Help the Believer Fear God: Tithing teaches the fear of the Lord (v. 23) – reverence, awe, love, commitment, obedience, worship, thankfulness and a sense of stewardship. For all good we have is from God – all belongs to Him – yet He only requires back a token. This is to teach us that we should seek His glory with all things. The extent of God's grace seen in allowing sinners to eat and drink in His presence also creates awe in us
- 3) To Help the Believer Rejoice: Tithing reminds us of how much God has blessed us. This should lead to thankfulness and rejoicing in His love toward us (v. 26)
- 4) To Support the Church: Tithing was also used to support the Levites and priests in the OT. Vss. 28-29 command a 3-year tithe to help in this way, as well as for the support of aliens, widows and orphans in need

Second Point: The Connection Between Tithing and Table

- 1) A Covenant-Meal: Eating the tithe in God's presence in the sanctuary was, like other OT eating & drinking before God, a meal that symbolized covenant-fellowship with God. This came through the peace sinners found with God on the basis of the sacrifices that pointed to Christ. Sinners ratified that covenant through these meals, even as the Lord re-assured them through it. The Lord's Supper also involves a covenantal meal, based on Christ's sacrifice, in which we ratify our part in the covenant and the Lord reassures us
- 2) Fear at the Table: The Supper speaks so strongly of God's grace through Christ's sacrifice, we should be filled with awe by this eating and drinking
- 3) Joy at the Table: Like the eating of the tithe, the Supper reminds us of God's many mercies to us, creating thankful and joyful hearts. Whatever we offer to the Lord in any area of life is a result of His mercy in Christ
- 4) Support of the Church: The Supper reminds us that the church, from whose ministry of Word and sacrament we benefit, needs to be supported – to God's glory and the welfare of His people

Conclusion:

