

A Brief Comedy of Tithing

CHARACTERS: Bill, Luther, Nathaniel

SETTING: church pew

PROPS: offering envelope, check, pen (in Luther's pocket)

COSTUMES: modern day wear

NOTE: A local basketball team's name can replace references to the Lakers.

Sketch Opens With Bill Sitting On The Pew Between Luther And Nathaniel, "Listening" To The "Speaker."

Bill: (To Luther) Excuse me, do you have a pen I could borrow?

Luther: Of course. (He reaches into his pocket and hands him a pen)

Bill: Thanks. I just need to fill out this offering envelope.

Luther: (Disappointed) Oh, that's what you wanted it for?

Bill: It shouldn't take me very long. (He begins writing on the envelope as Luther watches over his shoulder, then...)

Luther: Whoa....whoa...hold on there, Money Bags! Did you mean to write that many zeroes on there?

Bill: It's just a hundred dollars.

Luther: Just a hundred dollars? Are you crazy?! This is the offering we're talking about, not a Lakers game!

Bill: It's my tithe.

Nathaniel: Could you two keep it down please? I'm trying to hear the announcements.

Luther: (To Nathaniel) Then quit talking and you'll hear them. (To Bill) What's your name, pal?

Bill: Bill.

Luther: Bill, do you have any idea what a hundred bucks can buy?

Bill: Actually, I do. It'll pay for two teenagers to go to youth camp next week. (Luther yawns as he continues with his list) Or it can buy Sunday School curriculum for ten students. Or four blankets for the homeless. Or...

Luther: ...a great seat to a Broadway show or a new bowling ball and shoes or half a surfboard. (To Nathaniel) Tell him. Go on. Stop him before he throws his money away!

Nathaniel: (To Bill) Bill, I think what you're doing is splendid. (To Luther) Now, if you don't mind... (He indicates toward the "front" as if to say, I'm trying to listen to the speaker!)

Luther: Splendid?! You think what he's doing is splendid??? You can't be seri... Wait just an apple pickin' minute! I get it now. You're one of them, aren't you?

Nathaniel: Them?

Luther: The opposition. The good guys (He points heavenward). I didn't recognize you without your halo.

Nathaniel: We don't wear them to church. It blocks the view of the people behind us.

Luther: I knew it! You goody goodies are always turning up at the most inopportune times.

Nathaniel: We usually get complimented on our sense of timing, showing up just when people need us most.

Luther: Well, if you don't mind, I prefer to work alone.

Nathaniel: Bill needs my encouragement to do the right thing.

Luther: But Bill's going to listen to me. (To Bill) Aren't you, Bill?

Bill: Well, I, uh...

Luther: Bill works hard for his money. (To Bill) ...Don't you, Bill?

Bill: Well, yes, I, uh...

Luther: (To Nathaniel) He's got better places for it to go. (To Bill) Haven't you, Bill?

Bill: I suppose I, uh...

Luther: (He puts his arm around Bill's shoulder) Bill...Buddy, Pal....you're only human. Tell him you want to enjoy your money.

Nathaniel: Being obedient to God will bring you true joy, Bill.

Luther: Oh, yes, God... You guys always have to bring Him into it, don't you?

Nathaniel: (To Luther) Well, when you get right down to it, it's all His money anyway, isn't it? He just asks His children to give back ten percent to show their appreciation and obedience to His commandments. (To Bill) Isn't that right, Bill?

Bill: To tell you the truth, giving God ten percent and getting to keep ninety percent sounds like a pretty good deal to me. And anyway, you know what the Bible says, "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

Luther: Can't anyone here ever have a conversation with me without bringing scripture into it? It gives me such a headache. Besides, if you're such a cheerful giver, Bill, why was your hand trembling as you were filling out the offering envelope?

Bill: It was trembling?

Luther: Twitching and trembling. I thought you were going to have some sort of spasm.

Bill: Oh, that. Well, that was because I am a big Lakers fan, and like you said, a hundred dollars is a lot of money, and...

Luther: (To Nathaniel) See, I told you he doesn't want to give it!

Nathaniel: He will.

Luther: Oh, why don't you just admit it, my winged friend, when it comes to money, you good guys are fighting a losing battle. Who in their right mind would cheerfully give their hard earned money to God? Tearfully, maybe. Cheerfully, I don't think so. Our accounting department tells us that a lot of people actually enjoy paying their tithe. But Bill's not one of them. Now, why don't you just leave Bill and his financial decisions to me. Besides, I didn't tell him not to give anything in the offering. He can give...say, a buck.

Nathaniel: A buck? His paycheck was a thousand dollars.

Luther: You're right. Fifty cents. Why spoil the pastor? (Calculating in his head) So, let's see, one hundred dollars less fifty cents still leaves \$99.50! C'mon, Bill, we're going to Disneyland!

Nathaniel: Don't listen to him, Bill. You can go to the moon if you want, but don't do it with God's money. Give God what's due Him.

Luther: Keep the check, Bill. Don't listen to that old fuddy duddy.

Nathaniel: Listen to your heart, Bill. Give to the hungry.

Luther: Listen to your stomach, Bill. You are the hungry!

Bill: Stop! I'm so confused; I don't know what to do!

Nathaniel: There's only one real choice, Bill, and I know you'll do the right thing.

Luther: He doesn't know you like I know you, does he, Bill?

Nathaniel: Our side doesn't bring up your past, Bill.

Luther: Your past is our forte. Now, come on, Bill, put that check away.

Nathaniel: Give it only if you really want to, Bill, but if you do, God will bless you for it.

Bill: (He thinks about it, then starts to put it away, then takes it back out) I'm going to give it. (Both Luther and Nathaniel react accordingly)

Nathaniel: You won't regret it, Bill. And I know God is pleased.

Luther: (Sarcastic) Oh, and our side's just tickled pink, too.

Nathaniel: (To Bill) Don't mind him. He's just a sore loser.

Luther: You would be, too, if everyone kept ignoring your advice.

Nathaniel: Having a bad day, huh?

Luther: I don't know what's happening. Offerings used to be my favorite assignment. But today I can't seem to stop anyone from giving. But I'm not giving up yet. (As if turning to the person on the other side of him) Excuse me, ma'am. But I couldn't help noticing you're giving quite a healthy check in the offering today. Do you have any idea what you could buy with that amount of money? What's that? ...Get behind what? How can I get behind you when I'm already seated here next to... Oh, all right...I'm going, I'm going! (Luther rises and begins to make his exit) Boy, ever since the pastor started preaching on stewardship, offering time just isn't what it used to be! (Luther exits. Bill folds the check and places it inside the offering envelope and licks it closed. A satisfied Nathaniel and Bill sit back as if listening to the rest of the announcements.)

BLACK OUT