



What's a "Faith-Promise?"

"Faith-promise" is the term we give to the annual commitments we make to the Lord regarding the use of the gifts he's given us. Everything we have is a gift from God, including our "time," "talents," "treasures," and "testimony." It's called a "faith-promise" because it is a promise to God based on faith. Faith that God will empower you to keep the commitments you make.

Why do we make these faith promises?

Because as the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14ff) makes clear, God gives gifts for us to put to use to expand the kingdom of God. Whatever God has given us is to be put to use. We usually have good intentions about using our time, talents, treasure and testimony for God. But "good intentions" most often don't make the trip from our minds to our actions. If we truly are going to use the gifts God has given, the first step is to turn the "good intentions" into a "commitment." The faith-promise is where this happens. Putting a commitment in writing and signing your name to it helps to make the commitment more "real" in our minds.

Why do we make them every year?

We make new faith-promises each year, first of all because as our faith grows and matures, so should does our level of commitment. Secondly, as our situations and gifts change, our commitments will naturally change along with them. Thirdly, just as we need a yearly checkup with a physician is a good idea for your physical life, a yearly "spiritual checkup" is a good idea for your spiritual life.

As it relates to the giving of my "treasure" (income) is the Old Testament standard of a tithe (10%) still valid or did that change when Jesus came?

I think Jesus answered that question best in Matthew 23:23ff, where he points out to some Pharisees that he knew they commonly gave a tithe but did not practice the virtues of justice, mercy and faithfulness. He then told them,

"You should have practiced the latter (justice, mercy and faithfulness) without neglecting the former (tithing)."

A tithe was "the king's share" in ancient times, so a tithe was given back to God as a way for the people to show that they recognized God was their king. Tithing is still the appropriate way to acknowledge that God is king in your life. If ten percent seems a bit overwhelming, check out this blessing God promises for tithing 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."

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net