

The Things that are God's

Matthew 22:15-22

October 16, 2011

What belongs to God:

This includes:

The human job from the beginning of the Bible is:

The Bible is clear that we will be _____ for what God has _____ to us.

What does God intend for us to do with God's money/resources?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Tithing is a spiritual discipline, the practice of giving the first ____% of one's income to God for the work of the kingdom through the church.

The most ancient form of worshipping God is the _____.

When we give our tithe, we are _____ to God's generosity to us by giving the _____ part of our resources back to God for the purposes of God's mission through the work of the church.

Instead of giving God the first fruits, we often give God the _____.

We who follow Jesus should be growing more _____ with every year.

Prayer Concerns:

Monday: Read Leviticus 25:18-24

God gives instructions for the people as to how God wants them to care for the land. If they obey God's instructions, they will live fruitfully and securely on the land. God makes it clear that the land belongs to God, and the people are tenants and caretakers of it.

* How does the understanding that God is the owner of the land affect the way that we should see and treat the land? How does this affect the way that we live on the land and with each other? How does this affect our modern understanding of ownership and entitlement?

Tuesday: Read 1 Chronicles 29:10-22

In this passage King David prays with praise and thanksgiving as a response to the freewill offering that the people have given for the temple, which his son Solomon will build. David clearly states that all things come from God and belong to God.

* David expresses the joy that people feel in offering to God not out of obligation but out of a right and thankful heart. Do you find joy in your offerings? How do you think God feels about our offerings? Do you think God finds joy in them?

* Do you operate out of the belief that all things come from God and belong to God? How is that evident in your life?

Wednesday: Read Malachi 3:8-12

The prophet Malachi called the people to return to God. He pointed out their unfaithfulness to the covenant relationship that God had

made with them. In this passage, Malachi accuses the people of robbing God. Apparently, they have come upon a time of scarcity, and they are bringing less than the tithe for their offering.

* Do you think we are living in a time of scarcity, like Malachi's audience? How do we today rob God?

* There is no reason to be afraid that we won't have enough. In verse 10, God promises to pour out blessings upon us, providing what we need and even abundance. When has God provided for you when things seemed bleak?

Thursday: Read Matthew 23:23-24

Jesus denounces the scribes and Pharisees, who were the religious leaders of his day. He accuses them of not practicing what they preach and not living up to the law that they teach. He denounces them for obeying some parts of the law but not others. They tithe but yet they do not practice justice. God wants them to do both!

* Are there spiritual practices that you check off the list in a legalistic way rather than practicing them with heart and allowing them to really change you?

* How do the practices of tithing and doing justice connect?

Friday: Read Matthew 25:14-30

In this parable, three slaves are entrusted with their master's property while he is away. Two of the slaves produce fruit with what they are given, but the third slave buries the money and does nothing. This slave is punished in the end for knowing the character of his master and yet not using his property accordingly.

* If God called you right now to account for what has been entrusted to you, what would you say? What fruits would you be able to show from all of the resources you have been given? Are these fruits in keeping with the character of the Master?

* Notice that the next parable (vv. 31-46) is another example of being called to account for how we have spent the time that God

has given us. According to this passage, what are the ways that God expects our time and resources to be used?

Saturday: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Paul is motivating the Corinthians to be generous, especially as he is taking up a collection for the relief of the church in Jerusalem. Notice the language of abundance, provision, thanksgiving, and generosity, as well as the joyful tone!

* What kind of attitude should we have when we give? What is your attitude when you give your tithe and offerings?

* God is glorified and thanked as the giver of an indescribable gift. When was the last time you glorified God and thanked God for providing you blessing in abundance?

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth,

let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

Central United Methodist Church
428 S. College Ave. Salem, VA 24153
540.389.2933
www.central-umc.org