



Stew Pot: October

Stew On This...

This time of year, in churches all across the country, church attendance is down. Now I have absolutely zero data to back this fact up but, if I had to guess, my guess would be that the people of God just aren't getting out of bed as early, they aren't missing as many brunches with friends, and they aren't skipping that 1 o'clock kickoff time nearly as much right about now.

Why? Because it's this time of year when churches all across the country start talking about the big "M" word. Money. (No not monkeys. Though they *are* pretty awesome.) No! **MONEY**. Mullah. Dough.

But, Why? Why can't we talk about it? Why is it some big faux pas? We all have money. (yes, some have more than others.) And a lot of us spend our days making money. And we all seem to think we need money to survive in the world. So why can't we talk about it in church? Why do we roll our eyes and sigh loudly when it's mentioned on Sunday morning?

I want to take a stab at this. If you will – just for a little time – I want to try and teach you a bit about money.

- (1) Romans 3:23 “for **all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”
- (2) John 3:16 “for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever** believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”
- (3) Ephesians 2:8 “for it is by grace **you** have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”

Wait a second. These aren't about money! (*or* monkeys!)

You're right. Because when we talk about money and we use church words like “tithes and offerings” – it's not really about the dollar amount. It's about **our response** to the most unbelievable gift ever given to us.

Now you may meet some who say “the Bible says we **MUST** give 10% of all our money” (Genesis 28:22 and Matthew 23:23 are just a couple supports for this). But you won't hear me say that. You won't hear me say that for two reasons. One - the greatest commandment I'm called to follow is in Matthew 22:37, “Love the Lord your God with **ALL** your heart and with **ALL** your soul and with **ALL** your mind.” And two - why would I limit giving to just 10%?

Giving an offering is not about giving 10% of our money. **Giving an offering is about GIVING**, as a response.

Did you know there are over 2,000 verses in our Bible that talk about money? That over half of Jesus's parables focused on or involved something about money? Within the Bible – there is scripture to guide us through every aspect of our life – including money and finances. But the question is: are we seeking to understand money in a God-guided way?

In "24 Hours That Changed the World" Pastor Adam Hamilton writes "When (we) give our tithes and offerings to God, we do so not simply to meet the church's budget or to win God's favor... We give them as an expression of our desire to belong wholly to God, to honor and love him and put him first in our lives. Giving our tithes and offerings is an act of worship”.

When money is mentioned on Sunday morning – when the church has been **praying** about the work the **Lord is calling** us to do **for His glory** and we recognize that doing that work requires gifts, of all sorts, from **the full body of Christ** – this is an opportunity for us to say “YES! Yes! I want to give. Not just of my time and my actions and my words but my money – that thing of the world that seems to dictate so much. I want to give that too! I want to **trust God's spirit is moving** and working **in this community of believers** that sit around me every week. And I want to give as much as I can.”

Stewardship, being a good steward, is **NOT** just about money. **It's about so much more than just money.** BUT Money IS one of many gifts we receive from God and are called to manage **in HIS name**. So enough monkeying around... let's ask ourselves: how are **WE** going to worship God with our money *this* time around?

- The Stewardship Team