

## Giving God's Way – Humbly and Obediently (Part 2) – Mal 3:5-12

Mal 3:5-12; Last week we began a series called Giving God's Way

And I mentioned that it's not only been a long time since I've taught on giving – 3 years this weekend to be exact . . .

But we have a problem (**The Problem** – 1 Tim 6:10) – we're not giving God's way

I showed you a chart from 2009, I cited **The Reasons**, and then turned to Mal 3 for . . .

### **The Solution (Mal 3:5-12)**

The first part of which is to . . .

#### • **Get right with God (v7)**

That's from v7 where God says – *Return to me and I will return to you*

Which involves humbling yourself, confessing your sin, and making a commitment to live and give his way

Otherwise you face judgment, as we saw in v5-6

The second part of the solution, from v8-9, is to . . .

#### • **Stop withholding your money from him (v8-9)**

V8-9; When you withhold your money from God, it's divine robbery

Resulting in a curse – hardship in your life for the purpose of turning your heart and winning your obedience; God will do that

The solution to which, is to stop withholding your money from him

That was Part 1 of this message, and if you weren't here or haven't yet listened to it, let me encourage you to do so

As with all of my messages, you can buy a CD or DVD at Books & Things, or listen and watch for *free* online

In fact, you'll also find my notes there as well

The third part of the solution then, is to . . .

#### • **Start tithing to our church (10a)**

Stop withholding your money from God, and start tithing to our church

That's from v10 where God says – *Bring the full tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my house*

Which means . . .

#### ➤ **Give 10% of your income**

10%, or a tenth, because that's what the word *tithe* means

Which you can see explicitly in **Lev 27:32** – *Every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the LORD.*

You can see there that tithe/tenth are used interchangeably b/c that's what a tithe means

And it applies to every dime you earn – *every tenth animal* it says, is to be *holy to the Lord*, set apart for his use\*\*\*\*\*

So when God says *bring the full tithes* in v10, he's saying give a full *tenth* of all you earn

If you earn \$10, give a \$1; When you get a paycheck or a bonus, give a tenth

If you cash in a stock or bond, give 10% of your *gain*

If you sell a piece of land or a business, tithe your *profit*

If you receive a monetary *gift*, give a tenth to the Lord

Give 10% of your income

➤ “On my gross or my net? Isn't that usually the question?”

It was for Becky and I when we first got married

She advocated gross, and I argued for net – and she was right

B/c the Bible says give from your *firstfruits* of *all* your gain

Like in **2 Chron 31:5** – *As soon as the command was spread abroad, the people of Israel gave in abundance the firstfruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field. And they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything.*

Their *tithe* came from the *firstfruits* of their harvest – off the top . . .

And from *all* their harvest – from their gross\*\*\*\*\*

So before you pay your taxes, before you contribute to your 401k, before you do anything else – give to the Lord; tithe on your gross

And when you do, give it . . .

➤ **To our church** – that's the idea of the *storehouse*

*Bring the full tithes into the storehouse* – God says

Which in Malachi's day, was a room connected to the side of the *temple*, used to store the *tithes* that people gave – like grain, and olive oil, and money

So God was essentially saying, bring your tithes to the *temple*

To the primary place of spiritual nourishment

To your home base for community and fellowship

To the focal point of my work of ministry

And just like the *temple* was God's primary source of discipleship and ministry in Malachi's day . . .

So too, the *church* is God's primary source of discipleship and ministry in our day

It's an analogy you can't avoid

So when God says bring your tithe into the *storehouse*, the most direct application for us, is to give a tenth of our income *to our church*

To your spiritual home, for spiritual food and ministry and fellowship and discipleship

If this is the place you call home, this is the place where you should tithe

➤ Which usually raises another question, like – “Can't I give some of my tithe to our church, and some to others? To other org's or missionaries? Can I split it up?”

You *can*, and I know people who do – people who give 7% to their church for instance, and 3% to missionaries . . .

But that's not bringing your *full* tithe into the storehouse

That's a partial tithe – akin to robbing God as we saw last week

Why do you think he says “bring your *full* tithe into the storehouse?” . . .

Instead of just, “Bring your tithe” or “Give whatever you want to whoever you want as long as it adds up?”

Why do you think he's so specific about the *full* tithe, and the *storehouse*?

I think it's b/c he's over-the-top passionate about *his* work, in *his* place, and wants you to be also

Which doesn't usually happen with those who split their tithe

B/c *where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* (Mt 6:21)  
The implication being – if your treasure’s divided, so is your heart

Now, does that mean you shouldn’t give to other org’s? Not at all  
It simply means that you should tithe to our church first, and *then* give to others  
That’s giving God’s way

Give 10% of your income, to our church, and do so . . .

**For the sake of ministry**

Or as God says it in v10 – *that there may be food in my house*  
Which in Mal’s day literally meant the food and sustenance and money, that were  
necessary to sustain the priests and provide for the work of ministry

And the same is true today – your tithes are *necessary* to support the ever increasing work  
of ministry around here, and provide for those who lead it  
And if you’re wondering what that means exactly – read your bulletin each week, and  
pick up a prayer sheet in the lobby  
I guarantee you, you’ll be overwhelmed in a hurry  
And just think what it could be, if everyone tithed\*\*\*\*\*

And I want you to know that Becky and I do – we give a minimum of 10% of our income,  
right here  
We always have, and we always will – b/c it’s the rt. thing to do, and the blessing is ours

Which is the 4<sup>th</sup> part of the solution to our problem . . .

• **Trust God for the blessing (v10b-12)**

V10-12; This is God’s explicit guarantee that he will be faithful to provide, when *you* are  
faithful to give

And he’s so adamant about it, that he says – *put me to the test*  
Which you won’t find anywhere else in the Bible  
God’s like – “Go ahead, try me; Make my day, and I’ll make yours”  
Trust me for the blessing

That doesn’t mean give a dollar, get a dollar – there’s plenty of that garbage around  
Nor do we give *to* get – that should *never* be our motive  
What it means, is that if you give God’s *way*, and you’ll reap God’s *blessing*

➤ Like the blessing of *provision*  
Provision to meet your needs; Not your “greeds” but your needs

Like he says in 10b – *I will . . . open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for  
you a blessing until there is no more NEED*  
11b – *Your vine in the field will not fail to bear*  
IOW your means of income, your vine, will sustain you

Or as Solomon says it in **Prov 3:9-10** – *Honor the LORD with your wealth and with  
the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your  
vats will be bursting with wine.*

When you tithe, you can trust God to provide\*\*\*\*\*

*Including* his provision of the discipline and desire you need, to live on what remains  
That’s part of his provision

➤ Second, you can trust him for the blessing of *protection*  
11a – *I will rebuke the devourer for you so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil*  
IOW I won’t let pest or pestilence destroy your crops  
That’s what he means when he says I will rebuke *it* – I will render it inconsequential  
That’s *protection* of your livelihood – something you can trust God for when you tithe

Does that mean you’ll never get laid off, or never have a bad year in business? No  
But it does mean that God will protect you from things you’re not even aware of  
And, that he’ll protect *us* as a whole

As with all of Scripture, it’s important to read this not only as individuals, but as a group  
So that the bad year and subsequent need of one person, will be offset by the good year  
and subsequent plenty of others  
When you tithe, you can trust God for the blessing of protection

➤ Third, you can trust him for the blessing of *joy*  
Look at v12; As a result of *your* tithe and *my* blessing God says – *all nations will call  
you blessed, for you will be a land of delight*; A people of joy  
Why? B/c you’re participating in something bigger than yourself, and something of  
eternal value, and something that God is blessing with his provision and protection  
All of which equals joy and delight  
When you tithe, you can trust God for the blessing of joy

Take a look at this testimony from someone in our church who’s experienced all that and  
more (**Video–Mark Fish**)  
Giving God’s way is a matter of tithing to our church – humbly and obediently, and  
trusting God for the blessing

Now, having said all that, there are two main objections that I want to address  
(**The Objections**)

**1. “I can’t afford to tithe”**

“You don’t understand Pastor Rob, there’s no way; I can barely afford to pay my bills, let  
alone tithe; I just don’t have the money.”  
And that’s not true; You *do* have the money

Granted, after your mortgage, car loans, entertainment, clothing, and credit cards – there  
may be nothing left . . .  
But that doesn’t mean you don’t have the money  
It just means you’ve chosen to spend it on yourself instead of God

In which case, you need to change your priorities  
You can’t just choose a lifestyle that consumes all your income, and then say . . .  
“Oops, sorry God, I can’t afford to tithe”; That’s not legit

If you need to downsize your home in order to tithe, downsize your home  
If you need to get a cheaper car, get a cheaper car; Go out less; Spend less

Apart from that, apart from changing your lifestyle and priorities, you'll *never* be able to afford it

And you'll continue to live in the drudgery of disobedience, suffering the consequences, and wondering why you always *have* less, when you *give* less

## 2. “Tithing is part of the OT Law, and doesn’t apply to me.”

Which usually betrays a hardness of heart, or a control issue, or an authority issue . . .

But setting those aside, let me just address this at face value

The first part is correct – tithing *is* a part of the OT Law

And we are no longer under the Law – in that it is not the means of our salvation, nor the constraint of our life

But that doesn’t necessarily mean that it has no bearing on our lives, or no applicability for how we live – especially when it comes to tithing

And there are 3 reasons for that:

1. Malachi 3 is a part of Scripture

And **2 Tim 3:16** – *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for . . . training in righteousness*; All Scripture includes Malachi\*\*\*\*\*

Which means that it too is useful for training us in righteousness

In this case, the righteousness of tithing

Second, Malachi and the tithing it teaches does apply to us, b/c . . .

2. Tithing is *affirmed* by Jesus in the NT

In **Mt 23:23** he says – *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin [tiny seeds and herbs], and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.*”

You ought to have observed God’s standards of justice and mercy and faithfulness in the OT Law, without neglecting his other standards like tithing\*\*\*\*\*

And then third, contrary to the objection . . .

3. The Law in general *still* applies, but not like it used to

That’s the implication of **1 Cor 9:8-10** where Paul appeals to the OT Law to support his NT argument

*Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? <sup>9</sup>For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned? <sup>10</sup>Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop.*

He appeals to the OT Law, both generally and specifically, to support his NT argument

Which he couldn’t legitimately do if the Law didn’t still apply to us in some way, shape, or form

But he does, indicating that it’s the principle *behind* the law that remains pertinent\*\*\*\*\*

That is, if we can discern the *heart* of God and the *purpose* of God in writing the law, like

Paul did – then we can discern our application of it

Which is not always easy with the OT laws, but in most cases it’s possible

B/c the Law, as with any law, reflects its author

Just like the laws of a government reveal the nature and desires of those who govern . . .

So too the laws of God reflect *his* nature and desires, for those *he* governs

Laws always reflect the nature of those who write them

➤ So when God says in Mal 3:10 – *Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house . . .*

His obvious *purpose* was to provide sufficient means in the temple, to minister to the people and support the priests

And his *desire*, his heart, was to do so through the equitable and measurable giving of his people

Equitable b/c it’s a percentage as opposed to a flat amount for everybody . . .

And measurable b/c it’s specific – it’s *10%* as opposed to 9 or 11, or whatever you want

That’s God’s heart in the matter – his heart behind the law if you will

That his primary work of ministry, be provided for through the *tithes* of his people\*\*\*\*\*

So while the Law is not the means of our salvation, nor the futile constraint of our lives . .

The *heart* of the matter, the heart of God *behind* the Law, still applies

And in this case, it’s even affirmed by Jesus

So how foolish would we be, to forego the *blessing* of God, b/c we reject the *heart* of God?

Don’t do that; Give his way, and test him in this

And see if he doesn’t *open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.*

Prayer – we trust that your love never fails; that you are faithful over us; that you are good and your love endures