

An Act of Genuine Generosity

(Matthew 23:23-24)

Theme Title: *“Peace is...”*

Series Title: *“Peace in Giving”*

October 24th, 2021

Something to think about:

The religious leaders in Jesus’ day were known for their meticulous adherence to the Law of Moses. Even in matters of giving a tithe of everything they earned, they were second to none. However, they missed the point in their giving. Though they were obedient to give a tithe, they neglected the equally important things of living a life of holiness and grace by doing justice, showing mercy, and living by faith.

Matthew 23:23-24 (NLT)

²³ *“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.*
²⁴ *Blind guides! You strain your water so you won’t accidentally swallow a gnat, but you swallow a camel!*

What was the problem here? The problem was the intent with which the religious leaders were giving their tithes. And here’s the key point this morning:

Key Point: *“Giving to God must be done with a sincere heart without regard for what one will receive in return.”*

So, what is specifically going on in this passage of Scripture that Jesus is reprimanding the religious leaders so harshly? Well, it seems that they were missing the point of giving their tithe in the first place, and were merely going through the motions, so to speak, in following the letter of the law, without regard for the heart of GOD. What were the religious leaders doing specifically? Let’s take a closer look. The religious leaders were...

- **Tithing, but ignoring the more important things.**

And what were those things that really mattered? Let’s take a look:

- **Justice**

Psalms 11:7 (NIV), For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.

Proverbs 28:5 (NIV), Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it fully.

- **Mercy**

Hosea 6:6 (NIV), For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

Micah 6:8 (NIV), He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

- **Faith**

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV), And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Romans 3:22 (NIV), This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,

Something to take home:

God doesn’t need our money; He desires our heart!

Just like the religious leaders in Jesus’ day, we can’t allow our money to be the object; God must *always* be the object. We can’t assume that just giving money to the church is enough without also following God’s lead on justice, mercy, and faith.

We must remember: Giving is an act of worship; it’s something we do without having to be coerced. It reminds us of Who all things belong to, and is a representation of what God has done for us: He gave us His all! And, as an act of worship our lives must also represent actions of justice, mercy, and faith for these are the characteristics of one who is following Christ.

Sure, if our hearts belong to God so does our money, but it’s always God who is the object and not our money.

Key Point: *“Giving to God must be done with a sincere heart without regard for what one will receive in return.”*