

ON TRUST FROM GOD

“But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me.” —MALACHI 3:8-9

The above passage is a pretty solemn charge God makes against His people. “You are robbing me,” and they respond with amazement. Out of arrogance and greed, the Israelites were blatantly robbing God, and it ran rampant among the priests as well. Instead of unblemished animals, which God intended would symbolize the blood of Christ, they were sacrificing crippled, diseased and blind animals. Knowingly, they defiled God’s table and short changed His tithes.

God then tells them, “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house” (Malachi 3:10). Tithing was part of the Old Covenant where ten percent of income was paid into the temple treasury, and also included giving a tenth of the livestock and everything from the land, all of it to be set apart for the Lord. Tithing and offerings were not a gift as everything already belongs to God. In robbing God, they were also robbing the priesthood and those in need. Throughout generations of depriving God of what was rightfully His, the Israelites claimed no knowledge, guilt or accountability.

God said to them, “Test me in this and see if I will not throw open the flood gates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it” (Malachi 3:10). It is rare indeed that God calls upon His people to test Him. Both the challenge and promise are straightforward; simply give God what is rightfully His, and never again would the Israelites have less than they need.

God challenges us in the same way today. Under the New Covenant, when Scripture speaks of giving, we are not under obligation for a set amount, but if we mean business with God, then everything we are and everything we have is surrendered to Him. What we possess is on trust from God and, therefore, is to be administered faithfully to Him. How much we give is between God and ourselves, but Scripture teaches us to give willingly, generously and cheerfully. Not in any area of our lives will we become poverty stricken because of what we have given in the name of our Lord. In giving willingly, generously and cheerfully, we'll genuinely experience what Christ teaches – that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, Forgive me when I'm tempted to accumulate more for myself. Instil in me a never ending desire to give, and keep me mindful that all I have is yours. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Has there recently been a time when I didn't give because of concern I wouldn't have enough for myself?