



Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

DECEMBER 18, 2021

When you put God First

Do you remember when you put God first despite your fear and uncertainty about the future? What can we learn from your story that will help the rest of us put God first in our own lives today?

Do you remember when you fell in love with Jesus for the first time? For each of us, there was that first moment when we were overwhelmed by the love of Jesus. Nothing mattered more to you than following Jesus and acknowledging Him as king over your life.

You made every sacrifice to keep the Sabbath holy. You ate the right things and read the right books. You watched the right videos and resisted the wrong music. You avoided bad websites and longed to pray and talk to your God.

Unfortunately for you and your family, that didn't last long. Your first love faded and a war began between guilt and grace that would last until today. What would you give to get back to that first love you once had?

As it turns out, there are things you can give that will take you right back in 40 days or less. Namely, your time and your money. These are your most valued treasure and, unless you put them in the kingdom of God first, there is no other way of giving your heart fully to Jesus.

Here is how Jesus himself put it: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up

for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19–21).

Hollywood has convinced many of us that our heart comes first. This is why we always wait to feel like doing something before we do it. We will never feel like giving tithe and offering unless we do it consistently, because our hearts will only be in the kingdom of God if that is where we invest our time and money.

If you want to experience that first love again, start returning God's tithe faithfully today; set a promise (offering) and keep to it; spend time with God's word and prayer; and dedicate your time to helping fulfill the mission of the church and also to alleviate the suffering of others. Tithe, offering, worship, mission, compassion. Start doing this whether you feel like it or not. Then observe over the next few weeks how much your love for God will increase and how much easier it will be to follow Jesus.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

You have put God first. Your faith inspires us today. Jesus gave up everything to redeem us and His love compels us to put His kingdom first in our own lives. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.