

**October 8, 2023, Pastor Jason Smotherman**

**1 John 3:14 (ESV)**

For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. <sup>12</sup>We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brothers righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

I believe the true door past love is **GENEROSITY**.

**John 3:16-17 (ESV)**

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.<sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

God made the sun—it gives.  
God made the moon—it gives.  
God made the stars—they give.  
God made the air—it gives.  
God made the clouds—they give.  
God made the earth—it gives.  
God made the sea—it gives.  
God made the trees—they give.  
God made the flowers—they give.  
God made the birds—they give.  
God made the beasts—they give.  
God made the plants—they give.

God made man—they ...take?

Death to Life

In the end, it's not what you have gathered, but what you have given that tells the story about your life.

You must know, there is a difference between being a Convert of Christ and a Disciple of Christ. Many are satisfied in their soul with conversion rather than Lordship. The goal is discipleship. Is that your heart?

If He is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all.

The mandate of the church is not just conversion but discipleship.



### **Matthew 28:19-20**

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

I love the promise attached to this command.

Make Disciples. Baptize. Teach ALL.

ALL – not just the easy, comfortable parts, or the things you agree with or even understand. Like everything. The goal is to walk in FULLNESS.

The Promise: Just know, I am with you, cause you're going to need it.

Savior Jesus is a lot easier to talk about the Lord Jesus.

One of the first words that describes our King, after the word LOVE, is GIVE. So not only is the command to love. The command to love will bring in its DNA to the command to give.

Generosity is about Money, but it is not exclusive to money. It's about our time, energy, effort, and priorities.

### **Matthew 6:24**

“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

### **Ryan Visconti**

If you don't master your money, your money will master you.

The way you master money, as a disciple of Jesus, is by following Kingdom Principles found in scripture. If you are not a disciple of Jesus, these do not have to apply to you. They will work! They are universal truths, but you need not be offended by this Pastor preaching Kingdom Principles. If you are a Christian, please lean in.

Generosity is found within 3 primary places in our life as believers.

- 1) Finances – Tithe & offerings, and generosity with others.
- 2) Time – Towards God, our family, and our world.
- 3) Purpose – What is your purpose? How is the love of God being displayed in your life?

What is the Tithe?

Tithe is the first 10% of your income or increase which goes back to God. Malachi 3 tells us specifically where it goes. To the storehouse. The place you worship.

Why, How, and where I tithe is of importance to God. He has given us instruction.

Some groundwork needs to be laid to understand the principle of tithing.

Not everything in the life of a Christian is as simple as Old Testament versus New Testament. We don't read the first testament or the first half of the Bible and say as Christians, let's rip up the Old Testament, it doesn't apply to us.



No, it's very important.

The Old Testament lays a foundation and casts a vision.

Through Systematic Theology, the OT, is to be understood and experienced through the redeeming work of Christ.

The Old Testament without the New Testament is a promise unfulfilled.

That's the limbo that Jews live in, they have the promise, but they don't understand that they've already received the Fulfillment of that promise through Jesus. The New Testament becomes a gift that can't be appreciated without the Old Testament.

Through Systematic Theology you will learn lessons like the following about the OT.

- 1) 3 types of laws found in the OT: Civil, Ceremonial, and Moral.

Civil – God's laws given specifically to Israelites. These can give you insight on how God has dealt with certain issues over time.

Ceremonial – God's laws concerning the treatment of His tabernacle and the Levites who ministered in it.

Moral Laws – These laws are universal for all people and all time. How do I know what laws are moral vs Civil and Ceremonial? One quick way is that they are repeated in both the New and OT.

- 2) God's Heart of truth and love wasn't just in the NT.

Lucifer has committed Iniquities.

### **Ezekiel 28:18**

By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries.

Notice that God's character wasn't a hammer looking for a nail.

1/3 of the angels fell, there was a multitude of iniquities happening.

It's also where early church fathers starting using words like the "trinity" (Genesis 1:26) to describe and teach what they were learning in scripture. All that to say, the OT has many wonderful truths to share with those of us that are living in the NT Covenant. The principle of Giving and Generosity (tithing and offerings) is one of them.

Cain and Abel give us the first peak into the practice of first fruits.

One phrase we have used to describe doctrines we read in scripture for hundreds of years in "Natural Law".

The Origin (For Reference) :

Although the central ideas of natural law had been part of Christian thought since the Roman Empire, the foundation for natural law as a consistent system was laid by Aquinas, as he



synthesized ideas from his predecessors and condensed them into his "Lex Naturalis" (lit. 'Natural law').<sup>[6]</sup> Aquinas argues that because human beings have [reason](#), and because reason is a spark of the divine (see: [image of God](#)), all human lives are sacred and of infinite value compared to any other created object, meaning all humans are fundamentally equal and bestowed with an intrinsic basic set of rights that no human can remove.

Natural Law - one definition says it's a body of unchanging moral principles regarded as a basis for all human conduct.

This doctrine (teaching) of this basically states that you don't even need a Bible to know "Kingdom Principles" because God ingrained them into your soul when He created man.

### **Ecclesiastes 3:11**

He has also set eternity in their heart, without *the possibility that* mankind will find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

### **Ecclesiastes 7:29**

Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes."

### **Genesis 1:31**

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good. So, the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

It was good. (Important to understand)

The Fall of Man, made what was good, not good. Sin came into this world by our choice. Natural Law states though, there are Kingdom Principles still built in but now they are inside fallen man.

There is an internal war waged.

E.G. – Everyone knows murder, rape, harming children, etc. is wrong at their core. Even the most convicted atheist believes this. Morality engrained in us, conscience, is a sign that points to a creator.

The Bible explains these as precepts.

Precepts - a command or principle intended especially as a general rule of action.

Hebrew word for precept - *picadem* –

It occurs in Psalm 119 mostly but not exclusively.

Here are some examples.

**Ps 119:4** - You have commanded *us* To keep Your precepts diligently.

**Ps 119:15** - I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways. (Meditate on rules? Not really, more like ways)

**Ps 119:27** - Make me understand the way of Your precepts; So shall I meditate on Your wonderful works.

**Ps 119:40** - Behold, I long for Your precepts; Revive me in Your righteousness.

**Ps 119:45** - And I will walk at liberty, For I seek Your precepts. (Freedom is found in precepts, not away from precepts.)

**Ps 119:56** - This has become mine, Because I kept Your precepts.

**Ps 119:63** - I *am* a companion of all who fear You, And of those who keep Your precepts.

**Ps 119:69** - The proud have forged a lie against me, *But* I will keep Your precepts with *my* whole heart.



**Ps 119:78** - Let the proud be ashamed, For they treated me wrongfully with falsehood; *But* I will meditate on Your precepts.

**Ps 119:87** - They almost made an end of me on earth, But I did not forsake Your precepts.

**Ps 119:93** - *I will never forget Your precepts, For by them You have given me life.*

**Ps 119:94** - I am Yours, save me; For I have sought Your precepts.

**Ps 119:100** - I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts.

**Ps 119:104** - Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

**Ps 119:110** - The wicked have laid a snare for me, Yet I have not strayed from Your precepts.

**Ps 119:128** - Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider *to be* right; I hate every false way.

**Ps 119:134** - Redeem me from the oppression of man, That I may keep Your precepts.

**Ps 119:141** - I *am* small and despised, Yet I do not forget Your precepts.

**Ps 119:159** - Consider how I love Your precepts; Revive me, O Lord, according to Your lovingkindness.

**Ps 119:168** - I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies, For all my ways *are* before You.

**Ps 119:173** - Let Your hand become my help, For I have chosen Your precepts.

I will meditate on your precepts and help me understand.

Kingdom Principles are, in most cases, contrary to our fallen flesh.

Corinthians 13 even says, it is possible to give all I have to the poor and still not have love.

Our flesh wants to take. Our Kingdom Nature wants to give.

Becoming a disciple of Jesus is about understanding and following HIS way is better than our way.

### **Isa 28:10**

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little."

You do not get to pick and choose what Kingdom Principle to follow and which not to follow. Consumerism in our culture has taught us that. Don't like that, change churches. Disagree with that, who cares. Love those who you like, ignore those you don't like. Our walk to maturity is gained by painful here a little, there a little.

The Bible is full of precepts, commands, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

People have asked me in cunning ways.

Do you lean left, or do you lean right?

Respectfully, Christians don't lean, they stand.

They stand on the Word of God.

If it says it, we believe it.

We stand on the sanctity of life.

We stand on 2 genders.

We stand on marriage as described in God's word.

We stand against religion and pharisaic thinking that has ruined the church. We stand against the forms of power that have taken residence in the church. We stand not in a place of judgement but stand in a place of love.

People have asked me where you stand on the moving of the Holy Spirit?



If I haven't made myself clear enough. Acts is not the history book of the church that is for historical, philosophical, metaphysical, emotional feel-good stories to make the church feel good about how we started. It is a living, breathing, continuing work that is supposed to be seen in the church today. If you are not seeing, in it, you must ask yourself the question, am I a part of it?

If not follow these kind of precepts (general rules) –

**2 Chronicles 7:14**

14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

**Matthew 17:19-21 (AMP)**

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and asked, "Why could we not drive it out?" <sup>20</sup> He answered, "Because of your little faith [your lack of trust and confidence in the power of God]; for I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, <sup>[d]</sup>if you have [living] faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and [if it is God's will] it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. <sup>21</sup> <sup>[d]</sup>[But this kind of demon does not go out except by prayer and fasting.]"

**Hebrews 12:14 (ESV)**

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

To be clearer.

What am I after as a minister of the gospel.

A genuine move of God amongst the people He has assigned me too.

Not here for a paycheck – I had one.

Not here for a position – never needed one.

Not here for prestige or popularity – Make Jesus Famous.

My family – Jay, Brooke, Jayden and Jayce are here to be a part of the genuine. The authentic hunger that is arising for the great move of God promised for this valley. It's going to take everything we have and then God! Partnering with people with love and compassion to move them from the "lean" to the stand!

The leaning will cause you to waver, the standing will cause them to win.

Its why God told Joshua the following:

**Joshua 24:15-16**

"Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land

When it happens: The heart that has been transformed by Jesus becomes the taskmaster to the flesh that has been fallen, not the other way around.

These Precepts are built upon in the first testament.



The 10 commandments still apply today, largely even stricter.

They point us to Jesus.

They point though to an incredible truth, on our own we are in TROUBLE. If following these commands and precepts fully were required for salvation, all would sin and fall short. BUT JESUS who is rich in MERCY.

### **Matthew 5:17-23 (NIV)**

The Fulfillment of the Law

17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. 19 Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Murder

21 “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder,<sup>[a]</sup> and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister<sup>[b][c]</sup> will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’<sup>[d]</sup> is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

23 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you,<sup>24</sup> leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

How do we know if they apply in the last testament?

They are repeated in the NT.

Cain and Abel give us a prime example of OT precepts being carried over to NT precepts. Bible college students, Sunday school classes, small groups, have all asked why God accepted Abel’s but not Cains.

I believe simply that God didn’t want leftovers. He wanted to be prioritized and wasn’t. Honoring God with your life isn’t about giving him our best, our best is as filthy rags, honoring God is about putting Him first.

How was Cain supposed to know that?

He had no Bible to reference. No law to follow.

### **Romans 2:15**

The law of God is written on their hearts....

Imprinted on Cain and Abel’s heart was the direction of obedience.

Abel got it right. Cain took the shortcut.



If you came to church with family drama and haven't murdered anyone, at least you are ahead of Cain.

The precept was given. One followed and the other chose to invite the sin that was crouching at his door to make residence.

A few chapters later.

**Genesis 14** tells us of the High Priest Melchizedek and Abram.

He was the High priest of God.

Abram gave him a tenth of everything he owned.

The Abram who became Abraham, was involved and aware of the principle of the tenth. He wasn't just aware, but he actively understood the precept of tithing.

I want to be clear.

In both instances of tithing, nothing was promised in return.

It wasn't a prosperity gospel. Both came from a heart of love, that just wanted to GIVE.

**Genesis 28**, before the mosaic law (Law of Moses), we read of Jacob's vow. This vow, was not just a one-time thing with Abraham, basically stated that "if God will indeed be with me and protect me on this journey and if he will provide me with food and clothing and if I return safely to my father's home then the Lord will certainly be my God." Jacob's vow, I will set up a place for worshipping God and I will present a tenth, a tithe, of everything He gives me.

Jacob understood this about the precept of tithing:

- 1) It was God who gave him the ability to get.
- 2) It was God who was his ultimate protection.
- 3) Before a temple or place of worship is established, the tithe goes to the place where I worship.

So, this precept of giving was pre-law.

It most definitely during the law.

**Leviticus 27** tells of tithing of the fruit of the trees or crops of the land.

The Lord says it's His. I cannot emphasize this enough, the Lord said be careful not to take what should be returned to me. Notice how generous our Lord is, it's all His, but 10% goes to the place where you worship me.

**Deuteronomy 14** teaches some incredible lessons on tithing.

- 1) Tithing is a celebration! Whether in seasons of little or much, returning to God what is His should be a celebration. They ate, drank, they celebrated.
- 2) It was never about legalism. God allowed them to sell their land to bring in the cash to travel unincumbered to the temple or place of worship. Some people get caught up in tithing to the penny, or the first thing that leaves my bank account must be my tithe. Make sure in honoring God you're not making up rules to please yourself rather than God.
- 3) It was brought to their place of worship. Where you worship, is where your tithe goes. Unrestricted.

Some things that can help your church, or place of worship.

Give consistently and cheerfully.

We, as a church, steward God's resources best when people give consistently and cheerfully.





Proverbs. A book for everyday living. Young people to old people could glean from the wisdom found in this book. A proverb a day keeps stupid away.

### **Proverbs 3:9**

Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

In one of the first mentions of an observation (Malachi 3) the people of God had about their love that moved to giving. Putting God first leads to blessing.

First fruits are the first 10 percent of your increase.

**Matthew 23** – Jesus speaking to the scribes and Pharisees states the following –

### **Matthew 23:23-24**

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. <sup>24</sup> You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

### **Luke 11:42-44 (NKJV)**

But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over *them* are not aware of *them*."

Jesus noted that these legalistic religious leaders were so blinded by their own works that they make sure they tithed of their spice garden but wouldn't care about love and justice. You were right to tithe, but the weightier things you do not. It's possible to do the right thing but be the wrong person. Our salvation is not based upon what we do, but who JESUS IS.

Tithing and giving is such an entry level on the road to discipleship. Jesus even said so, it's not even part of the weightier things.

The OT covenant was obedience that led to salvation.

The NT covenant is salvation through grace that leads to obedience.

Some will say it's semantics.

It's not. Salvation through grace is different than salvation through obedience. One will lead you to salvation, the other will lead you damnation. Obedience to the law will never be done perfectly, outside of Jesus. You will always fall short. Grace that leads to obedience allows for Jesus to be our strength in our weakness.

Some arguments I hear against tithing. I am saved by grace, so I don't need to tithe. Technically Correct, salvation is not based upon our works. You will never meet someone who has been truly born again and loves Jesus who is not generous. There is no such thing a stingy Christian. A Christian who doesn't give is nearly impossible. When HIS LOVE dropped in us, it created a generosity machine!



Truth is, Grace's generosity looks far beyond the tithe.

2) **Acts 2** – They sold everything.

2) **2 Corinthians 9:6-7**

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup> Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

It's not just tithing that is commanded in scripture.

Billy Graham, in his sermon "Partners with God," says: "One of the greatest sins in America today is the fact that we are robbing God of that which rightfully belongs to Him. When we don't tithe, we shirk a just debt. We are not giving when we give God one-tenth, for it belongs to Him already (Levt. 27:30). This is a debt we owe. Not until we have given a tenth do, we begin making an offering to the Lord!"

Malachi 3 gives the warning. Don't rob God. You rob God by not bringing your tithe to the house of God.

Hattie Wiatt gives us the example of Love that leads to Giving.

Hattie Wiatt, a little girl, came to a small Sunday school and asked to be taken in, but it was explained there was no room for her. In less than two years she fell ill and slipped away on her own little last pilgrimage and no one guessed her strange, little secret until beneath her pillow was found a torn pocketbook with fifty-seven pennies in it, wrapped in a scrap of paper on which was written, "To help build the little Temple bigger, so that more children can go to Sunday school." For two years she had saved her pennies for the cause which was nearest her heart.

The pastor told the incident to his congregation, and the people began making donations for the enlargement. The papers told it far and wide, and within five years those fifty-seven pennies had grown to be \$250,000, and today in Philadelphia, can be seen a great church, the Baptist Temple, seating 3,300, a Temple College with accommodations for more than 1,400 students, a Temple Hospital, and a Temple Sunday school so large that all who wish may come and be comfortable.