Series: The Blessed Life

October 6, 2019

Message 3:

**Who’s First?**

Matthew 6:21

**Intro:**Reminder of why we are doing this. These messages will help you. Following these teachings will bless you! Your life will be better! It is guaranteed in God’s Word! What we are teaching will bless your marriage, your health, your finances, your relationship with God. This changes everything!

I am a pastor – this is part of my job – but I am a believer – I am a Christian! I am a fellow brother in the Lord!

If I found a cure for cancer I would share it with you! And no matter how hard it would be for you to take or how unbelievable it might seem to you – you would try it! This is how important this is!

This truth changes our lives because it is all about our hearts! In the first message we shared –

Matthew 6:21 - For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

If you want your heart completely changed- completely set free – trusting God for everything – God is truly GOD over all in your life – obeying these truths will make that happen!

**Big Idea: Who’s First in your Life?**

We say God – but who’s on first in your checkbook? That’s who’s really first!

Every time we get paid, we take a test –

Every time we get paid we have an opportunity to worship someone with the first fruit of what we receive. That is the first check we write. The first thing we do when we receive finances – who do we thank for those finances? Whom do we worship? Whom do we give an offering to and bow down to? “Thank you for my provision!”

Exodus 13 is right after the EXODUS … – Right after they left Egypt ...

Moses has to teach them how to live for God – it’s been 400 years –

What is the first thing he says – teaching them how not to walk in bondage anymore – but how to work in freedom –

Exodus 13:1-2, 12-13 - The LORD said to Moses, “Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether man or animal.”…

 …you are to give over to the LORD the first offspring of every womb. All the firstborn males of your livestock belong to the LORD. Redeem with a lamb every firstborn donkey, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem every firstborn among your sons.

Consecrate means – set apart -

> The Firstborn must be sacrificed or redeemed

If your animal had a firstborn, and it was considered a clean animal – then you had to sacrifice it. If the animal was unclean, then you have to redeem it – or buy it back with the sacrifice of a clean animal.

People don’t understand or want to receive the message of tithing because they don’t understand how important it is to God, how it runs all through the Bible – 100’s of years before the Law – even back to the Garden of Eden –

God: “You can have every tree except one. That one is mine!” It was a TEST!

You can keep everything – except this one is for me. For us: You can keep everything – except the first 10% - that’s for me.

The firstborn is sacrificed if it’s clean – redeemed if it’s unclean – Here’s why this is so important to God: Were you born clean or unclean?

Unclean! We were all born sinners! We don’t have to teach our children how to be bad. It comes naturally!

Was Jesus born clean or unclean! The clean was sacrificed so the unclean could be redeemed.

Jesus is God’s tithe.

If you want to talk to God about something very personal – talk about tithing with God. Jesus is God’s tithe because the tithe is to be given first. We don’t wait to see if we have enough left over then give to God – we give to God first!

There are many principles of tithing that bring a blessing into our lives, but the main principle that brings a blessing is that we give the tithe in faith! If we give our tithe at the end, there is no faith! Faith brings blessing!

God gave Jesus first! God gave Jesus while we were still sinners! He didn’t wait to see if we would repent or clean up before He gave us Jesus – God gave Jesus when we were mocking Him and spitting in His face!

God gave Jesus in faith! He believed He would receive a return on that gift! Jesus is called the firstfruits offering and the firstborn!

The firstborn in Exodus represents Jesus! So, the firstborn must be sacrificed or redeemed! The first portion is the redemptive portion.

God says if you give me the first one, the rest are redeemed and blessed! If you give the first portion to God the rest is blessed!

Would you rather go through life with 100% of it and all of it cursed or 90% of it and all of it blessed? The way to get the 90% blessed is to give the first portion to God! It boils down to our hearts! Are we willing and trusting of God enough to give the first part to God and let Him bless the rest?

He said, If you don’t redeem it, break its neck.

The first thing given is never lost – the first thing not given is always lost. You will lose it – it just won’t be given to God!

The firstborn must be sacrificed or redeemed –

> The Firstfruits must be offered

Exodus 23:19 – “As you harvest your crops, bring the very best of the first harvest to the house of the LORD your God…”

Notice: BRING

HOUSE OF THE LORD – We are not to give our tithe to any ministry we please or want – it belongs in the house of the Lord -

Proverbs 3:9,10 - Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

Why did God tell the children of Israel to bring all the silver and gold from Jericho into the house of God. Because it was the first city they took over in the Promised Land. He didn’t say conquer ten cities and choose which one you want to give to me. He said, “Give me the first – and the rest will be redeemed! The rest will be blessed! You’ve got to give me the first!”

Why? Because it took faith to give all of the silver and the gold from the first city.

In Joshua 6 – God says it is “consecrated” – set apart – for the house of God – once Achan took it He said Achan has taken of the cursed thing.

The very consecrated items that were set apart for the house of God became a curse. When you get paid it is consecrated to God – if you don’t bring it to the house of God it’s cursed. If you keep it in your account, it is cursed. It doesn’t belong in our house – it belongs in God’s house.

Bring all the silver and gold into My house from the first city. This is why God accepted Abel’s offering and not Cain’s offering …

When we understand the truth about the firstborn and the firstfruits we understand this –

Genesis 4:3-4 - In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor…

Do you see this? Cain brought “some” - Abel brought fat portions from what… How’s he going to bring the fat? Lyposuction?

One is a rancher and he offers the firstborn to God – the other is a farmer and he just brought some - did not bring firstfruits. God accepts one but not the other.

God had no choice but to reject Cain’s offering. God is pre-eminent, above all and cannot ever accept second best. It is theologically impossible for Him to do it – He can’t! God is always first!

This is 2500 years before the Law – He accepted the firstborn, but not some – because it just came in the course of time – an offering – not first.

God is perfect – He is first – He is not imperfect – He cannot be second, or third, or anything else! If God played golf his score would be 18! He would never be able to hit the ball and it not go into the hole!

> The Tithe Must be Brought First

2nd Chronicles 31:5 - As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything.

Notice brought … tithe –

Malachi 3:10 - Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse…

Notice again the word BROUGHT and BRING – The tithe is not given - it is brought – you cannot give what is not yours!

The tithe is not an offering – you don’t give the tithe. You bring the tithe because it BELONGS to someone else – to God.

What if someone said, “Pastor Randy, I heard you and Sharon were going out of town for a conference. My car is going to have to be in the shop. I know you’re going to leave a vehicle here and not use it – could I borrow your vehicle?” I say, “Sure! You take my car – pick me up when I get back!”

Then when I return and the person says, “Pastor, my wife and I want to give you this vehicle...” It’s mine! “Yes – but we want to give it to you …”

He is not giving me my vehicle – he is giving back what belongs to me!

We BRING the tithe to the storehouse! It always comes to the Storehouse or to the house of God – never given anywhere else to anything else – it is not brought to Christian ministries, Christian schools, good causes, universities – it is the house of God.

People try to get around this because they don’t want to GIVE over and above the tithe – They feel called to give to various ministries, and they want to – so they designate where their tithe goes, but that ends up being theft from God and God’s house to give to something else you think God wants to give to! This is not your tithe to decide where you want it to go. We are told clearly to bring it to the house of God!

What are we to bring the tithe of? EVERYTHING! Gross or net? How much do you make? Is it all yours? How much do you want blessed?

I want what the IRS takes from me to be redeemed!

Jesus said – Give to Caesar …

We tithe on gross, not net, and we bring it to the house of God – and that’s what and how God blesses.

If you did landscaping for me – after you spent money on trees, plants, fertilizer and labor you ended up with $1000 profit. I pay you with 10 $100 bills. How much is the tithe?

You now have ten $100 bills in your hands. Which one is the tithe?

How do you know which one is the first one? It is the first one that leaves your hand! It’s the first one you spend!

One of those has the blessing on it and is the redemptive portion – it causes all the rest to be blessed – it is the first one that leaves your hand and goes into the house of God!

Don’t give the redemptive portion to the mortgage company! The mortgage company does not have the power to bless your finances! God does! Don’t give the redemptive portion to the electric company, or to the car loan company!

To believe that nothing happens when you obey God – to believe that you are limited and the only resource you have is the amount written on that check – is to believe in a natural God – and a natural God is not the God of the Bible! The God of the Bible is a supernatural God and He is never limited by the amount of money on a check, so I am never going to believe that I am limited by the amount of money in my check, or in my checkbook, because I am going to be obedient to a supernatural God who promises me blessings and a return on my obedience! He has more than I do! I’m not going to work with my limited amount! I’m going to trust Him, obey Him and count on His unlimited amount!

Sit down, work on your bills and hope you have enough left over to give to God? You never will! And if you do and you give Him the leftovers and not the firstfruits? He nowhere says He will bless that! Which means we’re left where we started – under a curse – not because He is cursing us for disobedience – He finds us in our curse and shows us the way out if we will have the faith to take it!

FAITH – FAITH – FAITH! God give supernatural faith to your people!

Even if you give 10% - but it’s leftovers and not given first – it’s not the tithe God talks about here! The tithe must be brought first! It is the first portion – that’s the portion that has the blessing on it and has the power to redeem the rest of what you have in your hand!

This is a principle throughout Scripture – give me the first and the rest are blessed and redeemed!

1st Corinthians 16:1-2 - Now about the collection for God’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

What day of the week?

On the first day – as you prosper – in direct proportion to the amount you earn – you bring that percentage into the house of God.

I give online – when my check is deposited into my account and I sit down to pay bills – my tithe AND my offering to missions goes back out of the banking online system before I arrange for any other bills to be paid.

“So that when I come” … if God’s people would obey in tithing there would be no need for any other special offerings or fundraisers …

This is not legalism – it is a matter of the heart – legalism has to do with salvation – this has to do with blessing!

What if my wife ends up being out – somehow she runs the debit card through a checkout counter between the time the money hits the bank and I arrange for my tithes to go out – OH NO! WE’RE CURSED! No! This is a matter of our heart! This is not legalism – this is life!

I know this will help you!! Again – if I had the cure for cancer you would take it! This is the key to being blessed – and people won’t take it! God says through Malachi – Try it before you knock it! See what God will do! Listen to people who have testified about God’s supernatural blessings due to their tithing!

Exodus 13:14-15 - “In days to come, when your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ say to him, ‘With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed every firstborn in Egypt, both man and animal. This is why I sacrifice to the LORD the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons.’

Someday your son will come to you and say, “Dad, what are you doing?”

Your son comes in – “Dad, the sheep is giving a lamb!” You say, “Wonderful!” You run to the field, help with the delivery – then cut the throat of that new little lamb. At some point your son will say, “Dad – why are you doing this? Dad – you are killing our profits! These are the best! You’re killing the best and taking away from us!”

Then, you take your son, sit him in your lap – or down on your couch – and you say, “Son, I need to share something with you. Our family has not always been in the ranching business. At one point we were slaves back in Egypt. One day when you were younger, great-grandpa took his shirt off in the field, you may or may not have seen the scars on his back, but he had been beaten with a whip. We didn’t own anything. We didn’t have any sheep, or cattle – we were slaves. But God – BUT GOD – with a mighty hand delivered us – therefore, we gladly give to God the firstborn of all of our flock. Because everything we have belongs to Him! You’re going to get to do this someday.”

When I grew up in Indian Heights and my Dad had me clean up the yard – he always paid me in an amount and in a way that I could take ten percent of that to the church. He made sure I did it.

My dad grew up with nothing … but Christ came into His life – changed his life – redeemed him – forgave him – gave him a wonderful wife – they committed themselves to the Lord – they committed themselves to this church – they have given 10% and way more to this church, from the time he was without a job … Florida … they were obedient and faithful – God has answered, provided and blessed. He taught me to do the same.

I started in ministry making $120 a week - $12 went to God. Actually, more than that.

I gave $5000 to a building program when I was making $15,000 per year – that $5000 was above the tithe. It was mathematically impossible – but it happened, because God said do it – I did it – He provided! I’ve never looked back! Done that and more over and over and over again – and I’ve been tight – but always provided for. And always blessed. And blessed beyond anything I ever expected!

Some of you here, were once not a follower of Christ – you were in horrible to sin – BUT GOD – He redeemed you with a mighty hand – there should be none of us who resist to gladly give Him the firstfruits of all of our income. We had nothing – and everything we have is from God!

Here’s the question: You have to answer it truthfully – honestly – not religiously -

Who is really first in your life? Whom do you honor with the firstfruits of your increase? Whom do you worship? Who’s first?

***Announce Extravagant Offering at end of this message –***

**Invitation -**