

SHARING THE SANCTUARY MESSAGE WITH THE WORLD

(Faithful Stewards of God)

The joy filled message of Heavens plan to save fallen man, as portrayed in the sanctuary, must to be given to the entire world. God has not given this message to us in order for us to keep it to ourselves! We must share it with our neighbors and friends. Each of us must do everything in our power to share this message of God's answer to the sin problem, for it is the message that helps prepare the way for Jesus' soon coming.

In this lesson we will examine the gospel call to witness, and how this great work is to be supported.

A Time for Witnessing

1. What did Jesus say must happen before the end shall come?

Matthew 24:14 *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world ...and then the end will come."*

Note: Before Jesus can come, this gospel must go to every person on planet earth. Jesus does not give this commission to only a few people. We must all band together to share the good news that Jesus is coming again.

2. What were the last words that Jesus spoke as He ascended into heaven?

Acts 1:8 *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses."*

Matthew 28: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations."*

God has commissioned every true child of His to share His message with the entire world, to prepare a people for the soon coming of the Lord. But each individual is not to share it in a vacuum. The task is too gigantic to be done independently; that's why we need each other, and that's why we need to belong to God's church.

The individual Christian needs not only to witness, but also to be part of the body of Christ, the church. Through the church, the body of believers is able to share the everlasting gospel with the entire world (Revelation 14:6). By collectively binding together, the whole church is able to accomplish much more than it would if each individual worked on his own. Likewise, by combining our various resources we can all have a part in financing God's work around the world. Not only is there a need for witnessing, but there is also a need for giving.

A Time for Giving

3. How was God's work in the sanctuary supported?

Malachi 3:10 *"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house."*

Note: The word tithe means "tenth." The tithe was to be exclusively devoted for the use of the Levites, the tribe that had been set apart for the service of the sanctuary. Ten percent of all the income of the children of Israel went to the priests for their support.

4. Is the tithing system part of Moses' ceremonial law, which ended at the cross?

Genesis 14:18, 20 *"Melchizedek king of Salem... was the priest of God Most High... And he gave him a tithe of all."*

Genesis 28:20, 22 *"Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, ...of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."*

Note: No! Both Abraham and Jacob gave a tenth of their income to God long before Moses' law was given. Because it pre-dated Sinai, we know that it was not part of the ceremonial law that ended at the cross. From the earliest times the Lord claimed a tithe as His, and this claim was recognized and honored. The law of tithing is God's plan for support of the ministry, and it remains in effect today.

5. Did Jesus condemn the tithing plan?

Matthew 23:23 *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.”*

Note: No. Jesus saw that the miserly Pharisees were counting out individual leaves and tiny seeds for tithe yet, they failed to uphold the rest of God teachings. Therefore He rebuked them for being so exact in tithe while failing in judgment, mercy, and faith. He did not condemn them for tithing, but for ignoring the other great principles of Christianity. That is why Jesus said, *“These ought you to have done [speaking of tithing], and not to leave the other undone.”*

6. How does the apostle Paul say the New Testament ministry is to be supported?

1 Corinthians 9:13, 14 *“Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.”*

Note: Paul indicates that just as the Old Testament priests were supported by the temple, so God has ordained that the New Testament ministry be supported in the same way as the Old Testament ministry. The Old Testament ministry was supported exclusively from the tithe; likewise, the tithe is to be used for the support of the ministry in New Testament times.

When someone returns tithe to a Seventh-day Adventist Church, the local church treasurer remits all the tithe to the local conference. The local conference supports the gospel ministers in the conference. The local church does not pay the pastor. All pastors receive the same basic salary, regardless of the size of the church. In this way large churches help the small churches, and pastors do not move to larger churches to get larger salaries. The local conference, in turn, sends nearly forty percent of its tithe to the Union Conference and the General Conference, in order to help support the ministry of the gospel around the world. Thus the local individual church member who returns his tithe supports the worldwide ministry of the church.

7. How much of what we have belongs to God?

Psalms 24:1 *“The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.”*

Note: Technically, 100 percent of all we have belongs to God. But God asks us to acknowledge that we believe it all belongs to Him by returning a tithe, or 10 percent of our increase.

8. How important is it for Christians to return the tithe to God?

Malachi 3:8, 9 *“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me.”*

Note: God is very clear. To fail to return tithe is to rob God. Tithing is a test of our honesty to God, but offerings are a demonstration of our love. No Christian wants to be found guilty of robbing God.

9. What test did Adam and Eve fail that we must pass if we expect to inherit God's kingdom?

Genesis 3:3 *“But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’”*

Note: God told Adam and Eve they could eat the fruit of all the trees of the garden except one--the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not to eat of that tree or even touch it, else they would die. God did not put an electric fence around the tree. Rather, He kept it where they could reach out and take the fruit. And they did, because they did not trust God. Today, God gives us all the same test. He says, "You can keep all the money that comes to you, except one tenth. That money is Mine. Don't take it." However, He leaves it where we can reach out and take it, if we so desire. But when we do, we repeat the sin of Adam and Eve. God did not need the fruit of the special tree. It was a test of their loyalty. Neither does He need our tithe. He owns everything! It is a test of our love, loyalty, and trust.

10. In addition to my tithe, which belongs to God, what else does He ask of His people?

Psalms 96:8 *"Give to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come into His courts."*

Malachi 3:8 *"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings."*

Note: The Lord asks us to give freewill offerings as an expression of our love for Him and our thanksgiving for His blessings.

11. How is the rest of the work of the church to be supported?

Deuteronomy 16:17 *"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God."*

Note: An offering is any amount given in addition to the tithe. Thus all other work of the church is supported by free-will offerings.

In order to carry the "Everlasting Gospel" into all the world, the church needs financial support. The tithe supports the gospel ministry of the church. Offerings support the educational, medical, humanitarian and missionary work of the church. Each member is encouraged to divide his offerings between the world needs, the local conference needs, and the local church needs.

12. How much should we give as offerings?

2 Corinthians 9:7 *"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly."*

Note: The Bible does not specify how much the offering is, but allows each individual to determine the amount in accordance with the blessing of God in his life, it is a free will offering.

13. What does Jesus say about giving?

Acts 20:35 *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

14. What promise does God give to those who faithfully return their tithe and offerings?

Malachi 3:10 *"And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."*

Note: Absolutely fantastic! God actually says to test Him on this point. He will provide a blessing so big that we can't even receive it! God has made men His stewards.

15. If we give, what will happen to us?

Luke 6:38 *"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."*

NOTE: It is impossible to out give God.

16. What kind of a giver does God like? .

2 Corinthians 9: 7 *“God loves a cheerful giver.”*

17. Does life really consist of the possession of things?

Luke 12:15 *“For one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”*

Note: Sometimes the richest people in the world are the most unhappy. Life is more than material possessions. Possessing Jesus Christ and having a relationship with Him far outweighs material possessions.

18. Should a Christian be worried about having the vital necessities of life?

Luke 12:22-30 *Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. "Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? "And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? "If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. "If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? "And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. "For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things.*

Note: What fantastic promises! God says He'll take care of our needs; we need not be concerned about them. Let's make sure we trust God completely.

19. What should the Christian seek first?

Matthew 6:33 *““But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

Note: If Jesus, our great High Priest is first and foremost in our lives, if God's cause and the proclamation of His message is our first priority, God promises that our needs will be cared for. What a fantastic encouragement to put God first in our lives!

Your Response

Is it your desire to be a part of God's remnant people, and to support the worldwide proclamation of the everlasting gospel?

Answer _____