

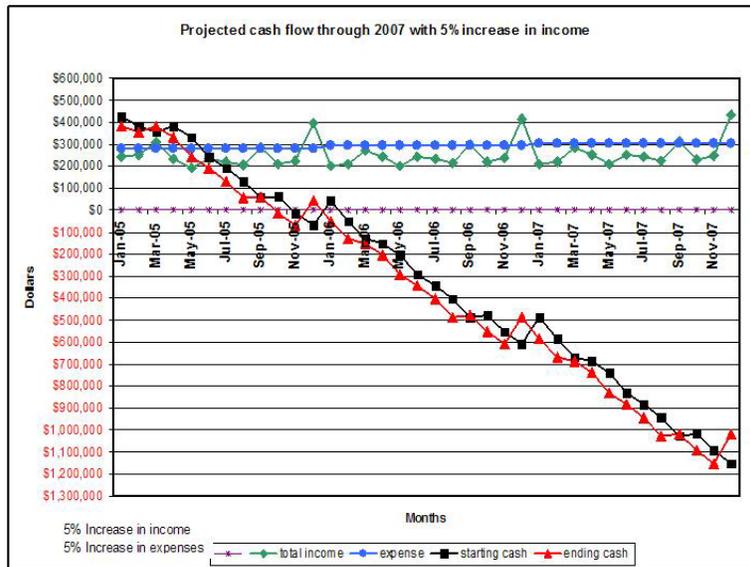
The Lord's Fundraising Program

Matthew 17:22-18:3

Pastor Peter Hiett

September 5, 2004

I'd like to show you a graph produced by Allison Bristow, our church bookkeeper.



This is the projected cash flow for LMCC based on current giving trends, assuming that income and expenditures increase 5% annually. Might I draw your attention to November 2007 where the red line drops below 1.1 million dollars, indicating we will be 1.1 million dollars in debt.

I've heard through the grapevine that some folks say, "Peter is afraid to preach on money and giving," and maybe I am. I do know that I have been reticent to interrupt

preaching series for fundraising programs, but this morning the topic comes from our text in Matthew 17. However, Matthew 17 is built upon a foundation that had been laid for thousands of years.

The Old Testament has extensive instructions on fundraising. Most religious income came through the tithe; tithe means 10%. If we followed the tithe, the church's budget would be as follows.

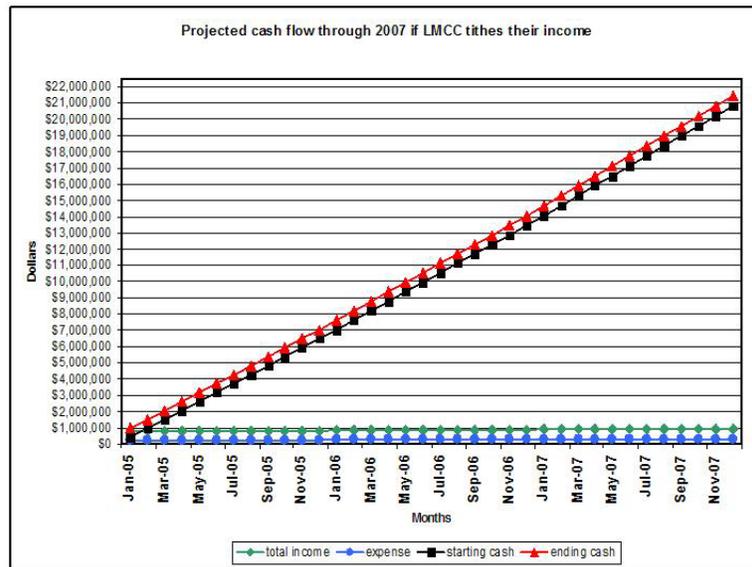
I would guess about 2500 adults would call this church, their church. So probably about:

- 500 live in the Genesee area x \$79,180 per capita income = \$39,590,000
- 500 live in the Evergreen area x \$36,654 per capita income = \$18,327,000
- 1500 more in the rest of JeffCo x \$28,066 per capita income = \$42,099,000
- The total income of worshipers at LMCC = \$100,016,000

(That's close enough since 47.2% of all statistics are made up on the spot.)

- But seriously, one tithe at LMCC should be \$10,001,600!

I asked Allison to run her chart again but considering we tithed (see next page).



May I direct your attention to November, 2007. We'd have 21 *million* dollars in the bank that we wouldn't know what to do with.

Well, biblically it appears that there are three tithes:

- 1) The Levitical Tithe: This paid for the salary of the Levites (Numbers 18:21). That would be like the church staff. Their combined salary would be \$10,001,600.00. Now, in case you think we'd be overpaid, 1/12 of us would be Levites. So instead of a staff of 30 some, it would be a staff of 208 $\frac{1}{3}$.
- 2) The Deuteronomic Party Tithe: (Deuteronomy 14:22-26) The Israelites were told to throw a party at the temple and commanded to spend their money for whatever their appetite craved (meat, wine, strong

drink) and then consume with great joy in the presence of the Lord.

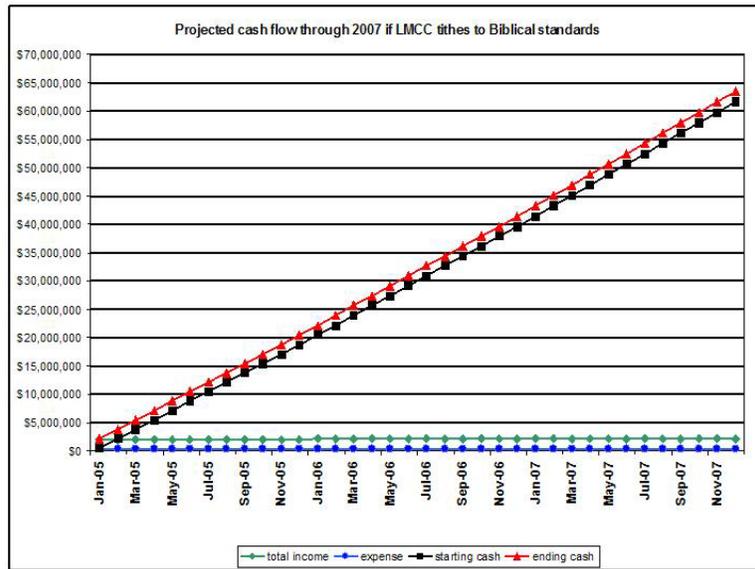
September 12th we're going to throw a "Party on the Side of the Road" because Jesus said to throw parties for people that can't repay you. Our budget for that party this year is \$15,500.00. If we obey Deuteronomy, our budget would be 9-10 *million* dollars. Instead of inflatables, we could build a looping roller coaster over I-70!

I guess that would be, like, our Outreach Budget, \$10,001,600.

Our Mission Budget would take the form of an army, so you'd need to give your sons.

- 3) The Deuteronomic Poverty Tithe: (Deuteronomy 14:28-29) It was kind of like our Deacon's Fund, but it appears they may have only collected it every third year. So it would only be \$3,333,866.66/year. That's still a killer deacon's fund.

Well, I had Allison punch those numbers into her computer (see next page).



May I direct your attention to November, 2007. If we tithed Biblically we'd have 65 million dollars in the bank that we would not know what to do with.

Actually, if we gave as presented in the Old Testament, we'd have a lot more so far. This wouldn't include the building fund. For a building program we'd need to get some Canaanite slaves and some kings that would take our stuff and some offerings.

We say "give your tithes and offerings." So far, we've only talked about tithes. The Old Testament prescribed God's offerings. There were consecration offerings, guilt offerings, sin offerings (for unintentional sins — for intentional sins, you yourself, become the offering), peace offerings, cereal offerings, burnt offerings. The burnt offering was just totally vaporized.

To do this right, we're going to need to get a bunch of farm animals or find substitutes. A red heifer in that day

was probably equal to a Dodge Durango today. So we'd just take my Dodge Durango, blow it up, and worship.

Now that's good, Old Testament, Biblical stewardship and that would be our worship budget.

But now, there's one more offering that would be like our maintenance budget (Exodus 30:11-16).

Now, it gets weird.

The Lord says to Moses, "When you count the people of Israel, then each shall give a *ransom* for himself that there may be no *smiting*."

My friends, that is a compelling fundraiser:
"Show me the money or get smited."

It was to be a half shekel for each person (in Jesus' day, probably a couple hundred dollars). It was the same amount whether you were rich or poor. It was called *atonement*. Atonement was the same for each person, and that atonement money was for the service of the tent of meeting which became the temple. And get this, that

ransom for atonement to serve the temple was to be a *remembrance* before the Lord.

Ransom, Atonement, Remembrance

God called it, "The Lord's offering to the Lord." Weird.

Later on it was called a "tax" by the kings of Israel (but God called it an "offering"). In Jesus' day it was referred to as the "half shekel tax" or the "temple tax."

Now Matthew knew a whole lot about taxes because he had been a tax collector for the Romans. The scribes and Pharisees wouldn't eat with him because of it. However, in Matthew 17 he records that this very same group came to Peter to collect taxes from Jesus, not for Rome but for the temple.

Now our text, Matthew 17:22-18:3:

As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were greatly distressed.

Well that's just more of that "Jesus dying on the cross and rising from the dead stuff again." It doesn't really have anything to do with real world issues like budgets and payments and stuff like that, right? So let's go on.

When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the half-shekel tax went up to Peter and said, "Does not your teacher pay the tax?"

It's interesting that the Greek word for "pay" used here is "teleō" which is also translated "complete," "pay," or "finish." "Does your master complete, pay, or finish the temple tax?"

He said, "Yes." And when he came home, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of

the earth take toll or tribute? From their sons or from others?" And when he said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free."

The *sons*, plural, are free. Free is in the emphatic position in the Greek. "*Free* are the sons!" If you're a son, you're free. That's huge!

All the tithes and offerings in the Old Testament were built around atonement in the temple, according to the law. Jesus said He came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill the law. So if there are sons, and they are free, then the offering has been made, and the atonement has been paid, finished, completed.

So, then, are you a child of God?
If so, you're free; you do not have to pay.

I'm not afraid of talking about tithing,
but I really am afraid of lying about Jesus
and His cross.

The sons are free.

Next verse:

*"However, not to give offense to them,
go..."*

Jesus is going to have Peter make the offering anyway, not because it's required, but in order to "not offend." Now Jesus has had no problem at all with offending religious leaders' pride, ego, and religious

sensibilities, yet he goes out of His way not to offend whatever little bit of faith they might have.

You see, He doesn't want the Jews to think the Gospel is a gospel of greed. Then people might join up just to get out of paying taxes and to make money. Calling themselves believers but never having faith in the God who is Himself self-sacrificing love. They might even go on television one day, preaching greed and calling it Gospel. Then folks might believe in greed, thinking that's the Gospel or worse yet, they might reject the Gospel, thinking it's only about greed.

Peter is to get and to give
that others might believe the Gospel of love.

And notice this, he's not to give because of what we normally refer to as "good stewardship."

- I mean, the money went to a temple that would be utterly obsolete in six weeks. In one generation (40 years) it would be destroyed and plowed into the ground by the Romans and Jesus knew it. He prophesied it.
- More than that, according to Josephus, the priests already had so much money at this time they didn't know what to do with it. So they built a giant golden vine.
- Even more than that, after the temple was destroyed, about the time that Matthew was written, the Romans conscripted this tax in order to build a pagan temple to Jupiter on the former site of God's temple.

- And, if you think that Jesus had Peter pay in order to save His own tail, Jesus is now setting His face toward Jerusalem where He will chase the money changers out of the temple, offending just about everyone. And He will be crucified by the very people who want to collect the temple tax.

Jesus is having Peter pay
because He actually loves His enemies.
Peter is free from the law
so that he is free to love like Jesus.

If you're thinking, "Great! Peter still ends up paying the money. There's no difference." Then you, my friend, do not yet believe the Gospel and your heart is blind to the glory of God. But have courage because He is able to make blind eyes see.

So anyway, Jesus says, "So as not to offend... go give." Now in Peter's mind there's still one huge problem. Give what? "Lord, I don't have the money I need!"

Remember, Peter has already given up everything to follow Jesus. Technically, because you call Jesus Lord, you have, too.

But Peter really has access to no money. I mean this is not some 43 year old, upper-middle class, white, suburban pastor who makes about \$100,000/year in a church full of rich people with combined annual incomes of 100 million dollars. Peter was the head of this poor, baby, persecuted church that in 6 weeks, on a Friday, would drop in attendance all the way down to 0.

Where will the church get the money it needs in order to love as Jesus commands?

The next verse is the only fundraiser (that I'm aware of) inaugurated and sanctioned by our Lord Jesus Christ for His church, the Israel of God, which will prevail against the very gates of death. The Lord spaketh unto Peter, "titular" head of His church on earth,

"... go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself."

Okay... [Peter picks up a fishing pole. He casts it into the aisle of the church and then reels it back in after having caught a fish.]

Hey, check this out, there's something in its mouth. Wow, a Hershey's Kiss! No money, but there's a note. It says, "Hey, you're not a fisherman, and this isn't the first fish you've caught." J.C.

Well, I don't exactly know what this fish means and what that note is about, so let's forget about it for now... What do you suppose that fish meant long ago for Peter? Peter was a fisherman. He'd looked in the mouths of fish thousands of times, and now he finds a shekel, just as Jesus said. That must have been awesome, maybe even fun.

At session John Coors said we ought to preach on giving money just because it's fun. John's over in Africa now providing light for people that have none, convinced that God called him to do so. Having fun.

I bet Peter had fun paying the half shekel tax that day.

A few times in the past when I had really run out of money through some people, like miracle fish, God provided exactly what I needed to stay in seminary or to keep doing this pastor thing. I have to tell you, it was awesome... and kind of frightening. If someone gave to me that freely, maybe I should give that freely.

But far more than that, it was frightening because maybe I wasn't in control the way I thought I was in control. That's even kind of offensive, like maybe my hard work wasn't as critical as I thought it was at times because God could just pull money out of fishes mouths. So maybe, in truth, I received everything by absolute grace when deep in my heart I had thought all along that I had earned it.

I mean, finding miracle money in fish's mouths has got to be fun and awesome but a little bit frightening and even offensive. It's like thinking you're an independent, responsible adult, only to find out that you're really a little child, dependent upon the good graces of your Father.

Do you realize that this may be the most offensive verse in the New Testament? This is the verse that so many Bible scholars try to explain away.

- It seems to make light of our responsibility and hard work.
- It seems to make light of so many of our supposed needs *because* we think that our biggest problems can be solved with money — problems like poverty, starvation, physical suffering. But if God is good and God can produce money in the mouths of fish, but oftentimes he doesn't, then that means that

oftentimes (maybe all the time) we don't even know what we need.

When my kids were little, they thought they needed every toy in the plastic toy aisle at Safeway. And what made the situation most offensive to them was that when they'd ask me, "Could we get the Barbie Dress Up Fun Set and bubble gum tape and Hot Wheels? Do we have enough money, Daddy?" I had decided not to lie, and I would answer truthfully and say to them, "Yes, we have enough money, and no, we're not going to get those things. You need to not get what you think you need."

See, it wouldn't have offended them if I could not have pulled money out my wallet. They had watched me pull money out of my wallet like it was a magic fish, and that was offensive to their egos.

But, if they could forget what they thought they needed and surrender to what I provided, which was what they really needed, they had a lot of fun.

Well, to be honest with you, I think I am afraid to preach on money but not because of tithing. My flesh loves tithing. It's easy; I'm in control, and I don't have to trust God hardly at all. I'm afraid to preach on money because I'm afraid God is calling me to become like a little child and that takes faith.

Little children receive everything by grace, and anything they give, then, is also grace.

Well, the children of a good father don't need to worry about getting what they need. However, they do often need to work on giving what they should. So getting what we need isn't the problem, and this sermon is on *getting*. However, *giving* what we should does seem to be a problem. In a few paragraphs, Jesus will speak with the rich

young ruler who doesn't give and goes away sad. At that time, we'll have a sermon on giving.

But do you see? Peter and the church's *getting* is not dependent upon the rich young ruler's *giving*. So listen closely, session, staff, and all those who worry about the budget of Lookout Mountain Community Church. LMCC's *getting* what she needs is not dependent on any rich young ruler's *giving* what they should. Likewise, your getting what you need is not dependent upon any someone giving what they should.

In other words, God is your provider, and He "is not short of cash, mister," (Bono). Even if someone else takes your cash and sells you into slavery, like Joseph. Though they "intended it for evil," God is providing your good.

And all things work together for the good of them that love Him and are called according to His purpose. So love Him and stop worrying about what you'll get. LMCC, love Him, and He will provide exactly what we need.

If we don't have the money we need, then we didn't need the money that we thought we should have.

You may think, "Gosh, if I really lived like that, then I could lose everything. I could be homeless. I could get crucified." Yep, like Jesus, like Peter. But maybe that's something you need.

Maybe you need to get a job. Some people are lazy, and they call it "trusting God." But they're not trusting God, they're trusting the welfare department or the good graces of other people. To trust your heavenly Father is to obey your heavenly Father, and He says, "Work heartily as serving the Lord, not men." We call that being grown up

and responsible, but God doesn't call us to be grown up and responsible. He calls us to be obedient in faith.

God forbid that you ever work for money. That would be a tragedy. You are always to work for your Father in heaven, and no matter where you do work, the money still comes from the mouths of miracle fish.

Maybe every fish is a miracle fish.
 If you raise hogs, maybe every hog is a miracle hog.
 If you manufacture widgets,
 maybe every widget is a miracle widget.

For every good and perfect gift comes down
 from the Father of lights (your Father in heaven).

Like the note said, I'm not a fisherman. So maybe Jesus would have me look in the mouths of some other critters. Peter was a fisherman. He'd always gotten his livelihood from fish, and maybe every fish is a miracle fish.

With little kids, everything is a miracle for they receive everything by grace. You could raise a dead man in front of a two year old, and he'd be unimpressed because, to a two year old, everything is a miracle. A ham sandwich is a miracle (they didn't make it). Adults live in the illusion that a ham sandwich is not a miracle because they think they paid for the ham and made the sandwich. But you can't make a ham! You can't make a tomato. You can't make one little grain of a mustard seed.

It's all gift!

Your next breath? 100% gift. Every particle in your being is continually held together by the Word of God. And if you really believed that, you would fall, as if dead, in terror. Why? Because you don't really believe in the depths of your heart that your heavenly Father is absolutely good, thoroughly love. Maybe coming to believe that, is your greatest need.

Well, Jesus (the Word of God) is saying to Peter and to Peter Hiatt, and to LMCC, and to all of His children, "Stop worrying about money and concern yourself with love. When you need cash, go to the sea and look in the mouth of the first fish you catch."

I believe that Peter went and actually got the money from the mouth of the fish and paid the tax. And yet, that was not the first real fish Peter caught from the real sea. That wouldn't happen for another 13 weeks. Jesus told Peter he'd be a fisher of men, and every Jew knew the "sea" was a picture of the nations.

On Pentecost Peter caught his first fish, actually 3,000. He didn't really catch them so much as God made them swim into his nets. They came from the nations. They were miracle fish with miracle money because of miracle love. Acts 2:44, "and all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all as any had need."

Let me try this again... [Peter casts the fishing pole again, and this time reels in the usher with the offering plate.]

Look, Hershey's Kiss!

[Holding up the offering plate] So this is our fundraising program, not taxes, but your offerings, given in love.

And this is going to be our financial stewardship campaign this fall. On various weekends we'll share with you our vision for loving even our enemies. Then we'll look in the mouth of the fish. If we have the money, we'll use it.

If we don't, then we won't:

Some programs will end.

Some of us may lose our jobs.

I may lose my job.

But listen: If that happens, it doesn't matter whether you were a faithful giver or not. It will still be God's perfect will for my life and for this church. We're free.

That's what I'm called to as a pastor, but I'm also a member. As a member, I believe I'm called to pray about that vision of love, asking if it is God's will, and then I am to go and look in the mouth of my fish, my income. But not my last fish, my first fish. That is, I am not to just spend the money on everything else and then look. It's not like 9/10 of the shekel is mine and 1/10 is for God.

If you call Jesus Lord, it's all His.

Everything we have is miracle money, belonging to God.

In other words, there were 100 million dollars in the mouths of our fish this year. So if we're 1.1 million dollars in debt on November 30, 2007, selling our building to the Safeway Corporation, it's not because there wasn't money in the mouth of the fish.

Don't you dare say, "We did not have the money we needed." You must either say:

- "We confess we stole the miracle money from God but now we turn and repent," or
- "We believe the Lord has led us to spend the miracle money to love people in other ways" (which is a possibility).

But don't worry. Whatever the case, you didn't lose the temple. Ever since Pentecost you are the temple, and the tax, the offering, has been paid. And whatever the case, you are the children of a very good Father.

Next verse:

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Every year, Susan and I pay a man to calculate our taxes so we can pay as little as the law allows. I must confess, we have no deep love for the IRS or their tax collectors. We're not free, and it's hard to love.

One day in 1968 at South Elementary on Windermere in Littleton I made a present for my dad. I didn't have to. I was free. But I knew that everything I had, and everything I was, and everything I loved was somehow a gift from my dad. In 2nd grade, I was crazy in love with my dad.

So I worked hard, and I worked long, and I gave all I could give, and I made this. It's a psychedelic, plastic ashtray that says, "To Dad" on the bottom. Never mind that he didn't even smoke. He loved it. He put it on his dresser.

The morning after Dad died last March, Mom said to me, "Is there anything of Dad's that you want?" I said, "Yea, I think so." I headed straight for the dresser and there it was, where it had been sitting for 35 years.

My gift to him was actually his great gift to me.

Well, your heavenly Father is not short of cash, but He does have a dresser and on it are widows' mites, and 6 million dollar buildings, and half shekel coins that weren't given as a tax, but as an offering. On His dresser are whatever has been offered in love from His children, but not taxes.

Do you get the point?
Your heavenly Father is not a tax collector.
He is your heavenly Father.
Stop paying taxes
and give him an offering of love.

The gift you give is really His gift to you, before and after. It's a communion of love. God is a communion of love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You've been made in the image of One who gives and gets and gives and gets and gives and gets with such passion and wild abandon that the giving is getting and the getting is giving. And that communion is an ecstasy that bears life.

- You are the bride of Christ.

- You are the little children of God.
- You are the very temple of the Holy Spirit — the living God.

Because Jesus, the good Son, paid, completed, finished the temple tax. It wasn't really a tax; it was the perfect offering. Jesus *atoned* for us, *ransomed* us, and made us sons.

“Does your master pay (teleô) the temple tax?” And Peter said, “Yes.” On the cross Jesus cried, “It is finished (teleô), completed, paid.” Then He said, “Father, Daddy, into your hands I commit my spirit.”

He wasn't paying the tax; He was making an ashtray for His Father, actually a new creation, actually children that love as He loved, actually a living temple.

For on the night He was betrayed (smitten on our behalf) He took bread and broke it saying, “This is my body, given for you. Do this in *remembrance* of me.” And in the same way after supper, He took the cup and said, “This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins. As often as you drink of this cup, do this in *remembrance* of me.”

When you come forward, you are making a public statement, and the public statement is this, “I get everything: Christ and all things with Him. And yea, I want to give everything.” In other words, “I want to learn to love like Him.”

And so they said to Peter, “Does Jesus pay the temple tax?” And then Peter uttered perhaps the greatest prophecy in all of scripture, “Yes.”

So you see on that cross, as Jesus hung there, and cried, “It is finished,” I believe He paid for more than every bull that was ever sacrificed in the temple every chicken, every lamb, more than every tithe, more than all creation. The very heart of God, for you. Why? So that the little children of the Father would know how marvelous is His love for you. That’s what you need; you need to know that.

So now, do you understand the Lord’s fundraising program? That was kind of a trick question wasn’t it? Because He doesn’t need any funds. “From Him and to Him and through Him are all things... the cattle on a thousand hills...” It’s not like He needs funds.

The closest thing He has to a fundraiser is this: Turning tax collectors into sons. And that’s what you are, little children of God, sons and daughters of the living God.

If you came forward this morning and you tore off a piece of bread with just a mustard seed of faith, I believe that you received all things, Jesus Christ, and all things with Him. That’s what you got.

And what did you give? Everything and nothing, right? You are going to go out of here, and you’re going to worry about stuff and you’re going to spend money without even thinking about Him, and you’re going to do all kinds of things. But, you see, He’s going to teach you because He’s full of grace.

The good Son now dwells inside of you, and He will teach you to love the Father as He loves the Father. He will teach you to live in the ecstasy that we call the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — Who is love. You are the

temple of the living God. And so believe the Gospel, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. And as he sat at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Matthew 9:9-11

As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were greatly distressed. When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the half-shekel tax went up to Peter and said, "Does not your teacher pay [teleô] the tax?"

Matthew 17:22-24

To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, their service in the tent of meeting.

Numbers 18:21

You shall tithe all the yield of your seed, which comes forth from the field year by year. And before the LORD your God, in the place which he will choose, to make his name dwell

there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstlings of your herd and flock; that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to bring the tithe, when the LORD your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the LORD your God chooses, to set his name there, then you shall turn it into money, and bind up the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses, and spend the money for whatever you desire, oxen, or sheep, or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves; and you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household.

Deuteronomy 14:22-26

At the end of every three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your produce in the same year, and lay it up within your towns; and the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29

The LORD said to Moses, “Command the people of Israel, and say to them, ‘My offering, my food for my offerings by fire, my pleasing odor, you shall take heed to offer to me in its due season.’ And you shall say to them, ‘This is the offering by fire which you shall offer to the LORD: two

male lambs a year old without blemish, day by day, as a continual offering,” etc, etc., etc.

Numbers 28: 1-etc., etc., etc.

The LORD said to Moses, “When you take the census of the people of Israel, then each shall give a **ransom** for himself to the LORD when you number them, that there be no plague among them [smiting] when you number them. Each who is numbered in the census shall give this: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as an offering to the LORD. Every one who is numbered in the census, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the LORD’s offering. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when you give the LORD’s offering to make atonement for yourselves. And you shall take the atonement money from the people of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tent of meeting [**temple**]; that it may bring the people of Israel to **remembrance** before the LORD, so as to make atonement for yourselves.”

Exodus 30:11-16

Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a **ransom** for many.

Matthew 20:28

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying,

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in **remembrance** of me.”

1 Corinthians 11:23-25

Jesus answered them, “Destroy this **temple**, and in three days I will raise it up.”

John 2:19

When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the half-shekel tax went up to Peter and said, “Does not your teacher pay [teleô] the tax?” He said, “Yes.” And when he came home, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their sons or from others?” And when he said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free.”

Matthew 17:24-26

So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

John 8:36

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Galatians 5:1

Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God.

1 Peter 2:16

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more.

1 Corinthians 9:19

And when he said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. However, not to give offense to them, go

to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.”

Matthew 17:26-27

Well, the God I believe in isn't short of cash, mister.

Bono, "Bullet the Blue Sky"

Money? I never give it a thought. It always comes. We do all our work for our Lord; he must look after us. If he wants something to be done, he must give us the means. If he does not provide us with the means, then it shows that he does not want that particular work. I forget about it.

Mother Teresa, My Life for the Poor

Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:7-8

However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself. At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you

turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 17:27-18:3

When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, “It is finished [τετέλεσται]”; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John 19:30

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