



## The Tithe

**When love and gratitude converge, it cannot be contained, and an extravagant, generous response occurs.**

While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly. “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her. Mark 14:3-9

Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, could not contain her love for Jesus with a few drops of oil, as was the custom. Jesus brought her brother, Lazarus, back from the dead. Mary and Martha were with Jesus while he ate at their home. Mary sat at Jesus’ feet and listened to Him teach. Mary’s gratitude for bringing her brother back to life surely was on her heart. With so much gratitude and deep love for Jesus, Mary ‘poured out’ the most costly gift she had on Jesus. Mary’s love for Jesus was so overwhelming she could not contain it. What an aroma of perfume filled the room. Jesus knew that Mary’s action was in response to her deep love and gratitude for Him. Mary gave all she had to demonstrate her love. Jesus knew something that no one else in the room knew. In 48 hours His greatest gift of generosity for humanity would be the laying down of His own life for the salvation of the world. For your salvation.

Some in the room saw her gift as wasteful. Jesus rebuked them and said “she has done a beautiful thing to me.” If the motivation is gratitude and love, the gift is beautiful, not wasteful. More than a tax deduction; more than an obligatory religious tithe; if the motivation is in gratitude and love, the gift is beautiful!

### **Would Jesus describe your giving as something beautiful, done for Him?**

It is our hope and prayer that as an individual your love for God and gratitude for all He has done for you will be inspiring your hearts in an outpouring of love and giving generously – tithing is a way to show this. Jesus knew that one cannot separate the sharing of the good news of salvation in Christ from generosity. Good news –God’s generosity –spreads because of our generosity. Mary’s story illustrates how love and gratitude for God brings the extravagant response of generosity from those who follow Him.

Our love is often channeled through routines of duty and standard expressions.  
On rare occasions love breaks beyond the customary channels.

### **We tithe because...**

1. We tithe because the best and first belong to God. In the Old Testament, Abraham and Jacob brought money and everything that God had blessed them with. As Christians, descendants of Abraham, through Christ, it seems logical that our giving is a response in faith that applies to us as it did to those in the Old
2. Testament.
3. We tithe because Biblical wisdom is for all generations. Proverbs 3:9-10 states “Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine.”
4. We tithe because New Testament believers joyfully and generously gave a percentage of their income.

5. We tithe because Jesus did not negate the practice of tithing as He did other laws and observances.
6. We tithe because it is a starting point for giving as New Testament believers.
7. We tithe because of our gratitude for all that Jesus has done for us and for our deep love for Him.

More than 2,300 scripture references and many books have been written about giving, stewardship, tithing, and Old and New Testament instructions for believers. This document is intended to provide you with some Biblical principles and scripture to consider in living a life of generosity. There is more to learn and share about the subject of tithing!

**Whose money is it? Everything is God's.**

**For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.**

Psalm 50:10-12

**Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.**

Matthew 22:37-38

**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

Matthew 6:21

**No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.**

Matthew 6:24

**We are to live by the spirit; be led by the Spirit; and keep in step with the Spirit.**

Galatians 5:16-18

**Living and giving generously is a byproduct of the Holy Spirit in our life.**

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**

Galatians 5:22-23

If we are to live and give generously, it is the result of the Holy Spirit working in our lives. Look at the fruits of the Spirit and how each is connected with generosity. Goodness is translated as an act that brings good to others and is sometimes translated in the New Testament as generosity! What influences the way we live and give? Reflect on how you were influenced by 1) your upbringing (your parents and how they exemplified or taught generosity); 2) your church (exposure to teaching and scripture, experiences or an active church life, etc.); 3) your life experiences (like the Great Depression, loss of job or income uncertainly); 4) your cultural influences (charities, volunteer work); 5) peers on social media (recent ALS bucket challenge, for example); 6) the flesh (Galatians 5: things not of God, Ephesians 2: desires that lead us astray); 7) Christ (Ephesians 2:5 made alive in Christ); 8) your spiritual gifts; 9) the Holy Spirit at work in you.

**What is influencing you as you seek to live and give generously?**

**Tithing is not a New Testament law but a Biblical principle and pattern for giving.**

Tithing is a practical way to put God first in our life and give Him our first fruits. It also helps us, as believers, to develop spiritual habits that affect our heart, soul and mind. Tithing is a way that we demonstrate our priorities.

The Marvin Church Library has many books on giving, finances and stewardship.