



What's with all these 'Only comes once in a century' signs?

I've gotten quite a few questions about these "Don't miss it" signs that have been up at church for the past month.

Every so often a special day comes around on our calendars which presents us with the opportunity to do something out of the ordinary. One such day occurs this year on Sunday, October 10th. Only once a century do we have a 10-10-10 day. (Tenth day of the tenth month in the tenth year).

But this particular day in history is even more unique since it occurs on Sunday. Because of that we can add a fourth "10" to give us 10-10-10-10.

And the fourth "10"?

The fourth "10" stands for the Biblical concept and teaching of the tithe—the action of people of faith in Christ setting aside and then giving back to the Lord 10% of the blessings He's given.

Thus, we have "Ten-Ten-Ten-Ten", a special stewardship program intended to encourage God's people in LC-MS churches of the Minnesota North District to try tithing on that Sunday. "Bring a 10th to the Lord on the 10th day of the 10th month of the 10th year!"

Some of you might remember that our District sponsored a similar "10-10-10" in 2004 (the last time October 10 fell on a Sunday). People throughout our District were encouraged to try tithing the week of October 10, 2004. Many congregations made use of this program and God blessed their efforts. It was not out of the ordinary for participating congregations to have received an offering that morning of 2, 3, 4, or even 5 times their normal weekly offering ! And many congregations continued to experience the blessing of members growing in the grace of giving beyond that one Sunday.

Such results are not surprising. After all, our gracious God has promised to enable us to grow spiritually, and He always keeps His promise. Will He do it again? Pray that our heavenly Father would once again bless us with the desire to grow in the grace of giving !

Why 10% ? Ten percent was typically the "king's share" in ancient times. When God commanded His people to tithe in the Old Testament He was teaching them to acknowledge that He is King of their lives. The One to whom they owe their ultimate allegiance. The One they trust 100% to provide and protect them.

But did Jesus ever talk about tithing in the New Testament? Actually He did. In Luke 11:42

Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

God's people in Jesus' day followed the Old Testament and gave a tithe to the Lord. The Pharisees took that to the extreme of even tithing their small garden herbs. Jesus is not chewing them out here for tithing - even their small things. He actually tells them it's good that they do this. What He does chew them out for is not treating people with justice and not showing true love to God. In effect He says, "It's not an either-or thing. You should tithe AND show justice to others and love to God." I had a pastor friend tell me once, "If 10% was the standard for showing gratitude to God before Jesus died for us, why on earth do we look for ways to give Him less after Jesus came?"

So, how does 10-10-10-10 work?

Start with prayer. Ask God to help you answer these two questions

- Is the Lord asking me to increase what I give back to Him?

- Is the Lord encouraging me to take a step in that direction by setting aside one-tenth of my (our) income and bring it as an offering to Him on October 10th?

Then simply fill out the commitment card below (cards will also be available at worship October 3 and 10th) and bring your tithe to worship on the 10th (or mail if you can't be in worship that day).

Do you have to give a tithe that day? No. But I'd encourage everyone to consider this promise God makes in 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 you will not have room enough for it."

The following comment is an example of the kind I hear from folks who didn't think they could afford to tithe - but who tried it anyway: "It strengthened my faith like nothing else to see how God kept his promise to provide for my needs and to pour out countless blessings on top of it." I have no doubts that God will do that for you as well.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net