

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EVERY MAN WORSHIPS
BASED ON WHAT IS RIGHT IN HIS OWN EYES
10-9-16**

Scripture reading:

Judges 17:1 And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah.

Judges 17:2 And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son.

Judges 17:3 And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee.

Judges 17:4 Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.

Judges 17:5 And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EVERY MAN DOES WHAT IS RIGHT IN HIS OWN EYES IN THE AREA OF WORSHIPPING GOD:

Here we have quite a strange story:

Micah - and his episode with stealing money from his mother.

I. THIS MORNING I WOULD LIKE TO JUST PARAPHRASE THIS STORY:

An unbelievable horrific account of just how bad God's people can become when they do what is right in their own eyes.

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How can men become so corrupt and all in the name of the Lord?

A. *Micah steals money, 1100 shekels of silver and gets guilty, returns it to his Mother who in turn blesses her son for giving the money back to her And says I had dedicated the money to the Lord to make a graven image.*

Just to give you an idea of what 1100 shekels of silver is:

Later in this account Micah hires a priest who is given wages of 10 shekels a year, which seemed an acceptable amount for his service. If that reflects even a poor man's wages ... if we take that as a poor man's wages which today would be between 10,000 to 20,000 a year, and divide the 10 into 1100 shekels, we get 110. If it were only \$10,000 a year, that would be over one million dollars. Imagine stealing \$1,000,000 dollars out of your mother's purse!

Now after this, Micah's mother makes a graven image—and dedicates it to the Lord? Strange, is it not? How can you dedicate something to the Lord that is an abomination to the Lord? Yet we see people doing it all the time.

Judges 17:5 And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Judges 17:7 And there was a young man out of Beth-lehem-judah of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there.

Judges 17:8 And the man departed out of the city from Beth-lehem-judah to sojourn where he could find a place: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.

Judges 17:9 And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place.

Judges 17:10 And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in.

Judges 17:11 And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons.

Judges 17:12 And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah.

Judges 17:13 Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.

B. *This priest (whose name is Jonathan) was content to stay with Micah and be his priest. Judges 18:30*

Obviously the 10 shekels of silver a year was not a bad amount of money to live on; besides all this, he had a place to live, his food and clothes paid for ...

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C. MEN FROM THE TRIBE OF DAN SPOT THE LEVITE AT MICAH'S HOUSE:

Judges 18:2 And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there.

Judges 18:3 When they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this place? and what hast thou here?

Judges 18:4 And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest.

Judges 18:5 And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous.

Judges 18:6 And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD is your way wherein ye go.

Judges 18:7 Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man.

D. THE CHILDREN OF DAN STEAL AWAY MICAH'S GODS AND PRIEST

Judges 18:11 And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war.

Judges 18:12 And they went up, and pitched in Kirjath-jearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan unto this day: behold, it is behind Kirjath-jearim.

Judges 18:13 And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah.

Judges 18:14 Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do.

Judges 18:15 And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him.

Judges 18:16 And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate.

Judges 18:17 And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war.

Judges 18:18 And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye?

Judges 18:19 And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?

Note:

Judges 18:20 And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.

Judges 18:21 So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them.

Notice his priest was glad for this so-called promotion.

He was a hireling—and as a hireling, when more money was made available, he was gone.

E. MICAH TRIES TO FIGHT TO GET BACK HIS IDOLS, BUT REALIZES IT IS NO USE ...

Judges 18:22 And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan.

Judges 18:23 And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?

Judges 18:24 And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?

Judges 18:25 And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household.

Judges 18:26 And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.

Note: Any false religion is not worth dying over.

Is his icon going to save him?

What a fiasco! Micah steals from his mother, his mother dedicates stolen money for a idol dedicated to Jehovah, the children of Dan steal the idol and Micah's priest? WHAT A JOKE!

Such a false idol is not worth dying over!

MORE OF THE SAINTS HAVE DIED FOR THEIR FAITH, BUT WHY DIE FOR AN IDOL?

No religion has more martyrs than Christianity. How many have given their lives for the cause of Christ.

Someone has said the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.

But this idol poisoned the tribe of Dan for their entire history. They never recovered out of idolatry.

F. THE CHILDREN OF DAN, FROM THEIR BEGINNINGS, NEVER SAW REVIVAL, BUT LIVED IN IDOLATRY ALL THEIR DAYS.

Judges 18:27 And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire.

Judges 18:28 And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man; and it was in the valley that lieth by Beth-rehob. And they built a city, and dwelt therein.

Judges 18:29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.

Judges 18:30 And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

Judges 18:31 And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EVERY MAN WORSHIPS BASED ON WHAT IS RIGHT IN HIS OWN EYES -

Now this morning I would like to draw out some spiritual applications and lessons we can learn from this account about what happens when a nation and a people start doing what is right in their own eyes.

I. WHEN EVERYONE DOES WHAT IS RIGHT IN THEIR OWN EYES IN THE AREA OF RELIGION AND WORSHIP, THEY MIX ELEMENTS OF PAGANISM WITH TRUE WORSHIP.

Judges 17:3 And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee.

Judges 17:4 Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.

When we get away from the Word of God, people justify all kinds of idolatry in the name of the Lord.

God forbids using icons and images to worship Him.

Micah's mother praises God as she received the 1100 shekels so she could set up her false idols to worship Jehovah. SHE DEDICATES THE MONEY TO GOD AND THEN USES THE MONEY TO DISOBEY THE VERY GOD SHE SAYS SHE WORSHIPS.

We are not to worship any old way we want.

We are not to give any old way we want.

We are not to do service to God any old way we want.

Isaiah 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

This is why we have the Bible....

The Bible is given to us as an instruction book on worship.

This book tells us how to live and serve God.

I Timothy 3:14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

I Timothy 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Whenever a people cease to study the Word of God and go to tradition and doctrines of men and culture, etc., they go into error.

What is the final authority for what we do and how we worship God?

Is it our thoughts? our thinking? our culture?

How do we know what is right or wrong?

We have this sad statement of the spiritual condition of the nation in this statement:

Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

IN THOSE DAYS EVERY MAN DID WHAT WAS RIGHT IN HIS OWN EYES!

Seemed reasonable to make a god out of the 1100 shekles of silver.

Why not? That was the acceptable form of worship in the day.

So Micah's mom dedicated the money to Jehovah, the God of Israel. Sad to say the downfall of the people of God is that so many are conformed to the world and the things of the world. So the beat goes on. People are still worshipping the way they see fit. The truth is for the average person, the Word of God is not the priority for worship. Most people seek a church that has this program or that program. Why did Micah's mom make a graven image? For convenience! How convenient it was to have their own place to worship. They liked playing church. They have their own hired preacher/priest and their own little church.

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II. *MANY OF THOSE WHO HAVE A RELIGION THAT IS RIGHT IN THEIR OWN EYES OFTEN HAVE A ROOT SIN OF COVETOUSNESS JUST LIKE MICAH.*

1. *HIS COVETOUSNESS IS REFLECTED IN THE SIN OF THIEVERY:*

Micah stole 1100 shekels from his mother.

1100 shekels if Jonathan the priest made 10 shekels a year.

1100 shekels represented 110 years of wages!

Only her cursing caused him to give it back to her.

He had \$1,000,000 dollars and he gives it back. WHY?

The Proverbs tells us why.

Proverbs 21:9 It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.

Proverbs 21:19 It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.

Proverbs 25:24 It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.

Proverbs 27:15 A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.

He lived in the same house with his mother!
He couldn't take the cursing over the money anymore!

2. THEIR COVETOUSNESS WAS REFLECTED IN THEIR GIVING TO THE LORD:

Micah and his mother wanted to look religious, but were unwilling to relinquish ownership of what they gave to the Lord.

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What does it say, "I HAD WHOLLY DEDICATED THE SILVER UNTO THE LORD" to make a graven image, and how much did she give to the founder?

So Micah gives the money to his mother. His mother gives it to him and then he gives it back to her, and she takes 200 shekels and gives it to a founder, silversmith—a little confusing, is it not? But one thing is obvious—they did not dedicate it all as the mother said she did. She changed her mind when she got it back.

200 Shekels. What happened to the other 900 shekels?

It is amazing how we rationalize what it is to dedicate everything to God?
Though making a graven image alone showed that they were not in the least dedicated to God!
They just did what they thought was right in their own eyes!

Beside all this, the reason they made the icon was so they could enjoy the icon and place it in their own little house of idols to enjoy!

Some people will only give to the church if they have control of what they give.

Again they do that which is right in their own eyes!

Today people give as they think is right in their eyes.
They worship as they see fit in their own eyes.
We ought to give as the Lord commanded us to give!
We ought to worship as the Lord commanded us to worship!

I believe that one of the ways we worship that is based on what is right in our own eyes is reflected in the way we give to the Lord.

The average person in the church today is no different from Micah and his mother. They have no Biblical principles for the way they give, or the way they worship. They are just doing what they think is right in their own eyes.

We have a lot of people who say they do not believe that the principle of tithing is for today. So then I say:

Think about this when you tithe. When money is given to the church, it ceases to be your money. It is now God's money.

Malachi 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

This is why I believe that tithing is a biblical form of giving as reflected in the Old Testament and consistent with the New Testament.

I believe tithing is established by God to keep his people honest and void of covetousness. Each week as we faithfully give the tithe to the Lord we show that we are willing to relinquish ownership of God's money back to Him.

Some would say, "How can you say it's God's money when I worked for it?" God gave you the health, the opportunity, the talent. It is God's.

Application:

Abraham tithed before the giving of the law.

Genesis 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Job tithed before the law.

Moses commanded men to tithe under the law.

Paul taught that every person in the Church should give an equal percentage to make things fair.

II Corinthians 8:12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

II Corinthians 8:13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:

II Corinthians 8:14 But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:

II Corinthians 8:15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.

3. HIS COVETOUSNESS WAS REFLECTED IN HIS DESIRE TO CONTROL HIS WORSHIP AND HIS PRIEST.

Years ago I visited a fellow who biblically wasn't qualified to be a deacon. He was sour grapes about it. He said he didn't want to come to church if he couldn't be a deacon. How silly, later he was found to be involved in immorality. You see, he didn't want to worship God if he was not in leadership and control of the church. Church is not our toy to play with. He reminds me of Micah—his temple was his little toy church.

Micah and his mother wanted control of their god(s) and to enjoy their house of gods.

Just like Micah, a lot of people today want to go to a church where they can control the worship based on what they believe is right in their own eyes.

THEY HAVE THEIR OWN LITTLE HOUSE THAT THEY BUILT, THAT THEY WORSHIP IN, AND THAT THEY CONTROL.

So often people would rather specify their giving than to give the tithe.

For a lot of people they think they can stay home and worship by watching TV. How convenient that is. Again they have their little house of gods. It is in their TV.

Again every man does what is right in his own eyes.

A. *HERE IS WHAT THE LORD COMMANDED THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL:*

Deuteronomy 12:2 Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree:

Deuteronomy 12:3 And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.

Deuteronomy 12:4 Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 12:5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

Deuteronomy 12:6 And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks:

Deuteronomy 12:7 And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

Deuteronomy 12:8 Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.

Deuteronomy 12:9 For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you.

Deuteronomy 12:10 But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety;

Deuteronomy 12:11 Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD:

Deuteronomy 12:12 And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.

Deuteronomy 12:13 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest:

Deuteronomy 12:14 But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

A. *WHAT HAS THE LORD COMMANDED US TODAY IN THE CHURCH -*

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Ephesians 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Ephesians 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

In the book of Acts, since the days of Pentecost, the disciples assembled faithfully and steadfastly:

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

The church is called the body of Christ. I Cor. 12:12-25

The church is called the pillar and ground of the truth. I Tim. 3:15

The church is called the bride of Christ. Eph 5:23

The church is where Christ promises to meet with his disciples. Matt. 18:20

The church is to be where matters of controversy could be settled. I Cor. 6:1-4

The church is where guidance should be given. Eph. 4:14

The word of God preached. II Tim 4:2

The ordinances obeyed. I Cor. 11:2

Missionaries ordained and sent out. Rom. 10:14-15

The church is where Jesus said the gates of hell could not prevail against. Matt. 16:18

Now how is it that some say they have no need of the New Testament church?

Every time you forsake it and stay home from attending its services, that is exactly what you are saying!

How is it some would not fear to violate its authority and hurt that which Christ loves?

So why would it seem that the Lord today wants us to support the local church not only with our tithes and offerings, but also our attendance and support through efforts and good works and fellowship.

TODAY: People want to worship as it is right in their own eyes. They attend a church that they think suits them and give the way they want to give, serve the way they want to serve. etc..

Application: JESUS AND THE WOMAN AT THE WELL.

We worship in this mountain; you say Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship ... who knows?

Jesus told this woman plainly.

John 4:22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

III. THOSE WHO SEEK TO WORSHIP THE WAY THAT IS RIGHT IN THEIR OWN EYES LOWER GOD TO THE LEVEL OF AN IDOL AND MAKE RELIGION THEIR TOY OR PLAY THING.

He had a house of gods.
He bought and paid for it.
He controlled it.
He hired the priest.

Many a church has been controlled by a rich donor.

Many a country church is like that—controlled by a backslidden trustee or deacon.

Visitors are made to feel unwelcome.
Never does the church reach out to win souls.

BE CAREFUL THAT WE DON'T LET OUR CHURCH DEGENERATE TO PLACE OF A PRIVATE SOCIAL CLUB!

Micah built a little house for his gods. His mother made a special god to represent Jehovah the LORD.

So today there may be a lot of talk about Jesus and praising Jesus, but how much Scripture are we violating in the process? Be careful we are not playing church like Micah was.

HOW FOOLISH this is. The God who made the universe—do you really think you can build a little house for Him?

Idolatry is so very foolish!
Imagine the silliness to think that you can put God in a box.

Even today some churches teach that God dwells in a little box and is dispensed each Sunday in the Eucharist. How foolish that is!

IV. THE MINISTERS OF THESE FALSE CHURCHES ARE NOTHING MORE THAN HIRELINGS. HE WAS HIRED FOR 10 PIECES OF SILVER.

THIS LEVITE WAS CONTENT TO DWELL WITH THE MAN EVEN THOUGH HE KNEW IDOLATRY WAS AGAINST THE WORD OF GOD.

When I surrendered to serve the Lord full time, I never expected to get rich.

Didn't look to make lots of money, I just wanted to do God's will.

John 10:13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.
Jesus laid down his life for his sheep....

Evidences of a hireling:

1. HE WILL COMPROMISE DOCTRINE FOR A POSITION OR JOB:

I Timothy 6:3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;
I Timothy 6:4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,
I Timothy 6:5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

2. HE WILL SEEK TO PLEASE PEOPLE RATHER THAN GOD.

Acts 5:27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,
Acts 5:28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.
Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

3. HE WILL SEEK THE WELFARE AND FRIENDSHIP OF GOD'S ENEMIES (DOCTRINE OF BALAAM).

Numbers 31:16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

IV. A HIRLING ALWAYS HAS IT IN HIS HEART TO BE A BIGGER HIRLING, GREENER PASTURES SO TO SPEAK.

Judges 18:18 And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye?
Judges 18:19 And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?
Judges 18:20 And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.

The ministry is not a job, it is a calling.

When I took this church I never asked about salary. I decided if this is where God wanted me, then we could talk about the finances later.

A man who is called of God will preach whether he is paid or not paid.

Paul was an example:

I Corinthians 9:14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

I Corinthians 9:15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

I Corinthians 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

I Corinthians 9:17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

I Corinthians 9:18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

I Corinthians 9:19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

Reason Paul Worked:

I Thessalonians 2:9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

II Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

II Thessalonians 3:7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

II Thessalonians 3:8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

II Thessalonians 3:9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

II Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

II Thessalonians 3:11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

II Thessalonians 3:12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

If a church wants God's blessing, it is their responsibility to pay their preacher so that he will be free to be able to minister better.

I recall a story of a church member complaining about their preacher not making a hospital visit. Yet the preacher didn't have gas money, his vehicle was in need of repair, and he didn't have money for gas to make the visit. The church member should have been complaining to the church about making sure the preacher's gas tank and vehicle was in repair.

The reason Paul worked and supported himself was so people would know that he was a true man of God and not a hireling. Instead they thought maybe it was because he was a lesser apostle. Amazing how the devil puts a twist on the good motives of the Apostle Paul.

It is the responsibility of God's people to support preachers.

The tithe is given to the local church to support the local work and also the preacher.

Though most preachers do not minister for money, it takes money to pay bills to be free to minister. The tithe supports the local work.

Faith Promise giving is to support missionaries around the world. This is how we can expand our witness around the world. This is Missions Month, and this month we invite missionaries to come every Wednesday to speak at the church and share their ministries with us. It is a time when we try to consider supporting other men of God to expand our witness around the world by proxy.

We have been privileged to have had some great missionaries. They are sincere, and you can tell that they are not hirelings (though through the years we have had one or two who were questionable). But for the most part, they are sincere and love the Lord.

Micah wanted control of his hireling preacher ...
The people were commanded to give the tithe ...
The Levites were commanded to give a tithe of the tithes ...

Numbers 18:26 Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe.

Numbers 18:27 And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress.

Numbers 18:28 Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD'S heave offering to Aaron the priest.

Missions giving is a way that the local church can give a percentage of what it makes back to missions.

It is also a way for people to give above the tithe for worthy preachers.
We do not support hirelings.

NONE of the money that we give to missions is wasted on unfruitful servants.
We have some great missionaries. All through the years that I have ministered in our church, we have never dropped the support of a missionary unless they have left the mission field.

When we give to missions, we are fulfilling this pattern.

APPLICATION:

We need to worship, give, and operate our place of worship not like we want to, but like the Bible commands us. THIS IS THROUGH GIVING THE TITHE. WE LOSE CONTROL OF OUR MONEY WHEN WE GIVE THE TITHE. THIS WAY WE ARE NOT OPERATING A HOUSE OF IDOLS LIKE MICAH!

Remember Micah. The whole episode of idolatry started with his covetousness. Mom had 1100 shekels of silver stolen by Micah. She was cursing and carrying on so much that finally Micah decided to give it back to her.

I Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Invitation: So do you worship the way you want to, or like the Bible says?
Do you give like you want to or like the Bible says?
The tithe should be given each week. It is a good way to insure you attend church each week.
Faith Promise giving - commitment to give not sparingly, but abundantly.

Some people attend church any old way they want.

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Church attendance and tithing go hand in hand.

Do you worship like the Bible says or like you want to?
What is the difference between you and Micah in the Book of Judges?

Remember what happens when you worship God by doing what is right in your own eyes. This is the essence of idolatry. How many people are dedicating their money to make an idol in the name of Jesus today. God help us not to be like Micah and his hireling priest Jonathan.