

Biblical Giving

Malachi 3:6-12

6 For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

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

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.

A. Introduction

- The Lord's plan for church finance is a simple one.
- By the faithful tithes and offerings of His people, the work is to be supported.
- His simple plan is for His people to give a minimum of a tithe to support His work.
- The fact that Jesus stood by the treasury of the temple (Mark 12:14-44) and watched His people put in their money, indicates that He is interested in what they gave, and how they gave it.
- The subject of money is a touchy one for some people, but it should not be.

- We should be eager to know God's method for our giving and be eager to obey God in this area.
- God has given us many wonderful promises, which depend on our obedience in this area.
- As we become obedient to God in our giving, we will begin to see His blessing of provision for our material needs in a wonderful way.
- Anyone who is serious about following the Lord must take giving seriously.

B. There Are Three Reasons Why Some Do Not Tithe

1. The first is that they have never been taught to tithe.
 - Because of the way some people react, many preachers never approach the subject.
 - But I do not do our church a favor by neglecting this teaching
 2. The second reason people do not tithe is that they misunderstand the place of tithing in the Bible.
 - Some do not think that it is for today.
 - But this is a misunderstanding of the principle of tithing as God's plan for giving.
 3. The third reason that people do not tithe is simply because they just refuse to do so.
 - Some people refuse to tithe, no matter what you say, or what God says.
- Many people are living lives filled with tragic events; events which cause them not only financial suffering, but emotional suffering as well.
 - They are suffering, because as Christians, they refuse to give God His tithe.
 - They, in the words of our text today, have been, "cursed with a curse."

C. Why We Should Give

1. We need to give because God is the owner of all that we possess.

- Everything that we have is a gift from God.
 - Our life, our health, our mate, our children, and all our material and monetary blessings are from Him.
 - So when we give to God we are acknowledging His ownership and lordship over every area of our lives.
 - This was the idea of the bringing of the first fruits in Old Testament times.
 - By giving God the first of all our increase, we declare that He is Lord over it all.
2. You see, we are accountable to God for how we use the material possessions which He has entrusted to our care.
- We are stewards of what we possess, not owners.
 - Our possessions have merely been entrusted to us for our use.
 - All that we have really belongs to God.
 - How we use what God has entrusted to us is the responsibility of stewardship.
 - I Corinthians 4:2 says, "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."
3. If God is the owner and we don't give to him we become robbers.
- "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me..."
 - Failure to TITHE brings INSULT and INDIGNATION to your provider.
 - It is like saying, "God I just don't trust you."
 - Failure to TITHE brings INJURY to your PROSPERITY.
 - It is just this simple – You Give God blesses, You don't give – And God will get his tithes in another way.
 - We cannot Rob God!
4. We also need to give because God has commanded us to give.
- In Malachi 3:10 it says, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse..."
 - Another passage of Scripture is Leviticus 27:30, which says, "... All the tithe . . . is the Lords; it is holy unto the Lord."

- It is clear that God has commanded tithing, that is, giving one-tenth of all your income to the Lord.
 - God accuses the people of robbing Him.
 - When they asked Him how, He said, "In tithes and offerings."
 - Then He commanded the people to bring all the tithes into the storehouse, which was His house.
 - The purpose was that there would be sufficiency in God's house.

5. We should give because of the great need.

- The work of God in the church depends on the tithe.
- God has chosen to tie His work to the faithfulness of His people.
- In order for the church to be blessed, and enabled to carry out His work, we must all tithe.
- We are exhorted to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, "that there may be food in my house."

6. Just think of what could be accomplished if everyone would just tithe.

- Think of the support that could be given to missions.
- Think of the extra money that would be available to local outreach.
- Buildings could be refurbished and needed improvements made.
- More money could be made available to the poor and hungry.
- Money could be channeled to agencies and ministries that are worthy.
- Money would be freed up to help struggling churches get on their feet.
- New churches could be started, and the list could go on.
 - All this could happen in most churches if the people would just tithe.
 - Ten percent of all the incomes of the families in our church would more than meet these needs.
 - If all of God's people in the church would be faithful to bring forth God's tithe, there is no question that God's work would prosper.

- The church would not only have enough money to pay basic operating expenses, the church would also have enough money to reach out world wide.

7. We should give because of the promises of God.

- Our text in verse 10 says, "Prove." or "Test me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows."
 - This is the only place where the Lord says to prove or test Him.
 - We have His permission to put Him to the test in this.
 - Do you believe Him?
 - Try Him out on this.
 - See if you can out give God.
 - Test Him.
 - He gives you the challenge.
- Luke 6:38 says, "Give and it will be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over."
- Proverbs 3:9-10 says, "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."
- II Corinthians 9:6 says "He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully."
 - God has committed Himself to bless you.
- John Bunyon said, "There was a man; some called him mad, the more he gave, the more he had."
- God will keep His promise to you, if you will be faithful and obedient in the matter of giving.

8. We should give is because of our gratitude for all the Lord has done for us.

- He has blessed us beyond what we deserve.
 - Because of all that He has done for us, we can give out of a heart full of love for Him.

- We give because we want to.
- This is the best and highest motivation for Christian giving.
- We should give because we love Jesus.
- It is not really a very large thing, considering what He did for us.

D. What Should We Give? (Tithes, Offerings, Alms)

1. Tithes

- The beginning point of Christian stewardship is the tithe.
 - Some may say, "That is the Law, and we are free from the Law."
 - This is a misunderstanding of both the Law and the tithe in relation to the Law.
- Because really tithing didn't originate from the Law.
 - Tithing precedes the Law, and as we will see, it was neither instituted by Law, nor terminated by grace.
- Tithing may go back as far as the garden of Eden.
 - And Abel may have been the first tither.
 - He offered the first-fruits to the Lord.
 - This principle of first-fruits is one which is important in Scripture.
 1. All of the first-fruits belonged to the Lord.
 2. That is why our tithe should be the first of our income, not the leftovers.
- Whether Abel was the first tither or not, we know Abraham tithed.
 - He is the Biblical example of tithing.
- In Genesis 14, we find the story of Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek.

- Abraham had rescued his nephew Lot from the Kings who had captured him.
- He had plundered these kings and was returning victoriously.
- Out of the blue comes Melchizedek, King of Salem and priest of the Most High God, who brought him bread and wine and blessed him.
- Genesis 14:20 says that Abraham gave him, "tithes of all."
- What Abraham did, was to give gratefully, voluntarily, and systematically.
- And he did it 430 years before the Law was given.
 - Now this required care on Abraham's part.
 - He had to do some addition or some subtraction, maybe some multiplication.
 - He had to calculate a tenth of all his income.
 - You see, that is what a tithe really is.
 - Some people believe that to tithe simply means to give.
 - That is incorrect.
 - The word tithe actually means tenth.
 - It is a precise mathematical term.
 - The Lord asks us to give Him a tenth of all our income.
 - Abraham gave a tenth, and to do so he gave carefully.
- Do you give carefully to the Lord?
 - Have you looked at your income and tithing records to be sure that you are giving at least a tenth?
 - You say, "That's legalistic."
 - Well, let me ask you something.
 - If your paycheck was short twenty dollars this week and your employer said, "Don't be so legalistic, it's only twenty dollars."
 - What would you think of that?
 - Do you want you employer to be careful in figuring your wages?
 - Then be careful in figuring your tithe to the Lord.
- Tithing is an Old Testament word.
 - But many other key words are as well.

- Words like "faith", "atonement", "redemption", "righteousness", "sin", and the like, have their origin in the Old Testament, but not in the Law.
 - Neither does tithing.
- Melchizedek, according to Hebrews 7, is a figure for Christ.
 - And Abraham is the forerunner of all those who trust Christ by faith according Romans 4:11.
 - So the symbolism is that the man Abraham, a picture of the believer, pays tithes to Melchizedek, a picture of Christ.
 - So we see that the tithe was established before the Law was given.
 - We have also seen that Jesus himself affirmed the tithe, and you find that this kind of systematic giving continued on in the life of the early church.
- Paul almost echoes the words of our text in Malachi in I Corinthians 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week, let everyone of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him."
 - Here we see reference to proportionate giving, as God has prospered him.
 - The NIV says, "in keeping with his income."
 - What is in keeping with everyone's income?
 - The same percent for all is.
 - This is New Testament tithing.
- Is the tithe net or gross?
 - Those who make an argument for a net tithe, do so generally to evade the issue.
 - The real issue is what do we give to Jesus?
 - If we really love the Lord, we will want Him to get more.

- Let me emphasize however, that the tithe is only a beginning place of Christian stewardship, not an ending place.
 - In addition to tithes, there are offerings which are gifts over and above the tithes.
 - Some can give much more than a tithe because you are well able to do so.
 - We are to give as we have been prospered, it says in I Corinthians 16:2, and we are reminded in Luke 12:48 that to whom much has been given, much is required.
 - We should seek to grow in the grace of giving, just as we seek to grow in our knowledge of the Lord.

2. OFFERINGS

- Offerings are mentioned 724 times in the Word of God.
 - Tithes or Tithe is mentioned 38 times.
 - If Offering is mentioned 686 times more than tithes then why are we so many times more faithful to give tithes and yet not give offerings?
 - For every 1 time Tithe is mentioned there are 19 times an offering is mentioned.
 1. In Exodus 30:13-15 13 This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD.
 2. A shekel was a temple money. One shekel represented the tithes of the people.
 3. 14 Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD.
 4. 15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD...

- Tithes was COMMANDED to be given by God.
 - But an offering was given from the heart.
- The offerings were given to the work of the church.
- We know that tithing preceded the Law but it was established as a practice in the Jewish Law in Leviticus 27:30.
- “And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD.”
- The tithe was given to the Levites.
 1. They were the keepers of the Temple.
 2. The Levites did not work jobs outside of the Temple – They received their wages from the Tithe.
- Tithes DID NOT build the Temple.
- Tithes was used for the priests and Levites who managed the Temple!
- The people gave freely from their abundance an OFFERING for the Tabernacle.
 1. Offerings were meant to be used for the upkeep of the Temple and Tithing for the ministers of the Temple.
- It was given from their ABUNDANCE.
 1. We live in a day when we have put ourselves in the place when we are so in debt we cannot freely give to God because we don't have “an abundance.”

E. Alms

- The third type of Giving is alms.
- Alms are not Tithes, nor offerings, but what we give to others.
- This is something we should do but it must come after tithes and offerings.

- Hurricane victims, people who have lost their jobs, have deaths in their families and have added expense, or some other unfortunate event in their life.

F. Where & When Should We Give?

- To whom is the tithe due?
 - The simple answer is the Lord.
- We tithe to God. But how do we do that?
- There is a God-ordained agency which enables us to do that.
- It's called THE CHURCH!
 - Paul says in I Corinthians 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week, let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."
- Two things are clear.
 1. The first is the when of giving.
 2. It is to be on the first day of the week.
 - This is Sunday.
 - We worship on the first day, the day of Resurrection.
 - The Church calls it, "The Lord's Day."
 - Secondly, just as the when is clear, so also is the where.
- Where are Christians to be on the first day of the week, the Lord's Day?
 - They are to be meeting together as the church on the Lord's Day.
 - In other words, tithing is an act of worship, and is to be included in our worship on Sunday.

G. The Results of being Faithful

- "[SEE]...if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."
- God's GREAT PROVISION is assigned to the Tither.

- What is the one thing God cannot do? LIE
 - He is Truth.
 - If God said it, that settles it...
 - He will come through for you...

H. CLOSING

Someone wrote the following article, entitled, "Ten Reasons Why I Tithe."

1. I tithe because I love God.
I recognize Him as the Eternal One who created the universe and all that's in it; therefore, He is the Only One qualified to know what is best for me.
2. I tithe because of what God has done for me.
He gave His only Begotten Son.
He saved my soul from destruction and blesses me with possessions.
In Malachi 3, He said, "prove me."
I have and He has proved Himself faithful.
3. I tithe because it is God's plan of financing His kingdom.
He said, "The tithe . . . is holy unto the Lord. It not only is holy unto Him, it belong wholly to Him.
4. I tithe because tithing brings me joy.
The knowledge Of doing God's will in this matter brings peace of mind and joy to my heart.
5. I tithe because my church needs it.
Jesus emphasized the church; there fore, I am to be church-minded also.
6. I tithe because lost souls need the gospel.
People will be reached and saved as God's people bring the tithe into the storehouse.
7. I tithe because I desire God's blessings.
God blesses the 90%.

He promised to pour out a blessing and I receive blessings from Him in many ways beyond the financial.

8. I tithe because I want to reap bountifully.

A man reaps what he sows.

9. I tithe to safeguard my treasure.

The Scripture says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupts, and where thieves break through and steal."

10. I tithe because I do not want to be a robber.

God says people rob Him when they withhold tithes and offerings.

Malachi 3:8-12 gives four promises of God to tithers:

The "I will" promises:

- "I will" open the floodgates of heaven
- "I will" pour out blessings
- "I will" place a shield of protection over you.
- "I will" make you fruitful

ILLUSTRATION: A rich man died and at his funeral someone leaned over to his friend and asked, "How much did he leave behind?" The other guy said, "Everything!"

- Money can buy you medicine, but it can't buy you health.
- Money can buy you a house, but it can't buy you home.
- Money can buy you companions, but it can't buy you real friends.
- Money can buy you entertainment, but it can't buy you joy.
- Money can buy you a business, but it can't buy you integrity.
- Money can buy you a bed, but it can't buy you a good night's sleep.
- Money can buy you a crucifix, but it can't buy you a Savior.
- Money can buy you a good life, but it can't buy you eternal life.

When you are faithful to God He will be faithful to you!

