

Sunday, August 27, 2017 - "The High Cost of Spiritual Slippage" - Bryce Gray

Key Passages: Nehemiah 8-13, Deuteronomy 12

- Feel free to read the passage(s) out loud as a group
- Allow the group to share freely about what stood out to them from the passage or from Sunday's message

Main Ideas

- End of Nehemiah Ch 8
 - The people read the Word of God
 - They realize that God has given them a fresh start
- Nehemiah 10
 - They decide that they will fund worship of God in the temple (Levites, singers, etc.)
 - Giving a tithe (even the Levites would give a tithe of the tithe)
- Nehemiah Ch 12
 - Dedication of the wall. A huge celebration with a "rocking band"
 - Why did they promise to give what they did?
 - Deuteronomy 12: God said set aside what I tell you, take it where I tell you and celebrate it
 - Once you honored God with what he gave you, then ask blessing on your business
- What did Levites do?
 - Worship, settled disputes, taught the scriptures, disease investigators, building inspectors
 - They didn't have land/inheritance so they were provided for through the tithes of the people
- Malachi 3
 - God wants his storehouses to be abundant to serve those in need
 - God says "put me to the test" Set aside what is His and see how He blesses us
- But the New Testament means we don't have to follow Old Testament laws or regulations about giving
 - New Testament says a tithe is just the beginning
 - Tithe AND justice and love
 - Tithe AND caring for the poor and giving to the needy
 - God is impressed when our giving shows trust in him not if it's a certain number (Mark 12)
- Nehemiah goes back to Jerusalem and finds the Levites haven't received their portion
 - He essentially asks "Why is God's work neglected?"
 - God has said a portion of what I have given you is mine, it's not just about the 10%
 - Imagine what ministry could look like if we all responded to what God was prompting us to do
 - God wants us to be responsive to how He is leading us in giving
- 4 categories and applications
 - 1) Tippers (I should probably give something) - God may be calling you into the adventure of tithing
 - 2) Tithers (checking boxes, 10%) - there may be more promptings to bless and give beyond the baseline
 - 3) Theatrical (like to be known) - A call to do it in secret
 - 4) Previously Burned (bad church experience) - There may be some bitterness or unforgiveness to let go and allow God to heal
- The Ideal: Open handed, listening to God's promptings, all we have is "In-Play"

Questions (Feel free to use all of these, some of these, or none of these)

1. What has God shown you about giving?
2. What has God revealed to you about your heart regarding tithing/giving?
3. How have you seen God respond to your giving?
4. How do you identify with one or more of the 4 categories?
5. How might God be challenging you in the areas of giving/tithing?
6. Have you ever tested God like he says to in Malachi 3? What happened?
7. What is God inviting you into as a result of this passage or sermon?

****15 Minutes with God Reading Plan-**

Mon: Psalm 73 Tues: Psalm 91 Wed: Psalm 96 Thurs: Psalm 103 Fri: Psalm 139

****5 Minutes Reading/5 Minutes Writing/5 Minutes Praying**