

Tithing as First Fruits
Proverbs 3:8-9

- I. Today we're going to start talking about one of Jesus' favorite subjects – money.
 - a. Jesus had more to say about money than just about any other topic.
 - i. He talked about it more than he talked about hell.
 - ii. He talked about it more than he talked about heaven.
 - iii. In 16 of his 38 parables – Jesus talked about money.
 - b. Jesus talked a lot about money because God in the Old Testament spent a lot of time talking about the priority given to money, riches, and wealth.
 - i. The tithe is giving of 10% to the Lord.
 - ii. Setting aside this portion of your wealth to God.
 - c. Another way the Bible talks about giving is the phrase “firstfruits.”
 - i. We are asked by God to give the firstfruits of our labor to Him.
 - ii. We see that in Proverbs 3.
 1. {verse 8-9} = “This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.”
 2. The first fruit – were an acknowledgment of the fact that the land and all it produced were the gift of God to Israel, and in thankfulness for this bounty, all the first-fruits were offered to Him.
 - d. First fruits and tithes are closely related, but they aren't the same thing.
 - i. The tithe is 10% it specifies the portion that will be returned to the Lord.
 - ii. The first fruits specifies which portion will be returned to the Lord.
 1. It says the first portion (the first 10%) is to be returned to the Lord.
 2. It was (and is) a way to demonstrate that God is first.
 3. It's a way to show God that His Kingdom is your number one priority.
 - iii. When you make God your number one priority [when you demonstrate that] you open the door for God to richly bless you.
 1. Proverbs 3:9-10 says, “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. “
 2. Will God make you rich if you give him the firstfruits – not necessarily, God may choose to bless you in some other way.
 3. I will say this, “if you give God the first fruits of your labor, you will be blessed beyond measure.”
 4. This isn't a gospel of prosperity, it's a Gospel of obedience.
- II. I've invited Rodney and Gail Sadler to come and share with us this morning. Listen to their story and see how God has blessed them as a result of their obedience and sacrifice.
- III. Because of Jesus, something wonderful happens to us as we give.
 - a. James says this, [James 1:17-18] = Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.”
 - i. God not only wants the first fruits of our labors, God wants us to be the firstfruits of His creation.
 - ii. God wants us to make him first with our money, but even more importantly with our lives.

- b. When we make Jesus Christ first in our lives, our money, our time, everything in our lives shows it.
 - i. If we offer ourselves as first fruits.
 - ii. Everything else we do and touch becomes an offering of first fruits.
- c. And because we offer our first fruits – God is able [through us] to reach the world for Christ.

IV. VIDEO – “The Plate”

V. Be a kind of firstfruit of God’s creation.

- a. Give him the firstfruits of your money; give him your tithe.
- b. Allow him to bless you because you have offered your best.
- c. Allow God to bless you because you have trusted him.
- d. It always requires faith to give first – to tithe –
- e. I’ve never met a person who tithes who has said they didn’t have enough.
- f. Because they have offered themselves as firstfruit and God blesses.