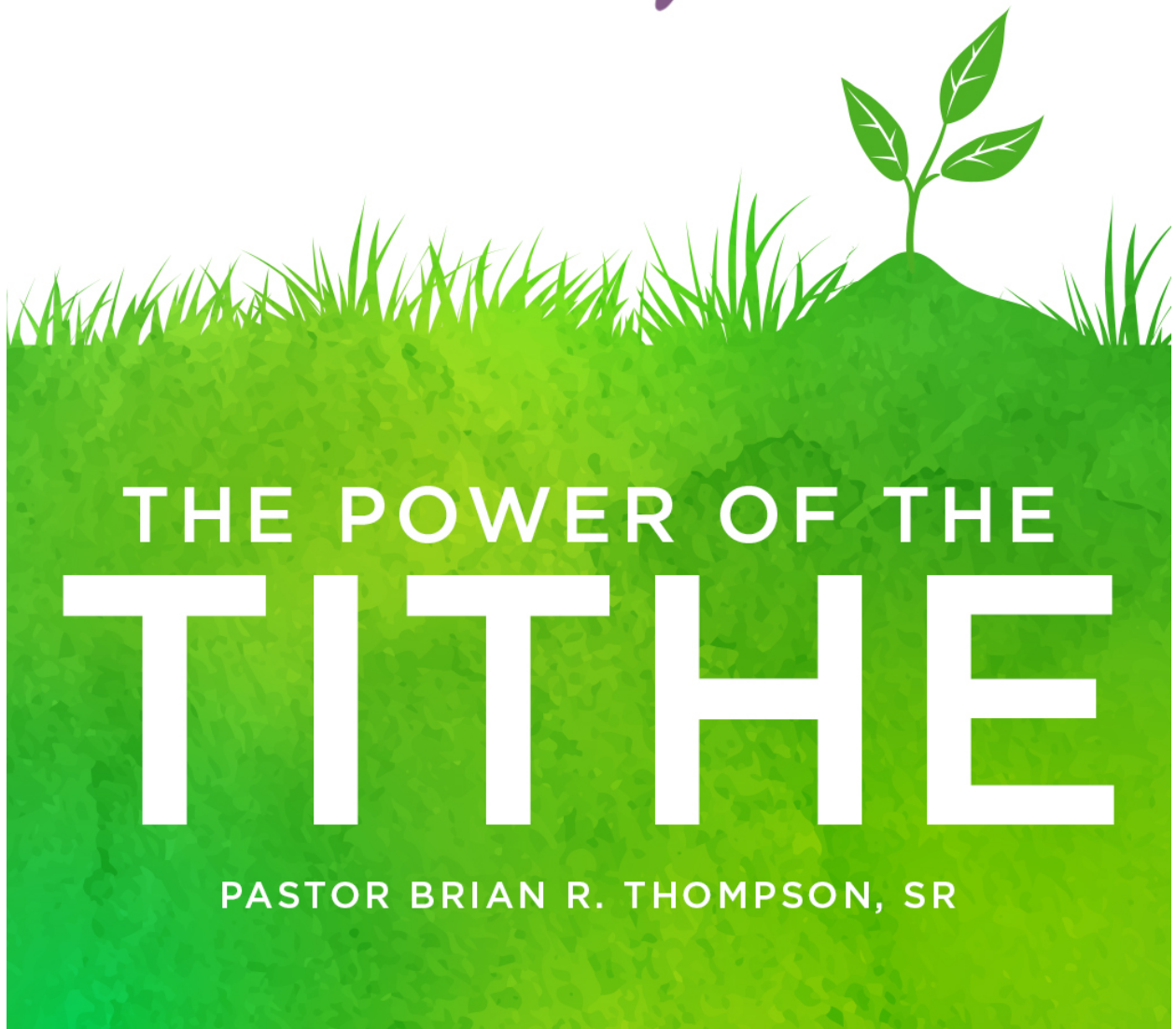


SIMON

Temple

AME ZION CHURCH



THE POWER OF THE TITHE

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INTRODUCTION

THE POWER OF THE TITHE

There is a profound truth found in the Book of Hosea. It reads, “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*” There are many Christians who do not enjoy the blessings that are available to them merely because they do not tithe. Over the years, I have observed that there are people in the Church, from the newly born-again Believers to the folks who have been in church for years, even ministers who do not tithe or are not faithful in their giving. These people seem to be the same ones who are constantly having financial problems or are trying to “*make ends meet.*” Almost every time, the root of the problem can be traced back to the area of tithing.

I define the tithe as ten percent (10%) of all legal and legitimate (justified in scripture) financial increase. The tithe literally means “the tenth portion.” That portion belongs to the Lord, and He trusts the Christian to bring it to Him. It is something you return to God, such as returning a rental car when you are finished using it. The car does not belong to you. It was never yours, only yours to use. God enables us to work a job, have a business, or come into an inheritance of which He has already counted out ten percent as belonging to Him.

A survey was conducted and it was found that less than 20% of Christians in America actually pay tithes. (I believe that percentage is increasing!) No wonder churches have been struggling financially and had to run to the world system to borrow money as soon as there was a sizable need. Can you imagine Jesus sitting in a chair in the waiting room at the Commercial Loan Department of the First National Bank, waiting for His name to be called to meet with a loan officer about getting a loan to build a new temple? Of course not.

Well, that same Jesus lives in us, and He is in the midst of a major building program. He is building His kingdom. If We follow His plan for meeting our needs materially and financially by giving tithes and offerings, I truly believe We (the Church) would not have to go to the world’s banks ever again. In fact, they would come to us.

Through the principle of sowing and reaping, God has made His Church self-sufficient and has provided more than enough to meet every need. He provides our wisdom, peace, righteousness, love, life, healing, protection – everything we need – and financial needs are no exception.

Tithing should not be looked upon as an obligation, but rather as a privilege. It is time that we acknowledge the sovereignty of our God and practice obedience to His Word. Sovereign means supreme in power, rank and authority, independent of others and above all. Before God created man, He made a natural, material world for him to live in. He then placed man in a beautiful and abundant garden. After man violated the command of God by eating the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he was forced to live a life of toil and hard work. God intervened and sent His only begotten Son to bear our sins, redeeming us from the curse of sickness and poverty.

When you **honor** someone or something, you treat them with special distinction and respect. You give them a special place and special recognition. We even have a term that we use when we financially bless the speakers that come to our church. We give them an honorarium.

God's desire is to prosper us in every area – spiritually, mentally, physically, socially, and financially. Tithing gives Him a channel or opens the door for those blessings to flow. I heard one man call it the "*Covenant Connector*." God wants us to see Him as our Source, and to know that He delights in the prosperity of His people. Through tithing (honoring God with our ten percent), He will bless us, protect us, and cause us to be honored. God said, "*For them that honor me I will honor...*" (I Samuel 2:30).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What is a tithe and when did it begin? The tithe was first mentioned in the Old Testament (Genesis 14:20) when Abraham “*gave Melchizedek tithes of all.*” The word “*tithe*” comes from the Hebrew word MA’ASER, which means a tenth or tenth part. Some think it was under the “Law,” but anyone can see from the passage of scripture that tithing was done by a man of faith, Abraham, many years before the Law of Moses came into existence in the earth. Abraham realized that everything he had came from God, and he was like a “*tenant farmer,*” one who takes care of the land and gives back a portion of its increase. A tithe is “*one tenth*” of your increase, or what you bring in. It could have started as far back as Adam and Eve, where God had one tree that was designated *off limits* to them. It is as much in our day as it was in Abraham’s day.

2. What are the benefits of paying tithes and what does it represent? First, it is the foundation for “*Divine Prosperity,*” in every area (spirit, soul, body, finances, and status). “Even from the days of your fathers, you have gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 3:7-8).

Second, the devil will be forced back from your life. “*I (the Lord) will rebuke the devourer for your sakes*” (Malachi 3:11).

And third, all will know that you belong to the family of Almighty God “*And all nations shall call you blessed...*” (Malachi 3:12).

Your tithe represents you (your life, your work, and your time). The child of God is the representative of God’s holy nation. God is holy, His people are to be holy (I Peter 1:16), and the tithe is to be holy, set apart to God and not tampered with – *The tenth shall be holy unto the Lord*” (Leviticus 27:32).

The key to receiving the benefits of tithing is this; do not treat it as a debt you owe, but as a seed you sow.

3. How should I tithe? Do you think God will increase my material blessing if I tithe? God teaches us to pay Him first. If you don’t have enough left to pay all your bills, start looking to God to supernaturally supply your needs. This is the Bible’s way, which does not necessarily agree with the answer of natural reasoning.

4. I cannot afford to tithe now, but if God blesses me in a material way, do you think it is OK to tithe then? The issue is not whether you can afford to tithe, rather whether you can afford not to tithe. Read the scriptures and meditate them. The Spirit of God will reveal to you exactly what you need to do. Remember, when God calls for a step of faith, He usually asks us to do something that is not entirely reasonable (Luke 5:1-8, I Kings 1:8).

5. Will the practice of tithing make me happier? I have noticed that people who seem to have the most joy in the Body of Christ are those who give in obedience to the Word of God. Obedience to the Word of God always brings peace with God. *“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them”* (John 13:17, Matthew 25:23).

6. Will tithing give me a deeper interest in the Lord’s work? Let me ask you this. If you invested your money in the stock market, would you have a deeper interest? *“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Matthew 6:21).

7. I have started at times and failed to keep it up. Should I try again? It is like any other area of your Christian walk, if you fail, you don’t give up. You try to understand where you missed it, get up and try again. You should be faithful in tithing as well as other areas of Christian living (1 Corinthians 4:2, Matthew 25).

8. Where do I pay my tithe? God said, *“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse.”* The storehouse is the place where you are being fed, normally the local church. If you are being fed some place other than your local church, you should seek God about where you really belong. You need a local church. *“Offerings”* represent giving over and above the tithe. It is to be given as God directs to meet the special needs and the work of the ministries in the Body of Christ. (Alms are money and other things given to the poor.)

9. Why are tithes and offerings so important to God? God wants to bless His people as He promised to Abraham. As we give tithes, offerings, and alms, we open up the channel for God our Father to bless and increase us. (Malachi 3:7-8, Luke 6:38).

10. How shall I figure my tithes? If you have a salary or income, give a tenth (10%) – not after living expenses are taken out, but before. Whether on welfare or fairing well, 10% of whatever comes into your hands belongs to God. Don’t tithe off of a loan, that is not your money. It is put through your hands for a designated purpose.