

FREEDOM NEWS

WHERE FAITH MEETS ACTION



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Message from Pastor Derek Heldreth

Part 3 of 3

3 keys to be Free in 23.

How can we have God's best for our life in 2023? The best way to have the best year is to discover the instructions of the Word of God to us – and do them.

We have been delving into 3 important principles for success throughout the upcoming year. The common factor in these truths is that they all involve the subject of "Firsts". God is a God of firsts. The first born is His, the first day of the week, the first part of our day. This stems from a heart that gives God first place. It is from that place that everything else falls into place.

We have previously looked at the importance of beginning each year with prayer and fasting. This involves devoting time of prayer and fasting to the Lord to seek His direction in the coming year, through His Word, through prophecy, through dreams.

We are now looking at the third principle which is the giving of First Fruit offerings. First of all, giving offerings in general is extremely important. It is God's way not to take our money but rather His way to bless us.

Malachi 3:10-11 These verses tell us that when we tithe, God will open up the windows of heaven and pour out such blessing that we can't even contain it all. Also, the devourer (devil) will be held back, and our ground will be fruitful.

Tithing is one form of giving that is vital to walking in the blessings of God. Also important are offerings, which is above the tithe. Offerings are given for many reasons, but one important reason is it propels your faith to accomplish what

you are believing for. Are you believing for something in your life that you haven't seen come to pass? Give an offering. Often if what's in your hand doesn't meet your need, that means you should give it as a seed. We should always have seed planted in the ground. How else can you reap a harvest?

But, the form of giving that is relevant to the first of the year is the First Fruit Offering. First Fruit offerings are seen throughout the Bible. Noah's first act after the flood was to offer a First Fruit Offering, a burnt offering on the altar. (Gen 8:20). Because of this offering he had provision after the flood through the establishment of seed time and harvest. We also see Abraham built an altar unto the Lord Who appeared unto him in Genesis 12:7 and he subsequently was preserved during a time of famine. Jesus was the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. 1 Corinthians 15:20

Today, when we give First Fruit offerings, it is a whole of something. It is not a percentage like the tithe. You can give all the profit from your first sale of the year, or a whole day's wage, a whole week's salary, or a month's salary. You determine how blessed you will be in the coming year. The principle of the first operates in preservation and blessing throughout the year according to what we have given in our First Fruit's offering in the beginning of the year. In other words, the first preserves the rest.

In Bible days, as the crops were first starting to bud out, they would painstakingly tie a string around the first buds of all the crop and preserve those crops as holy to give unto the Lord. This would cause the rest of their crop to be fruitful, preserved, and abundant. This offering is given in expectation of God's abundant blessings throughout the year.

Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor 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.

Also, our giving is to be out of gratitude and with an attitude of giving cheerfully.

2 Corinthians 9:7-8 Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

We are stewards of the blessings of the Lord. There is no greater joy than being that cheerful giver, who doesn't debate, doesn't get fearful, but gives joyfully out of a heart of faith.

First Fruit offerings is not just about a particular amount but rather an attitude of our heart to God, a deeper spiritual offering of our heart to God.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Easter Services Sunday April 9th 10:30am
No Evening Services - Church Potluck 6:00pm

The Gathering Women's Bible Study & Luncheon
Saturday, April 15th -- 12:00 noon to 2:30pm RSVP by April 13

Fill The Stadium "FTS" April 29th - 7pm
Gaylord Memorial Stadium 1185 Asp Ave, Norman, OK 73019

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