

D&C Lesson # 17
The Law of Tithing and the Law of the Fast
(D&C 59, 119, 120)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration)

I. When the Lord says He has given us all things, He is speaking the veritable truth.

A. We are all beggars and paupers, except that He has given us things which we can use to enrich ourselves.

B. So when He asked the Saints to give all things to the Church through the Law of Consecration (or later to give their surplus property to the Church: D&C 119:1), He is not asking more than is just or fair.

C. Unfortunately, man is very blind, and we do not acknowledge we would be nothing or have nothing except for His generous hand.

D. So it is because of our blindness that today we give only a tenth, as required, and then other offerings according to our free will.

II. An event in Jesus's life may give us a clue to why tithing is a tenth of our increase.

A. Jesus entered a village where there were ten leprous men. They begged him to have mercy and were cleansed. "... one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks." He was a Samaritan. "Jesus said, Where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger" (Luke 17:11-19).

B. Isn't there something significant about this **tenth person who showed gratitude for healing, and that he was a Samaritan**. This event likely held significant **prophecy --- of us**.

First, from the beginning the Lord showed "a tenth" was a symbol for something holy set aside.

- "the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord" (Lev. 27:32).
- The Levites who served him received a tenth for their inheritance, and "*I [the Lord] am thy part and thy inheritance*" (Numb. 18:20-21). So Christ Himself was symbolized by the tenth. We should recognize then **that He gave Himself, a tenth, back to the Lord as an offering**.
- **He also gave Himself to us as our inheritance. For our inheritance is Salvation and Exaltation which only comes through Him!**
- When speaking of the remnant of Israel which shall return to Him in the last days, the Lord also identified them as "a tenth." "**But it [the remnant] shall be a tenth**, and it shall return..." (Isaiah 13:13).
- **And a tenth is what the Lord has asked his covenanted people from the very beginning to give back to Him in tithing.**

III. All these messages, taken together, seem to show the tenth often **symbolized the Lord's portion, and thus something holy**: that He himself was designated by the tenth as an inheritance; and that the latter-day returning remnant would be symbolized by "a tenth."

A. We are asked to live the Law of Tithing – to give 1/10th of our increase unto the Lord. **Is it not possible that the tenth [the returning remnant] will be identified and accepted as His people by the giving of their tenth?**

And is this not one true way of giving thanks to the Lord for our healing?

IV. That the tenth thankful one was a Samaritan is likely also prophetic.

* The Samaritans were **members of the House of Israel who had been mingled with the Gentiles**. The Samaritans featured prominently in several instances in Christ's Life.

* In the story of the ten lepers, only the Samaritan returns to give thanks.

* The Samaritan woman, met at a well, accepted Him as Messiah and spread the word.

* The Good Samaritan healed the stricken man, leaving him in care of others until His return.

V. While the worldly-identified Samaritans still live in Samaria, **we, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can be identified by those same traits**.

A. We are, after all, members of the House of Israel who were earlier mixed among the Gentiles, but have returned to our rightful designation as Israel in the last days. And faithful saints fulfill those roles of "the righteous Samaritans" designated in Christ's life.

B. Like the Samaritan woman at the well, **are we not those for whom Jesus Christ opened the fountain of living waters in the Last-days**, asking us to bear witness of Him to all we encounter?

C. **Aren't we asked to be like Christ, the ultimate Good Samaritan**, following in His path and seeking to heal any who are spiritually wounded?

D. And certainly, **we are that tenth portion of His people, who now healed, return and give Him thanks through our lives, our offerings, and our works**.

VI. The Lord also asked us to give other offerings, particularly to serve the poor.

A. And He **said it must be done in His way**.

B. He clarified this by saying, "And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine. But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, **that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low**" (D&C 104:15-16).

C. While the Lord revealed more than one way this could be accomplished, the **Law of the Fast** is its key fulfillment.

D. **By fasting and then giving fast offerings, those with means humble themselves, that those without means might be lifted up**.

E. We are also invited to give other offerings to help the needy.

VII. Becoming aware of how our offerings bless the needy will help us fast with Joy as well as give generously in that and other offerings.

A. Here is one true story which demonstrates just how meaningful our offerings can be.

B. Mariama Kallon lived in Sierra Leone during a civil war. Her parents and brother were killed; the legs of her sister cut off.

She was blessed to meet Latter-day Saints, and to join the church.

"My first Sunday in that Latter-day Saint branch was a day I'll never forget. I learned of hope. You could just see that there was hope in those LDS people, and I was drawn to them. I was given the Book of Mormon and started reading right away. I remember hearing in church about how families could be together again after death and then reading in Alma 11 where Alma teaches about how our bodies will be made perfect again in the Resurrection. I felt the Spirit so strongly as I thought of my family members killed in the war. I knew that the Church was true and that we could be together forever—each of us well and whole.

As the war continued, the Church sent food and humanitarian kits. Everyone was so grateful even to get a small bag of rice or beans. I received a blanket and a hygiene kit that included a toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, a comb, and a washcloth.” [This seems so little, but note what a difference it made].

“Soon, the rebels hit again and set fire to the house I was living in. As I was running to escape the flames, I took time to save only two things—my scriptures and my hygiene kit. We had to live on the run for a while, and I used my hygiene kit to help those around me. Our group of 25 women stayed in the bush for 3 weeks. I would squeeze out one pinch of toothpaste for each person, or we would go to the river and carefully pass my bar of soap from person to person. I tried not to share my toothbrush! The kit was so precious to us. The blanket too was invaluable. It sheltered us for many days until I used it to wrap an old woman who had died.

“My stepsister received a school kit. She was the only child in her school who had paper. Carefully, she tore out one piece for each of her friends and broke her three pencils in half, giving one half to each friend. Every day, the children would carefully write down their lessons and then gently erase everything each night so that they could use the sheet of paper again the next day. They were so grateful for the tools to learn.

“Eventually, I went back to my town and my branch. It was then that I decided I wanted to serve a mission. One thing that made me have the desire was that I felt that by serving my God, and my brothers and sisters, that I would return my gratitude to Him for saving my life. I know there is not much I can do to thank Him but that is one way by serving. And so I had the desire to serve....” (Read the rest of Mariama’s powerful story in Mark Albright’s “Missionary Moments,” *Meridian Magazine*, April 15, 2013). (emphasis added).

B. Note that Mariama was like the tenth leper. She showed her thanks not just by praising Him, but by serving the Lord!

VIII. Fasting not only blesses those who receive the funds offered by the faster, but it blesses the life of the one fasting.

A. Fasting is one way we have of acknowledging that everything we have comes from the Lord.

B. Fasting brings humility, can thus lead to greater sensitivity to the Spirit, and eventually to Revelation.

C. Fasting connects us to greater power. The Savior told his faltering disciples who had failed in casting out a devil, “this kind goeth not out **except by prayer and fasting** (Matthew 17:21).”