

May 8, 2022

Faithful Stewardship

Deuteronomy 14:22-29

Our Ocean Conference, started in 2014, brings together people committed to protecting the oceans and the communities near them. During this conference, attendees and their respective organizations are asked to put their money where their mouths are. Pledges are taken during the conference, and these pledges represent promises of quantifiable action to be taken to protect the oceans. “The Conference was a key moment for countries, civil society, and industry to commit to concrete and significant actions to protect the ocean. This year’s Conference closed with 410 commitments worth \$16.35 billion across the six issue areas of the conference. Since 2014, the Our Ocean Conference has now mobilized more than 1,800 commitments worth approximately \$108 billion.”¹

Commitments come from governments, civil organizations, nonprofits, and for-profit businesses. They come together to acknowledge how important healthy oceans are to life on this planet and pledge funds to help improve them. We each are asked and expected to do the same as we consider how to use our financial resources. As communities near the ocean benefit from its bounty, so we benefit from the blessings God has bestowed on us (whether we’re seaside or landlocked). The student book author writes, “The practice of firstfruits offerings recognizes that everything we have comes as a gift from God. In turn, we seek to give back to God a small portion of our abundant blessings.”²

It can be tough to let go of hard-earned money for things you don’t get to hold in your hand or benefit from immediately. However, we are called to “praise with your pocketbook,” as my grandmother used to say. “Do this so that the Lord your God might bless you in everything you do” (Deuteronomy 14:29b).

1. Do you think organizations like Our Oceans, which asks for concrete financial commitments, are beneficial? Why or why not?
2. Why is financial tithing important in your spiritual practice?
3. How does tithing bring blessings?

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1 <https://ourocean2022.pw/>

2 From Adult Bible Studies, Spring 2022, by Rita Hays (Cokesbury, 2022); page 99.