

SCRIPTURES FOR 4/15/07 LIFEGROUP LESSON

1 Corinthians 10:26

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

Malachi 3:8-10

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How do we rob you?'

"In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

Leviticus 27:30

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.

Romans 6:14

For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Colossians 2:13-15

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

OPENING:

ICEBREAKER or GET YA THINKIN' QUESTION: _____

OPENING PRAYER NOTES: _____

INTRODUCTION:

Most of these trust questions ultimately require a response. If we trust God with our destiny, we respond by faith and commit our selves to Him. If we trust God with our lives, we respond by living by His plan. If we trust God with our provision, we respond by ...

Q: What is the appropriate response to trusting God's provision? (*1 Corinthians 10:26*)

DIG DEEPER:

This passage has two elements: a warning and a promise; a curse and a blessing. After release from Babylonian captivity, Israel was dropping the ball; they were not properly observing the Sabbath and were not bringing the tithe; to top it off, the priests were taking more than their share of the temple offerings, leaving the Levites destitute. Malachi (literally "My Messenger") was pointing this out. (*Have someone read Malachi 3:8-10*)

Q: Who was cursed? (*Every individual or the nation as a whole?*) How do we get this blessing? (*One person tithes and gets all the blessings? Must the whole nation change?*)

Here is the main OT law about individual giving. (*Have someone read Leviticus 27:30*) But Paul suggests something new. (*Have someone read Romans 6:14*)

Q: Just because we are no longer under law, does that mean we can just do "whatever?" (*Have someone read Colossians 2:13-15*)

Q: What is meant by the "uncircumcision of your sinful nature?" (*Circumcision was the sign that you were one of God's people, so your sinful nature identifies you as NOT one of His people*)

Q: So, would it have been possible to become one of God's people if we were still under law? (*not unless you were Jewish*)

APPLICATION:

Q: So if the law is abolished, how do we know what to give? Is a tithe not enough, too much, just right, or no longer a standard? (*Yes. Have someone read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8*)

Think about it like this: You are living at home under the rule of your parents and as a response to providing you with shelter you are expected to clean your room every day. You don't do it every day, but they love you anyway. Then at some point, they tell you it is now up to you.

Q: What would be an appropriate response? (*Let it go? Keep up the standard? Now that it's on you, do even more?*)

CONCLUSION:

So God has to power to give us whatever we need, but there is a *proviso*. At all times we will have everything we need in order to "abound in every good work." Give nothing and I can promise nothing, but give cheerfully and know that God is ABLE to provide whatever you need to continue to give cheerfully. How does that translate in concrete terms? Trust.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

GROUP NEEDS: _____ SHUT-IN MINISTRY: _____

WHO'S LEADING...

THIS WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____

NEXT WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____