

Greedy For Money

We continue on our way, back to the future. The future of God's House On The Hill.

One of our short term goals as a church as most of you know is to form two leadership teams; one of Elders, or "Deacons" as they are also referred to in scripture, that will advise me and pray with me about the Lord's working in my life, the overall direction of the church, philosophy of ministry, projects, events, generally what this congregation will represent in the community the Lord has put us in (our "Jerusalem"). These are the members of the Elder Council.

The other is the Church Council that handles the day to day operation of the church; finances, general leadership direction and training, volunteer coordination, logistics (where we do what we do) and ministry team administration.

If anyone desires to be on one of these teams we are asking that they first become members. Being a member is simply learning what Foursquare stands for as an international interdenominational movement of the Holy Spirit so each person can understand and agree [or not] with what the word of God teaches. It's very reasonable to expect anyone in leadership to understand and agree with the basic biblical principles we are identifying with.

I recognize that we are all in different stages of our spiritual growth. No one should be comparing or competing. I often refer to a continuum from 1 to 10 as if our salvation begins with a "1" and the "10" happens at full maturity closer to the end of our lives. I believe each of us have our own 1-10 scale. My 10 may be different from your 10. The point being we each want to strive to mature to God's best in our lives. He meets us exactly where we're at and then matures us along a path that He has tailored for our benefit. Each aspect of our walk with God also has its own time line. Sooner or later we are all called to lead. It may be your family, another person to the Lord, a ministry, a class

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a university or a nation; each in our own way in our own gifting and in God's time.

We as a church have had a very significant summer of ministry growth, in the community, in our individual lives and here in this room. The Holy Spirit has for several months been telling me its time for the next step. It's time to move into a rented space and finally plant this church in the this community, to have a base of ministry operations that can be used 7 days a week if need be, day and night; center for our spiritual development and a focal point of ministry that would be available to us 24-7-365. Where we could have our midweek bible study, an after school youth program, night classes for training in ministry and a visibility in the community that will answer the question: "Where do you meet?"

To do this the Lord is stirring in me a need for willing partners in this work. These would be the Elder Council and the Church Council, leaders for the future of our church.

We first spoke of the qualities of a leader two weeks ago when we looked at Acts 6:1-4 (READ). This focus on appointing leaders was necessary because the ministry was growing and the work was needed to be done, in this case waiting on the needs of the Hellenist widows, and the urgency was such that the men called to lead in prayer and the ministry of word wanted to focus on that and by appointing others to the task it would free them up to do what God had called them to. That is the reason we are asking members to step up and give us, Raquel and I, a hand carrying this burden we have for our community. It is a responsible thing to do, it is a reasonable thing to do and it is a necessary thing to do.

I must first acknowledge that most of us are already helping in some way or another and I truly appreciate that. This next step of growth would put others in place that would be willing to own this ministry as their own and take responsibility for different areas to free myself and Raquel up to greater prayer and ministry of the word; and in addition to all that I am going to be going back to work. Please allow me to paint the big picture.

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I was working at an insurance agency in Biddeford for 5 ½ years and was suddenly laid off! I had already been looking around in the insurance world to better my situation for some two years and has already seen that I had a pretty sweet deal as far as pay goes. When I was then thrust into the job market it became evermore apparent that the type of money I made was a thing of the past; even the jobs were disappearing that were once there. Everybody wanted to pay commission only and no benefits.

To keep looking for work seemed to be a drill just to keep qualifying for unemployment! So, I spent time in prayer and asked the Lord what to do. I came upon a plan as a fleece, one that would better our state financially and use my experience selling auto, home and life insurance to support my family and still be available to the church. This was a year ago I made this plan.

I had pretty much given up on this and was ready to take my pension from a previous employer when the unemployment ran out and learn to live on less. Well, the Lord had a better idea! He told me to roll my pension as a lump some and to fix our house because we are going to be in it for the long haul; just as that conversation was going on one of the companies that I had sent my resume to called to do a phone interview. I was brutally honest with them even telling them my previous employer had to order me to remove all Christian symbols from my work area because a customer with that company that I was talking to had complained that I was talking to them about God. They still recommended me!

So, here I am, looking for a space to grow in, passing on my pension funds to a contractor to fix my house, ready to run out of unemployment looking to the Lord for a solution. Only the Lord could take all those things and work them together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. He is doing it in a way that keeps showing me over and over that His hand is unmistakably in it. This also includes you.

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I mentioned two weeks ago, before all these things started swirling about in my head, that we would be looking at the traits of a leader and to read 1st Timothy. Please turn with me to; 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

These verses give the prominent character qualities of a Bishop or overseer or elder. He must be blameless, a husband faithful to one wife, temperate (someone who avoids extremes), sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach not a drunkard, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not argumentative, not wanting what others have. In general it has to do with having a good reputation, as v. 7 says your reputation outside the church matters as well or you may become vulnerable to the devil.

There is one area, “greedy for money”, that may go unnoticed in some of us and in some translations it isn’t even there because it is the same as, “not covetous”. This is a love of money. Now we may think that only rich people have a love of money because they have so much of it. This can be, and is most often, a secret love that we hide way down deep in our hearts. No “good Christian” would love money more than God! Or do we?

Later on in this same book Paul writes in 1 Timothy 6:8-10 (READ): “...The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith...” I can’t remember how many times I’ve heard people speak of a church that, “all they talk about is money!” That is not all we talk about here but it is a subject that the Lord cares greatly about! Jesus talks more about money than most other subjects: Luke 16:3 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (material wealth or possessions.)

When people fear not having enough money so they hoard it or hold on to it it is the same as greed. Greed says, “I must have this for me.” “I’ve got to provide for myself.” This selfish lack of faith can be a secret that eats you alive from the inside out.”

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The Lord tells us that we are to trust Him and not worry. Matthew 6:24-34 (READ) Don't worry about what "enough" is. The Lord promises to provide for us. We must trust Him!

Malachi 3:8 "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings."

A tithe is a tenth. The principle goes all the way back to Abraham:

Genesis 14:19-21(NKJV)

¹⁹ And he blessed him and said:

" Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;

²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand."

And he gave him a tithe of all.

The origin of the tithe was Abraham when he was delivered from his enemies by the king of Salem, Melchizedek. He gave him a tenth of all he had in gratitude. That is the attitude we are to give our tithe from, out of the gratefulness in our heart that the Lord has brought us into His family, saved us from our sin, started us on a road to fullness of joy and is bringing us step by step to being all that He has planned for us in every good way!

When some one holds back his tithes and offerings the word of God tells us he is robbing God! It's also saying we don't trust God to provide for us after He has promised to do just that.

Malachi 3:10

Bring the whole **tithe** into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."

This promise is for then and is for now, we just have to trust God.

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That brings us back to the future. Our future to be financially responsible for a higher rent then we pay here for three hours a week.

We pay the Community Center \$62.50 for three hours, just over \$20/hour. to use the theatre, restrooms and one room for the children. If we were to pay for the full seven day week at that rate it would be over \$3,000 a week, or \$12,000 a month.

We can have our own space for \$1,200 a month! That's \$1.65 / hour.

We need to raise about \$1,000 more a month to do this. If we all trust the Lord at His word I believe it would be very doable. In the bigger picture I could lease from the church my insurance office which would lower the rent we would pay by \$300/month that would lower our hourly coast to \$1.25. If we all pray real hard for me to negotiate the lease even lower I'm believing we can get the rent to \$1,000, with my office rent of \$300 a month it be at \$700 a month or \$.96. SO, for somewhere between \$1.25 and \$.96 an hour we can move to the next level.

Our tithes and offerings would need to show this extra income for us to actually do it. All that is holding us back is our community trust in the Lord's provision. If it's God's will its God's bill.

If ten people would give an extra \$25 a week we would raise an extra \$1,000 a month. When Raquel and I take money from my pension plan to do all the things we need to do in our home we will give 10% to the church. In addition, this new job with MetLife© promises to guarantee me enough for training weeks 10% covers our \$25. If we all tithe with a joyful heart we will not only have a new church location when we enter the new year we will be well on our way to receiving from God the promise of [Malachi 3:10](#) "Bring the whole **tithe** into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me

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in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”

This area of money is best left in the Lord’s hands. If you will trust Him in this He will remove the fear of not having enough and replace it with the peace that He will provide all that you need. Trust Him and He will not let you down.

Next Sunday after church you are all invited to see this new space and though it may be small, we can grow there. The location, is just right, the size is big enough, to timing is God’s and to decision is yours.

Let us pray.