

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

- Week of July 12, 2026 -

Sunday School -----	11
Sunday Morning Service -----	36
Sunday Eve. Service -----	32
Wednesday Eve. Service -----	14

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

- Week of July 9, 2026 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,685.93
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund -----	\$ 119.12
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 07/09/26:	\$ 1,805.05

- Week of July 2, 2026 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,504.19
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund -----	\$ 145.35
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 07/02/26:	\$ 1,649.54

- Week of June 28, 2026 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,301.18
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund -----	\$ 145.35
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 06/28/26:	\$ 1,446.53

- Week of June 21, 2026 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,629.14
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund -----	\$ 145.35
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 06/21/26:	\$ 1,774.49

- Week of June 14, 2026 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,572.57
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund -----	\$ 145.35
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 06/14/26:	\$ 1,717.92

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed for church operating expenses EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,800.00



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.
3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.
4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).
5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.

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23 EAST WELLS BOULEVARD
SAPULPA, OKLAHOMA
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SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

Sundays -

- 9:45 a.m. ----- Sunday School
10:50 a.m. ----- Morning Service
6:30 p.m. ----- Evening Service

Wednesdays -

- 7:00 p.m. ----- Evening Service

Bi-Monthly -

- 11:00 a.m. or 3:30 p.m. ----- Ladies Bible Study
- 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month

Church Directory

Todd W. White -----	Pastor
Debra Carlton, Mickie Shatwell -----	Pianists
Derek Quinnelly -----	Greeter
Shirley White; Berdena Bergman/Debra Carlton; Daniel Avery/GiGi Avery; Derek Quinnelly/Larry Byars -----	Teachers
Larry & Mary Byars -----	Outreach
GinaMarie Shufelt -----	Ladies Bible Study
Hannah Dietrich -----	Flowers
Seth White -----	Sound/Video
Larry Byars, Derek Quinnelly, Daniel Avery -----	Trustees

SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST’S WEEKLY

REMINDER

Volume XXXII July 19, 2026 Number 27



What Your Brain Does When You Sing with Other People

You’ve probably noticed it before. Maybe you’ve even felt it yourself and wondered what was really going on. A room fills with people; some strangers, some neighbors who barely know each other, some a congregation carrying the weight of a hard season. Then the singing begins. Not performing, not spectating - just singing. And somewhere along the way, something changes. Shoulders drop. Voices that started out tentative begin to find their strength. By the end, the room feels different than it did just a few minutes before, and no one needs to explain why.

Pastors have tried to put words to this for generations. Until recently, we didn’t have a way to see what was happening inside the brain when people sang together. Now, we’re starting to get a glimpse, and what researchers are finding isn’t just interesting - it’s a small window into the wisdom woven into God’s design.

This isn’t about chasing a more emotional worship service - it’s about noticing what God has built into the act of singing together, and considering how we might steward that gift well.

The Brain Was Made for This -

When a person sings, the brain does not delegate the work to a single region and move on. It mobilizes. According to researchers writing in *Science for the Church*, drawing on a growing body of neuroimaging studies, the auditory cortex processes the sound, the motor cortex engages to coordinate rhythm and breath and movement, and the limbic system, which governs emotion and memory, activates with a kind of fullness that very few other human activities produce. Music, *and particularly singing*, is one of the only activities documented to engage virtually every major region of the brain simultaneously.

But here is where it gets theologically interesting - When people sing together, something **additional** occurs that isolated listening or private singing does **not** produce. W. David O. Taylor, writing in *Christianity Today*, draws on research showing that shared musical experiences create neural synchrony, a measurable convergence of brain activity across physically separate individuals. When a congregation sings together, they share neural activation in the amygdala, the insula, and the caudate nucleus - the key emotional processing centers of the brain. The result is a documented surge of endorphins and a release of oxytocin, the neurochemical most associated with trust, bonding, and what researchers call “fellow feeling.” Self-protective boundaries lower. Empathy deepens. Social bonds strengthen.

In simple terms, when your church sings together, something is happening in their brains that actually knits them together. It’s not just an emotional moment. It’s a shared experience that shapes them as a body in ways that don’t happen when they’re just individuals in the same space.

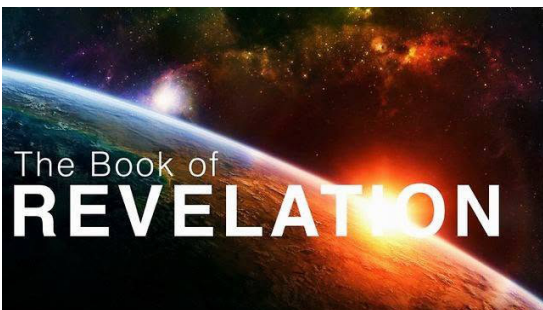
If you’ve ever wondered whether Paul’s picture of the church as one body with many members was just a metaphor, this research offers a kind of scientific footnote. It seems God has woven this reality right into how our brains work.

This Is Not the Spirit Working Around Your Bodies -

There is a tendency in some theological traditions to treat the body as a “container” for the soul rather than a participant in

(continued inside)

DON’T FORGET TO BE HERE TONIGHT
AS WE CONTINUE TO STUDY -



formation. Worship, in this framing, is a **spiritual** transaction that occurs within the invisible part of a person, while the physical body cooperates or, ideally, stays out of the way.

Scripture reflects this. Paul tells the church at Ephesus to be filled with the Spirit, and the next thing out of his pen is singing: *“Speaking [singing] to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19).* The physical act of singing to one another is presented as an expression of Spirit-filling, not a warm-up to it. Colossians 3:16 ties the word of Christ dwelling richly in a community directly to the practice of corporate song. The body is not incidental to what is being described. It is the **location** where the formation occurs.

Taylor’s argument in *Christianity Today* is this: the Spirit’s pleasure is to work not just in our heads and hearts, but also in and through our physical bodies, forming us wholly into Christ’s body. The brain’s response to corporate singing is not a loophole, a coincidence, or a technique borrowed from concert promoters. It is the instrument functioning as its Maker built it to.

And the effect is not momentary. Researchers building on the work of neuroradiologist Dr. Andrew Newberg and others have documented that repeated worship and prayer do not merely *feel* transformative; they **measurably reshape** the brain over time, influencing how people handle stress, relate to others, and make moral decisions. Using functional MRI scans, researchers have observed that sustained worship reduces activity in the amygdala’s fear response while **strengthening** the anterior cingulate cortex, the region associated with empathy, self-regulation, and moral reasoning.

A worship service is not something that just gives people an emotional experience on Sunday morning - together, everyone is collectively participating in their formation in ways that go all the way down to the cellular level.

Singing Together Does Something That Nothing Else Does -

It is worth pausing to consider what the research specifically shows that **corporate singing** produces that other forms of gathering do not. A small group is relational but not physically synchronized. Even individual prayer, practiced in community, does not produce the same neurological profile as voices joining together in song.

This synchrony is at the heart of it. When people sing together, they start to breathe together. Researchers have even found that heart rates begin to line up in the same room. The act of making music together pulls our bodies into step with each other. That’s why a church that sings well together often feels more unified because, in a real sense, *they are*.

Taylor’s framing in *Christianity Today* is particularly striking: ***“If the whole village is listening and dancing, then the whole village is enacting a single pattern of musical activity, even though they are physically distinct individuals with distinct nervous systems.”***

There is also something happening with dopamine, the brain’s way of rewarding us. Studies show that music, especially when it’s

meaningful, lights up the brain’s reward centers, and, when people have powerful spiritual experiences, those same areas are activated. In other words, what happens in worship can shape how people make decisions and live the rest of the week. That’s not a small thing for pastors and leaders to notice.

This is part of why the season of online-only worship during COVID left something missing - No matter how creative we got, digital services couldn’t replace what happens when people sing together in the same room. Many reported feeling less connected to God and to each other. The way we gather matters because our bodies matter, and God made them that way.

How to Actually Activate This in Your Church

It’s one thing to understand all this. It’s another to steward it well. The research points to what’s possible when a church sings together, but whether that potential is realized depends a lot on the choices leaders make week by week.

The first and most underappreciated decision is whether a congregation is actually singing or merely watching. These are not the same experience neurologically, relationally, or spiritually. The neurological and relational benefits documented in the research are tied to **participation**, not to aesthetic quality. A room full of people singing imperfectly together produces outcomes that a room full of people appreciating a well-executed performance does not. The question to consider honestly is whether a Sunday gathering is designed for maximum congregational engagement or for maximum stage quality.

Song selection and key matters. When songs are pitched too high for the average voice in the room, people stop singing, not because they are spiritually disengaged, but because the physical act of reaching for notes outside a comfortable range is fatiguing and eventually discouraging. When people stop singing, the shared neural event stops happening. There is a large amount of specific research on vocal range and key selection, but the short version is this: *the key that sounds best on the recording is rarely the key that invites the most participation from a room full of average voices.*

Repetition, within reason, also serves participation. Familiar songs invite engagement because people know where they are going. New songs, however excellent, require cognitive bandwidth to learn, *which competes with the kind of presence that corporate singing is meant to produce.* A steady diet of new material keeps a congregation perpetually in learning mode. The practical implication is not to stop introducing new music, but to be intentional about the ratio, and to teach new songs until they become genuinely familiar before leaning on them heavily in worship.

Finally, consider the physical space. Rooms that absorb all of the sound [*IOW: are dead, acoustically.* - TWW] make congregational singing feel discouraging because people cannot hear themselves or each other. When you cannot hear the voices around you, *the shared experience is diminished.* Hard floors, reflective walls, and minimal soft furnishings **support** congregational singing, acoustically. This is not an argument for

a renovation. It is an argument for understanding why some rooms naturally facilitate communal singing, and others fight it at every turn.

“But Aren’t You Just Encouraging Emotionalism?”

This is a fair concern, and it deserves a direct answer rather than a dismissal.

Emotionalism in worship, rightly criticized, refers to the manipulation of feeling as a **substitute** for encounter with the living God. It chases the **sensation** rather than the Saviour. It judges the Sunday gathering by how it made people **feel** rather than by whether truth was proclaimed, responded to, and embodied. That concern is legitimate and worth protecting.

But the neuroscience described here is not a technique for manufacturing feelings - It is a description of what happens in a brain when embodied beings engage in a practice that God himself commanded. Paul did not say “if you feel led, you might occasionally sing together.” He wrote to Spirit-filled communities and described corporate singing as **characteristic** of that life. The Psalms were not group therapy - they were addressed to God by his covenant people, and they span the full range of human emotional experience precisely because God is not threatened by honest human feeling.

The real question is: ***are people singing because they’ve been stirred up by production, or because they’re responding to what’s true about God?*** The hope here is to clear away anything that gets in the way of a genuine response. Neuroscience can describe what happens when we respond together, but it can’t *create* that response. Only the Holy Spirit does that.

“We Don’t Have the Budget or the Band for Any of This”

Good. Because almost nothing described here requires a band. [*AND - the modern idea that a church has to get rid of traditional music and instrumentation and put together a “praise team” and a “praise band” is one of the greatest misunderstandings in the contemporary church.* - TWW]

The oxytocin surge, the neural synchrony, the endorphin response, none of it was produced in a lab by a polished arrangement with a full rhythm section and in-ear monitors. ***It was produced by people singing together - a piano and a capable player will do.*** An acoustic guitar and a confident leader will do. A congregation that sings a cappella for portions of the service will do, and may actually do more, because without amplification filling the room, people can hear each other more directly, and the entrainment effect can be more pronounced rather than less.

Some of the most formative congregational singing in church history happened in rooms with no audio equipment at all. The practice predates the technology by centuries. What good technology can serve is the participation of more voices and the clarity of the musical lead. When it is used poorly, it replaces the congregation with a **performance**.

A small church with a hundred people, a piano player, and songs chosen for real voices can experience all the benefits the research describes. A big church with a big budget and a talented band can miss it entirely if people have learned to watch instead

of sing. The real question isn’t about equipment - it never has been.

Reconsider This -

When a congregation sings together, something is happening to them as a body that cannot be replicated by any other element of the gathering. They are being neurologically knit together. They are forming memories in regions of the brain that will retain them for decades. Research on neuroplasticity shows that early embodied faith experiences create neural pathways that can persist even into late-stage dementia, when almost everything else is gone. They are releasing the neurochemicals that build trust, lower defensiveness, and deepen empathy toward the person standing next to them. And the Spirit of God, who does not need neurochemistry but is apparently not above using it, is doing something in and through those bodies that reshapes them over time.

The singing of God’s people isn’t just a warm-up for the real ministry. It is ministry. Let’s honor it as such.

- from an article by Chris Reynolds, Northeast Florida Baptist Association



***The Vital Role of
Congregational
Singing in Church Life***

The act of singing together during church services holds a profound significance that extends beyond mere tradition. It serves as a powerful means of engaging both the heart and mind, fostering unity, and proclaiming the truths of our faith.

Engaging Heart and Mind -

Singing in a congregational setting uniquely combines intellectual understanding with heartfelt emotion. The Apostle Paul emphasizes this connection in Colossians 3:16, urging believers to let ***“the word of Christ dwell in you richly”*** through ***“psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”*** This practice allows the truths of Scripture to move from mere head knowledge to deep-seated convictions, stirring our affections toward God.

Teaching and Encouraging One Another -

Beyond personal edification, our collective singing serves as a form of mutual teaching and encouragement. Paul instructs the church in Ephesians 5:19 to address ***“one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”*** When we lift our voices together, we reinforce doctrinal truths and exhort each other in the faith. This communal act becomes a means by which we teach and admonish one another in all wisdom (Colossians 3:16).

Declaring God’s Faithfulness -

Participating in congregational singing also stands as a testimony to God’s unwavering faithfulness. Even in times of personal struggle or spiritual dryness, choosing to sing can be an act of faith, affirming our trust in God’s promises. As we *vocalize* our praises, we not only remind ourselves of His goodness but also bear witness to those around us, strengthening the collective faith

of the church body.

The Impact of YOUR Voice -

It’s important to recognize that the power of congregational singing doesn’t hinge on individual vocal prowess. Whether one possesses a trained voice or not, each contribution adds to the collective harmony and unity of the church. The emphasis lies **not** on performance but on the shared experience of worshiping God together.

Your participation in congregational singing plays a crucial role in the spiritual vitality of your church. By engaging both heart and mind, teaching and encouraging fellow believers, and declaring God’s faithfulness, you contribute to a rich tapestry of worship that glorifies God and edifies His people.

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NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

☛ ***DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA*** - [Note from Evangelist David W. Cloud: “We publish this information to challenge God’s people to do what Christ has commanded us to do, which is to pray for the nation (1 Timothy 2:1-6) and to fulfill the Great Commission that is repeated in Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-48; and Acts 1:8, at the heart of which is building New Testament churches as the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).]

Conservatives of all stripes can do politics, but only born again Bible believers can do the things Christ has commanded. The hour is very late. It’s time to focus like a laser on obeying Christ and calling upon Him to do great and mighty things, for He has promised to Great Commission churches, **“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20).**

On America’s 250th birthday, July 4, 2026, the **Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)** claimed 120,000 members, more than any socialist organization in U.S. history. They have won many seats at the state and local level and half a dozen in the House of Representatives, the most prominent being DSA cheerleader **Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC)**, who won a House seat in New York in 2018. In 2025, DSA candidate **Zohran Mamdani** was elected mayor of America’s largest city.

The DSA’s agenda is as radical as Black Lives Matter.

Contrary to false reports, it is a Marxist, anti-Christ, anti-Bible, anti-American organization. “Self-identified Marxist movements control a majority, 62%, of the DSA’s national leadership arm” (“A Marxist Majority,” *Front Page Magazine, July 1, 2026*).

The DSA publicly espouses the abolition of police and prisons and the release of all people “from involuntary confinement”; the total elimination of conventional energy sources such as coal, petroleum, and natural gas; the replacement of capitalism with a centrally planned economy; forgiveness of foreign debt; forgiveness of all medical and student loan debt; reparations to “the survivors of colonization and their descendants”; open borders and the abolishment of ICE; free abortion on demand; nationalized healthcare; free “gender affirming care” for minors without parental consent; race-based reparations, abolishment of

the criminal justice system; and the abolition of “white supremacy” (cited from “*Democratic Socialists of America, Influence Watch*).

“The DSA has a division called Trans Rights and Bodily Autonomy (TRBA) which claims it is the ‘largest hub for grassroots trans rights organizing in America.’” The DSA is hostile to Israel and friendly to Islamic terrorist groups like Hamas and the Houthis. The DSA has stated that “Zionism is racism” and “fascist mobs are the true face of Zionism and the representatives of the Israeli State’s objectives.”

At the DSA’s annual convention in August 2025, members approved a resolution calling for a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and “all resistance” to the state of Israel. The DSA “calls for scrapping the U.S. Senate, replacing the president and Supreme Court with bodies chosen by and subordinate to Congress, drafting a new constitution, and creating a ‘democratic socialist republic.’ It seeks to abolish the separation of powers crafted by the Founders. The platform calls for ... sharply cutting military power” (“*DSA Boasts,*” *AMAC, July 7, 2026, Association of Mature American Citizens*).

Michael Freund, visiting fellow at The Heritage Foundation, warns, **“The DSA is not demanding different policies. It is demanding a different country.”** Daily Signal senior contributor Victor Davis Hanson said, **“We’re watching a modern-day French Revolutionary-like takeover of the Democratic Party”** (“*DSA Boasts,*” *AMAC, July 7, 2026*).

It’s not time to fret; it’s time to pray.

☛ ***SPUDCELL: DID SCIENTISTS BUILD A LIVING CELL?*** - “A team of American scientists announced this week that they have built a cell from nonliving chemicals that can feed itself, grow, and replicate, a feat that pushes synthetic biology into territory once confined to science fiction. ... The creation, nicknamed SpudCell ... was assembled piece by piece in a laboratory at the University of Minnesota ... [I]ts creator is the first to admit it barely works. Kate Adamala described her creation as ‘an incredibly wimpy organism...’ The cell began as a liposome, a water-filled sphere enclosed by an oily membrane. Researchers inserted a genome of roughly 90,000 base pairs, encoded across seven separate DNA plasmids and borrowed in part from a virus and from *Escherichia coli*” (“*Scientists build,*” *Israel365News, July 6, 2026*).

This is interesting, but it has nothing to do with the theory-destroying evolutionary problem of how life sprang from non-life. First, the SpudCell is almost nothing. It is not living; it is not conscious; it is mere chemicals; it has no longevity. Second, whatever SpudCell is, it was designed and constructed by intelligent scientists. It did not construct itself from inanimate material. ChatGPT has far more intelligence than SpudCell, but it is also intelligently designed by man. If man eventually makes a more complicated cell, it would only prove that cells require intelligent design, and a cell as complicated as a living cell requires super-intelligent design. Third, SpudCell borrows genome material from a virus and a bacterium, but the supposed first living cell could borrow DNA material from nothing since nothing

existed!

☛ ***LONGEVITY GURU HAS INCURABLE AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE*** - Byron Johnson, a “longevity guru” who aims to live to be 160 or longer, reports that he has been diagnosed with “autoimmune gastritis (AIG), a chronic autoimmune disease in which the immune system attacks the stomach’s acid-producing parietal cells, reducing stomach acid and impairing vitamin B12 absorption” (“*Biohacker,*” *Fox News, July 6, 2026*).

Johnson is a multimillionaire who is devoted to reversing aging and defeating death. Following a program called “biohacking,” he is committed to a special diet, a regime of vitamins and supplements, hard training, sauna, hyperbaric oxygen, frequent medical testing, using AI to accelerate longevity research, etc. The goal is to reach “longevity escape velocity--in which medical advances would eventually extend lifespan faster than he ages.”

In light of major advances in medical research in recent decades, Johnson’s program sounds a bit reasonable, but there is one devastating glitch: death is not ultimately the result of ill-health; it is the result of sin, and only God can fix the sin problem. If man could resolve the issue of death, the Bible would be disproven, but not one Bible teaching has ever been disproven. Johnson would do far, far better to study the Bible and come to understand and receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. **“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).**



Christian Giving and Soul Winning

by Dr. John R. Rice

God wants Christians to give generously and trust Him to provide for their needs, leading to spiritual and material blessings.

Are you learning to be a good Christian? The Scripture says we should grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Scripture says, **“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”** When you get saved, you are a baby Christian and you need to learn, you need to grow. Since you are not a graduate of a theological seminary when you get saved, you need to learn. And I want to help you about that.

In Acts, chapter 2, we learn about those young Christians, **“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.”** Then what? **“... and fellowship ... and in prayers.”** And now you see in Acts 2:44-47:

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and

singleness of heart. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

These New Converts Set Out to Give -

There was a time of persecution and trouble. People lost their jobs. These people got saved and now they are under persecution, and somebody has to help them, They brought their goods and sold what they had and put it at the apostles’ feet. They gave all they had to the Lord and to His work.

There was an emergency. This was not commanded. And later they gave up that plan when it was no longer necessary and when other people sent money in to take care of these poor saints in trouble at Jerusalem. So this is not like communism where there is a dictator and where the people are forced. But they felt like giving everything they had to Jesus and to His work. Isn’t that wonderful? They didn’t count what they had their own; it belonged to God.

Years ago in Texas, Dr. J. B. Gambrell had an article in *The Baptist Standard*, titled “*Who Owns the Wool?*” (He was talking about the sheep.) The normal and proper answer was, **“The man who owns the sheep owns the wool also.”**

Well, the God who owns the Christian owns his money and his possessions. Actually, all we have belongs to the Lord. We are not our own. We are bought with a price. So God wants us to give.

You know, the God who made the world doesn’t need our money. But **we** need to give it. The cattle on a thousand hills are God’s, and the silver and gold are His. But it is part of the loving kindness of God that He lets us share with Him. The Bible says, **“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”** That is a saying the Lord Jesus gave but it was not recorded in Matthew. Mark, Luke and John but recorded later as they passed it among the people (Acts 20:35). So it is more blessed to give than to receive; and God lets us have a sweet part in His work.

I feel so glad and so blessed when I think about this giving and what God has done and what part He lets us have in giving to His cause. These people in Jerusalem were happy. Everything they had they gave to the Lord and divided with other people. That is a wonderful thing about giving - ***God’s way in giving.***

These people here gladly gave everything. Later we learn one of the men was Joses who had some land out on the island of Cyprus. He went and sold that and brought the money and gave it to the apostles and said, “Use this for the poor folks.” And they did. The apostles gave him another name - Barnabas, the “son of consolation.” He became an apostle and went with Paul on his missionary journeys.

That was an example of the kind of Christianity they had in those days.

But some Christians were not very good Christians then. Ananias and Sapphira said, “Listen to these apostles bragging on Barnabas!” They said, “Now, we will sell some land, too, and we will bring part of the money and we will pretend that is all of it, so we will get credit, too.” Now that was selfish on their part, but you are still a human being when you get saved and you still have

temptations. So Ananias and Sapphira sold some property and brought part of the money, and Peter said, “Now you didn’t have to sell it.”

“I know.”
“You don’t have to give it.”
“I know, but this is all of it.”

Peter said, “You lied to God, and men are here ready to wrap you up and take you out and bury you.” So Ananias fell dead.

Then Sapphire came in and Peter asked her, “Did you sell the land for so much?” “Yes, Sir, and we gave every penny of it.”

Then Peter said, “The boys are just getting back from burying your husband and they are ready to wrap you up and take you out.” She fell over dead and they carried her out and buried her, not because she was supposed to give all but because she lied about it, pretending to be better than she was. God hates hypocrisy. But what God wants is loving gifts given willingly.

It Pays to Tithe and More From the Heart -

“Dr. Rice, do you believe in tithing?” people ask. Yes, but I believe in a great deal more than that.

“But Brother Rice, tithing, that is in the Old Testament, isn’t it?” It is in the Old Testament, but do you not think God wants a Christian under grace to be just as generous-hearted, just as loving as a Christian under the law, as a Jew under the law? Don’t we owe God as much as some Jew with ceremonies? The emphasis in the Old Testament is they brought the tithes in and some offerings; but in the New Testament it is not only that one-tenth belongs to God but that all belongs to God. Whatsoever you do, whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God, the Scripture says. All belongs to Him.

I promise you two things: One, tithing is the way of great happiness. And it is the way of prosperity and blessing, too.

First, how many promises there are that it pays to give! Someone says, “It looks like it would pay one to save up and keep all he can.” But that is not the way to have more. The way to have more is to give more. Jesus, speaking in Luke 6:38, said, ***“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”*** That comes up again and again in the Bible.

We read back in Proverbs 3:9,10, ***“Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”*** Isn’t that wonderful?

You give in a way to honor God, and God will see that you have better crops. You give thus, and God will see that you get a better salary. You give, and God will see that you don’t have as many accidents, as many doctor bills, as much extra expense. He promises, ***“Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”***

Here it is again in Proverbs 11:25, ***“The liberal soul shall***

be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself” - fat spiritually, and fat in material blessings, too.

Years ago a good woman, Mrs. Widner, was teaching a big Bible class in Dallas, Texas. She said, “Don’t talk about what you get out of it. You ought to give to God because you love Him. You ought not be talking about the rewards you will get.”

One woman said to Mrs. Widner, “Dr. John Rice says that if God says He is going to reward you, it is all right to tell what God said He is going to do, isn’t it?” She laughed and said, “That is right.”

And God did say He is going to reward those who give - “Give, and it shall be given unto you.” And, “The liberal soul shall be made fat.”

Over in II Corinthians 9 we read, ***“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly. and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”*** The Lord sure likes it when you enjoy giving.

I have found such joy in giving. I used to keep very careful account. When Mrs. Rice and I married, we had a little book where we listed everything that came in. We didn’t get much: we lived mighty cheaply. We spent \$5.00 to \$8.00 a month on groceries. We bought a pint of milk every two days. We kept very close account. On one page - I got today, \$11. Over here I would put down \$1.10 - 10% for the Lord, The next time I got \$2.30 - put down 23 cents over here.

I came in one day and I said to my wife, “I don’t like that way of doing. It looks like I am afraid God will get more than His share. I don’t feel that way.”

She said, “I don’t either.”

I said, “Let’s just start out giving 20% to foreign mission causes and what we want to to local expenses and other things.” That is the way we did it. So it has been through these years - always 20% and sometimes 50% or 60% and 70% of our income.

My how God has cared for us so wonderfully! It sure pays to seek first the kingdom of God. Jesus said, ***“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you.”***

Blessed is the Christian who delights to give. He prays so he can have money he can give. God loves a cheerful giver. So you and the Lord will get along fine if you will set out to seek His face, then to please Him with your giving. How happy that way is.

A Missionary’s Testimony -

Years ago I was in a revival campaign in a country community in West Texas. In a daytime service I set out to teach people gathered under a brush arbor that God demanded first place in everything, that He wanted tithes and offerings from the loving and believing hearts of His people. Present in the service that day was a dear country preacher, Brother Kuykendal. He was then, and had been for years, county missionary in Palo Pinto County, preaching in churchless communities, building up weak churches,

selling and giving away gospel literature as a rural missionary. He asked if he might tell how God had dealt with him about tithing. I gladly asked him to proceed. He arose and told his story about like this.

“Some years ago when I was county missionary of this county the famous Baptist businessman, H. Z. Duke, who founded the Duke and Ayers Nickel Stores over a wide area, came to this county and, speaking as a Christian layman, urged the men and women everywhere to try God and see if He would not make good His promises to bless them in material things when they gave tithes and offerings to His cause. After Mr. Duke had spoken in one community, I took him in my buggy to another community. Mr. Duke said to me, ‘Brother Kuykendal. do you believe in tithing?’

“‘I certainly do,’ I said. ‘I believe in tithing and I preach it myself.’

“‘But, Brother Kuykenda1, do you practice tithing?’

“‘Sadly I had to answer, ‘No, I do not. I believe in tithing, but I cannot practice it. You see, I have thirteen children at home. Every meal fifteen of us sit down at the table. I receive only \$125 a month, \$1500 a year as salary. I have to maintain my own horse and buggy for constant traveling. It is just impossible to take care of all the needs of a family of fifteen out of \$125 a month and have money left to tithe. So I believe in tithing. and I preach it. but I cannot practice it.’

“‘Mr. Duke was a very kindly man. He said, ‘Brother Kuykendal, would you like to tithe? Would you tithe if I would back you up financially so you could be sure you would not lose by it?’

“‘‘Nothing would please me more,’ I said.

“‘So Mr. Duke made me the following proposition:

“‘‘I want you to set out to give God at least \$12.50 every month as soon as you get your salary. Then as you feel led, you may give more. I promise you that if you need help, I will give it. Simply write me a letter and say, “‘Brother Duke. I am giving a tithe, but I miss the money. I need it for my family. I have given this year so much.” I promise you that I will send you a check by return mail. Are you willing to try tithing on that basis?’

“‘Ihesitated a moment, moved with emotion, and Brother Duke said, ‘I have thirty-two stores. I have plenty of money to make good my promise. I will be glad to do it. Will you risk me and start tithing on my simple promise that I will make good any amount you have given, any time that you find you miss it and need it? Will you trust me about it?’

“‘I gladly accepted his offer. I said, ‘Yes, Brother Duke, I have long wanted to tithe, but I felt I simply could not do it. Now, thank God, I can tithe and I will be glad to. And I will not feel like a hypocrite when I tell others they ought to tithe.’

“‘So I started tithing for the first time in my life. Every month I took out first of all one-tenth of my salary and gave it to the Lord’s cause; then, as I felt led, I gave more. In the back of my mind I always had this thought, ‘Mr. Duke promised me that he would make it up any time I need it. He will send me the money

if I simply ask him for it.’

“‘But a strange thing happened. It seemed our money went farther than before. I would preach in some country community and somebody would tie a crate of chickens on the back of my buggy. Somebody would put a ham under the seat. Or a godly woman would put some home-canned fruit in my buggy.

“‘A neighbor farmer said, ‘Brother Kuykendal, God has blessed me so that I cannot get all my corn in the crib this year. I have a big wagon load extra that I cannot keep. May I put it in your crib for your buggy horse?’

“‘Another neighbor drove over with a great hay wagon full of hay for the cow.

“‘It was very strange, but that year we had no doctor bills. The children’s clothes seemed not to wear out so badly. It was a happy, happy time. I never did have to call on Mr. H. Z. Duke to make up the money I had given to the Lord in tithes.

“‘Then one day when the year was about gone and the test was about over, I suddenly realized with shame that I had believed what H. Z. Duke said. He promised to make good anything I lacked because of tithing, and I believed him. But my Heavenly Father had made the same promise, and I had not believed Him! I had taken the word of a man when I did not take the promise of God! Now I had proven God’s promises and found that He took care of me and my big family on a small salary. I found that \$112.50 per month took care of our family better, with God’s blessing, than \$125 did without being under the blessed covenant which He has made with those who seek first the kingdom of God and who tithe.”

That godly country preacher stood there before the congregation weeping. With the deepest emotion he said,

“‘Now I have tithed for many years. My salary has been increased year after year. We have always had enough. We have never been shamed. The greatest spiritual blessing of my life, aside from my salvation, has been in learning to trust God about daily needs for my home and a big family.”

Will You Now Begin Tithes and Offerings?

Somebody says, “I can’t afford to tithe.” You can’t afford not to. You may starve to death if you don’t. So, young Christians, set out to tithe and then set out to win souls.

I don’t have time to go into that now, but a Christian can be a happy, giving Christian, and then set out to win souls day by day and God will help you in that. You can. You know, that is what those Christians did. That is the Great Commission get them saved, then get them baptized, and setting out to winning others and then teaching them to do exactly what I told you to do - get them saved and get them baptized.

Oh, what a happy life for a Christian, with the Bible day by day and following the Lord and reading and praying and giving and winning souls. You can be a happy Christian. ■