

## **The Heart of Christmas – Gold**

Pastor Shireal Martin

At Christmas, most people think of receiving gifts. Even in church - most people are here to receive. We usually preach Christmas sermon series that are based on us receiving Christmas gifts from God. Nothing wrong with that. However, this year our Senior Pastors and I believe under the power of the Holy Ghost felt led to do something different.

Instead of focusing on what we receive from God – we’re going to focus on what we can give to God.

We’re going to preach on that in this series of **The Heart of Christmas**.

What can we give to God who already has everything?  
And when I say God has everything – I mean God has everything!  
God is **self-sufficient** – He lacks nothing.  
Our God does not need anything. He is totally complete in Himself.

Not only is He complete – God already owns everything!

**Psalm 24:1** in The Living Bibles reads

“The earth belongs to God! Everything in all the world is His!”

So – what can we give to the God who has everything?

There are three things represented in the Christmas Story that GOD wants from us all the time. These are not just Christmas gifts. These are gifts we are to always give to the Father.

We can find what God wants from us in the Christmas story and through gifts, the wise men brought to Jesus.

### **Matthew 2:1-11**

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." ... and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

These wise men sought out Jesus and when they found Him – they gave gifts to Him. I believe when we really find Christ and we have truly given our life to Him – we live a life of giving. Giving to things that support the character, nature, and order of God. We begin to live a life of giving to the Father and the Son and giving to others as Jesus did.

I want you to notice **WHAT** the wise men gave to Jesus - they gave **GOLD, FRANKINCENSE** and **MYRRH**.

Over the course of the series, we are going to talk about what each of these items represent.

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**GOLD** - represents bringing our **MONEY/WEALTH** to Jesus. There are more than 2,000 references to money in the bible. Over half of Jesus' parables were about work or money.

**FRANKINCENSE** – represents our **WORSHIP** of Jesus. Frankincense is mentioned 17 times in the Bible. It was used as one of four sweet scents compounded together to make the ceremonial incense of the Jews. It was used in both sacrifices and prayer.

**MYRRH** – represents our **SACRIFICE** to be like Jesus. Myrrh is referenced 22 in the bible. Myrrh represents dying to self. It says when we come to Jesus – we have made a decision to give up the lordship of our lives to the Lord Jesus. He becomes **FIRST** place in our lives. We say “no” to ourselves and “yes” to Him. We do His will, not our will. We go His way, not our way.

I would like to say all three of these gifts can be classified as **Gifts of HONOR** to the Father and to the Son.

### **GIFTS of HONOR**

**GOLD** – Our Wealth

**FRANKINCENSE** – Our Worship

**MYRRH** – Our Whole Lives

Today I am going to teach on **Giving God our Gold** subtitle **A Gift of Honor**. For something to be considered **HONORABLE** to God, it must meet the *standards* of God.

When Pastor Joe, asked me to preach today. He said before you say yes, I am going into a new series this week and the first week is about our treasure, money and I continued to listen... I said, “I don't have a problem talking about money.”

Most ministers are comfortable with teaching others how to *pray, witness, worship, study* God's Word, and *love* unconditionally. However, many pastors shy away from teaching financial stewardship to their people for various reasons.

However, we cannot let the fear of man stop us from talking about the things God talks about. We've got to be concerned about the things God is concerned about. If God is concerned about how we handle our money, then we as the body of Christ must be concerned. As leaders in the church we would be failing you if we did not teach biblical financial principles.

Truth be told you and I talk about money almost every day. Every time we go to the grocery store and we look at those prices. We are talking about money. When we go to the gas station and we pay at the pump. We are talking about money. When we go to work. We are talking about money.

I know you say, “I love my job.” However, let the check **STOP**, you are going to take you and your love somewhere else where they can pay you for the work being done. Therefore, we cannot say we do not talk about money. The conversation is all around us.

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On the other hand, some people think that all churches want is their money. Please understand this, if no one ever discusses money, finances, or resources with us from a spiritual and Godly perspective; how will we know HOW to HONOR God with our wealth. This has to be taught and the things of God should always come from the House of God.

I am not talking about listening to some internet preacher. Anybody can pick up a camera and start posting something. I am talking about from people who have made a personal investment to follow Jesus. Look around you this is a personal investment to FOLLOW Jesus.

### Hosea 4:6 NKJV

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Strong's Concordance says "destroyed" is to cut off or to be brought to silence. Webster 1828 dictionary says "destroyed" mean to be ruined or swept away.

You and I cannot walk in our **FULL** potential when we do not KNOW. That is what I like about this church. This is a teaching church. Because, when we are taught then we are able to walk out those things that are **pleasing** and **Honorable** to God. We are able to **Do the Right Thing**, because **WE KNOW the Right Thing to Do**.

My assignment today is to teach on tithing and I have three **MAIN** points I want to bring out regarding tithing.

### 1. Tithes are Holy

Tithe is a **part** of **HOW** we HONOR God. God considers the "tithe" **HOLY** and when we bring our tithe, God is providing us with a natural way of participating in a **spiritual process**.

Tithes are first mention in Genesis 14:18. Here we are going see Abraham gave tithes of all to Melchizedek king of Salem, priest of the Most High God. This is Jesus appearing in the Old Testament.

### Genesis 14:18-20 NLT

<sup>18</sup> And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High,<sup>[a]</sup> brought Abram some bread and wine. <sup>19</sup> Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. <sup>20</sup> And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you." Then Abram gave Melchizedek a *tenth of all* the goods he had recovered.

### Hebrews 7:8

**NLT Version** – The priests who collect tithes are men who die, so Melchizedek is greater than they are, because we are told that he lives on.

**NKJ Version** – Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives.

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Through scripture, we can see Jesus *continues* to receive our tithes in heaven as our High Priest.

Scripture also lets us know that tithing is not optional or negotiable. Because the tithe is HOLY, it is a very important part of the STANDARDS God has set in place for His people. This also lets us know tithes are **monitored** in heaven because Jesus is continuing to receive the tithe.

Again, tithes are a natural way for us to participate in a spiritual process. Tithing speaks to who we HONOR and our *spiritual obedience* to the Father. Because, tithing is a part of the process of dying to self or letting go of our self-will and allowing God to be Lord over our life including our finances. Tithing is Holy.

We can see All Mighty God *reinforcing* the order of the tithes and offering being brought into the House of God. He also discusses the blessing of tithes.

### **Malachi 3:10 NKJV**

<sup>10</sup> Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, 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.* <sup>11</sup> “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” Says the LORD of hosts; <sup>12</sup> “And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land,” Says the LORD of hosts.

### **Location**

First thing I want to make mention of in verse 10 is God is instructing us **WHERE** to bring the tithe. Tithes are to come into His storehouse - the church and not any church. Our tithes are to go to the place where we are **MEMBERS** and where we receive our spiritual *covering*. It is not the will or the order of God, that we eat and are spiritually covered by one place and we send our tithes to another place. The tithe belongs to the church that is spiritually protecting you and your family, even if it is temporary.

### **Consistency is All**

Tithes are to be brought into the house of God every time we receive a paycheck or income. Because it represents bringing God the **FIRST**.

### **How tithe are used**

According to scripture **Malachi 3:10**; tithes are used to provide meat (provision) for the House of God. Tithes are a part of how the responsibilities of the church are taken care of. The church has to do the same as you and I; they have to pray for us and right checks to cover all expenses. Church is both a spiritual and a natural process.

## **2. Our Responsibility**

### **Matthew 10:8 NKJV**

Freely you have received, freely give.

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Tithing is giving BACK to God what He has *already* given to us.

**Principle of the Tithe** – is 10% of everything we make *belongs* to God FIRST.

**Leviticus 27:30 NLT**

One-tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain from the fields or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD and must be set apart to him as holy.

**Proverbs 3:9-10 NKJV**

Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

Most people think “tithing” is a money conversation. Tithing is **NOT** a money conversation. Tithing is a **TRUST** conversation being presented through money. When we see it as a money conversation, it will and can raise concern in us. Because all we can see is, deficit or we may be losing something when we do this.

However, when we can see this as a **TRUST** conversation. It changes the dynamics of the discussion. Because, the conversation becomes less about you and I and more about God. Can God TRUST US with what He has *already* given to us to *steward*.

Sometimes we say, well Lord if you give me some more money, then I will tithe. God is saying, when you HONOR me with what I have already given you, then I will release more.

**Why would God say this?**

Because He gave **FIRST**. EVERYTHING we have, He gave it to us FIRST. Which means, He is not asking us to do something, He has not *already* done. He is simply saying now it is our turn to show Him WHO we are going to HONOR with our money, **FIRST**.

I want to show you what **FIRST** looks like.

**Example: Order of Priorities.**

<b>This is NOT First</b>			<b>This IS First</b>	
1	Mortgage or Rent		1	God
2	Car Payment		2	Mortgage or Rent
3	Insurance		3	
4	Utilities		4	
5	Groceries		5	
6	Kids school		6	
7	God		7	

By putting God FIRST, He becomes responsible for ensuring we have everything we need. This does not negate our stewardship responsibilities.

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See, when we give some type of resistance over giving God the tithe we need to either change our vision or change our heart.

- **Changing our VISION** – means we need to see God bigger than our condition and we can only do this by getting into the word of God.
- **Changing our HEART** – means our heart needs to become more yielded to the things of God. Because when our hearts are yield toward God, we will start making better decisions that line up with the word of God. As a result, we will begin to step out in faith to trust God for something different.

### 3. The Benefits of Tithing

#### Haggai 2:8

“The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,” says the Lord of hosts.

So, why would God ask us to give Him the first 10% of our income, when everything belongs to Him?

Let me explain, God is God and He can use anything to get a point across. However, He has chosen to use the tithe as a means of stewarding us, to be able to get blessings to us and to be able to get blessing through us to bless others.

The benefits of tithes can be explain several different ways. Over the years, I have heard it explained different ways. I have even taught it different ways based on the audience and the environment.

For our **younger generation** God has given me to tell them. “You take care of God and God will take care of you.” Meaning give God what is in your hand and He will give you what is in His.

However, for our more mature audience here. Whose responsibilities look a little different from our younger generation. God gave me to share that tithing is like “**INSURANCE.**” Let me explain.

**Malachi 3:10-12** gives us a breakdown of the benefits of tithing. Those who bring “all” the tithes into the “storehouse” receive the following.

**1. Blessing Clause:** Gods word says, “I will open up the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing you will not have room enough to receive it.”

This is a **LIFESTYLE** of being bless because we have made a decision to HONOR and obey God with the tithe.

Blessings can look differently from person to person. However, here are some **GENERAL** examples of what the blessing can look like for those who bring **ALL** the tithes into Gods House.

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- You and your family are blessed,
- Your job or business is blessed,
- Your property and everything you own is blessed,
- Things **you** are responsible for are blessed,
- Anything **pertaining to you** and the **benefit of you** *according* to God’s will is blessed, and
- You can bless others.

**2. Rebuke (Protection) Clause:** Gods word says, “I will rebuke the devour for your sake and he shall not destroy the fruit of your ground.

This protection applies to *every* area of our life including the protection of our family and everything we own or have stewardship over. Here are some **GENERAL** examples:

- You and your family are protected,
- You and your family health and strength are protected,
- Your finances are protected,
- Your work or employment and all you set your hands to do for the kingdom is protected,
- Your business is protected,
- Your transportation is protected,
- Your travel is protected, and with this
- Your peace of mind is protected because God is covering it all.

**Example – Hail Storm Story**

**3. Maturity Clause:** Gods word says, “Neither shall your vine cast its fruit before its time.”

This is our spiritual maturity protection clause. It means God will not let our fruit from the *seeds* we have sown come forth before its *maturing date*. This ensures we can and will receive a FULL harvest (spiritually and/or naturally) on everything we have done for the kingdom of God.

**4. All Nations Clause:** Gods word says all nations shall call you blessed.

This means people will see the blessing (favor and increase) of God on your life and say you blessed.

I have been giving my tithes since I was 16 years old, so I **KNOW** tithing works. Why did I start so young? Because I believe in **putting myself in position** to be BLESSED. I put myself in obedience to Gods word and I don’t tell God NO.

**Altar Call**