

**Title: Are You Robbing God?**

**Text: Malachi 3:6-12**

*I was saved in 1991 and I didn't have a clue about giving...*

**Main Idea: God is Faithful, Are You?**

Background on Malachi

**1. God's faithfulness protects his people but his great blessings depend on their faithfulness (3:6-7)**

Do you see what I am saying here? God is faithful, and he will keep his word on never leaving nor forsaking us. However, for those who are God's children but walking the path of sin, you are missing out on God's blessing big time!

This is Malachi's fifth oracle (6 in total). An oracle is a Word from God. Malachi was a prophet of God speaking on behalf of God to the people of God so that they might turn back to God...

Let's break down verses 6-7

**a. Because of God's unchanging love, his people are not destroyed (6)**

**Malachi 3:6 ESV**

*<sup>6</sup> "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed."*

Consider the implications of this statement. The Jews were a stiff-necked people who were notorious for rebelling against the will of God. Yet He was profoundly long-suffering with them.

And there were times in the nation's history where He would take some of them out.

- Korah's rebellion ([Num 16](#)) - opening the earth and swallowing them up
- Fire breaks out in the camp -

**Numbers 11:1-3 ESV**

*<sup>1</sup> And the people complained in the hearing of the LORD about their misfortunes, and when the LORD heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp. <sup>2</sup> Then the people cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the LORD, and the fire died down. <sup>3</sup> So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the LORD burned among them.*

- Fiery serpents -

**Numbers 21:4–9 ESV**

*<sup>4</sup> From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup> And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. <sup>7</sup> And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." <sup>9</sup> So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.*

Yet, don't miss the fact that He did not ultimately destroy them!

**Isaiah 10:20–22 ESV**

*<sup>20</sup> In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. <sup>21</sup> A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. <sup>22</sup> For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness.*

There will always be a remnant of the Jewish people that God will not destroy.

*Most of the time, when the Israelites are referred to as the children of Jacob, it's a rebuke for their disobedience. It's a reference to the name of their forefather before the divine blessing was bestowed. Yet, even though they were faithless, God would remain faithful to them, as He was to their father, Jacob. Their rebellion has led them far from God, but restoration is still possible if they desire change. Exalting Jesus in Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi (Israel's Checkered History and the Reality of Her Rebellion ([Malachi 3:6](#)))*

Maybe you feel like you are far from the Lord right now? Maybe you have turned your back on God?

If you feel like there is a distance between you and God, guess who moved? It wasn't God! He never changes!

How can you get back into a right relationship with him? Confess your sin and recommit your faith in him! He hears those who repent and desire a right relationship with Him.

This leads us well into the next verse...

b. If his people want his great blessings they must show themselves faithful (7)

**Malachi 3:7 ESV**

*<sup>7</sup> From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?'*

The thing about God is He calls it like He sees it. And God, being outside of time, has the opportunity to see all things at once.

He sees that Jacob's children have been consistently turning against Him for many years.

And God, in this verse invites them to return to him.

If you return to me, I'll return to you!

This sounds like an invitation we find in the letter from James in the New Testament...

**James 4:8 ESV**

*<sup>8</sup> Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

But notice their response.

*"But you say, 'How shall we return?'"*

The NLT helps us catch the tone of their response...

**Malachi 3:7 (NLT)**

*<sup>7</sup> "But you ask, 'How can we return when we have never gone away?'"*

Do you catch their attitude here?

"What's your problem, God? We haven't gone away!"

They are questioning the HOLY, ALL-KNOWING God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

They are actually talking back to God. Not a great plan!!

Yet God is calling them to repent!

Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of action. But it is more than this. It is also about the restoration of a relationship. God, in this verse is asking them to return to Him!

He wants them to be a faithful people. And if they become a faithful people, he will bless them in inconceivable ways!

But, it seems the children of Israel don't even realize they are lost and in need of returning back to God.

In verse 8 God will answer their question.

But for now, there are some beautiful truths to remember.

God's faithfulness to you is not dependent on your faithfulness to him!

### **2 Timothy 2:13 ESV**

*<sup>13</sup> if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.*

No matter what, Christian...

### **Deuteronomy 31:8 ESV**

*<sup>8</sup> It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."*

If you return to God, He will bless you! How will He bless you?

The text tells us...

### **Malachi 3:7 (ESV)**

*<sup>7</sup> Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.*

Friends, is there any greater blessing than God himself? No!

God promises to return to the ones who have walked away from him! Amazing!

God gives Himself to those He loves. Wow!

Henry Blackaby calls this revival

*"Revival is when God's people return to God and God returns to them, and everyone sees the difference." – Henry Blackaby*

Are you faithful to God? Are you pursuing him daily? You will be so blessed if you are walking in faithfulness with our God.

If you are not walking in faithfulness, what should you do?

RETURN TO HIM! It's not too late!

**Review** - God is Faithful, Are You?

- God's faithfulness protects his people but his great blessings depend on their faithfulness.

## 2. God withholds his blessing as a punishment for ingratitude and disloyalty (3:8–9)

Now, remember, this is how God deals with His people. We are not talking about eternal punishment, but chastisement (i.e., [Hebrews 12](#)).

And there is one way in which God desires worship from His people and that is through giving. Giving is our way of showing our trust in Him. It demonstrates our faithfulness.

But...

- a. By being unfaithful in giving, the people demonstrate their ingratitude (8)

### **Malachi 3:8 ESV**

*<sup>8</sup> Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions.*

The Jewish people have just seen God's faithfulness in returning them to the land, rebuilding of the temple, and the repair of the walls. However, while they should be living in gratitude, they quickly fell into apathy after these monumental events.

What are tithes and contributions?

### **Tithes**

*The Israelites were to tithe on everything that they produced from their agricultural pursuits, including crops and livestock (Lev. 27:30, 32; Deut. 14:22–23). These tithes were given to the Levites, since the tribe of Levi had received no allotment in the land of Canaan like the other tribes (Num. 18:21, 24). In turn the Levites were to present a tithe of the tithes they collected to the Lord for the priests' sustenance (Num. 18:26, 28). Tithes were vital to the successful operation of Israel's religious system. If they were not forthcoming, the priests and Levites had to resort to other means of support (Neh. 13:10).*

*The tithe was presented at the central sanctuary (Deut. 12:6, 11), which was first the tabernacle and later the temple. When Malachi exhorted the Israelites to "bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house" (Mal. 3:10, emphasis added), he was referring to the temple in Jerusalem (Neh. 10:38; 13:12–13). Israelites ate a portion of their tithes, evidently as a kind of fellowship meal, "in the presence of the LORD" at the sanctuary (Deut. 14:23).*

*Every three years there was a special tithe. This tithe was not taken to the temple but was stored locally for distribution to the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows (Deut. 14:28–29; 26:12). Traditionally, Jewish interpreters have held that there were two different kinds of annual tithes, one for the Levites and the other for the prescribed meal at the temple. According to this*

*interpretation, the tithing of the third year was a special use of the second tithe. - Nahum-Malachi A. The Old Testament Tithe (3:8, 10)*

*Regarding the question of tithing and the Christian, two points seem particularly relevant. First, tithing was practiced before the inception of the Israelite nation and the institution of the Mosaic Law. Second, Jesus endorsed the custom (Matt. 23:23). Consequently, it seems best to view tithing as a timeless moral imperative that modern believers should observe. The fact that Israelites were to present other offerings in addition to their tithes seems to suggest that the tithe is a minimum that we should give to the Lord. - Nahum-Malachi A. The Old Testament Tithe (3:8, 10)*

### **Contributions or Offerings**

*There were various types of Old Testament offerings. Five are listed in Leviticus 1–7: the burnt offering, the grain offering, the fellowship (“peace,” KJV) offering, the sin offering, and the guilt (“trespass,” KJV) offering. However, the Hebrew word for “offerings” in Malachi 3:8 is the more general term, *terumah* (seventy-six times in the Old Testament), which basically means a “contribution” or an “offering” for a sacred purpose. - Nahum-Malachi B. Offerings (3:8)*

The bottom line is the Jews were not giving to God in the way they were supposed to and therefore were functioning in an unfaithful way.

And there is a warning in verse 9...

b. When the people are unfaithful, God withholds his blessings from them (9)

### **Malachi 3:9 ESV**

*<sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you.*

God was not messing around with the Jews. He was genuinely offended at their cavalier attitude. Earlier in Malachi, even the priests were offering not the best animals for sacrifice, but ones that were lame and bruised and diseased. God said to the priests,

*“Why don’t you give those nasty animals to the governor and see if he will accept them from you.” “Why then would you give them to me?”*

What is God’s point with the Jews? If we are not intentional and vigilant in following God and living in a way that is pleasing to Him, we will become spiritually lazy and lax and do what benefits us more than what honors God. And we set ourselves up for his chastising hand.

Isn’t this why Moses gives such an honest warning in Deuteronomy?

### **Deuteronomy 8:10–18 ESV**

*<sup>10</sup> And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. <sup>11</sup> "Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, <sup>12</sup> lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup> then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, <sup>15</sup> who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, <sup>16</sup> who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. <sup>17</sup> Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' <sup>18</sup> You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.*

And God loves his people enough to punish or discipline them to get them back on track with him. Because, friends, there is no better place to be than to walk in harmony with our God.

#### **Micah 6:8 ESV**

*<sup>8</sup> He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

Are you walking humbly with your God - especially when it comes to your tithes and offerings?

Maybe you proudly say, well, the New Testament never specifically commands that I should tithe. And you'd be correct.

However, do you use that as an excuse to keep all you earn for yourself?

Or do you want to please the Lord with what He has entrusted to you.

#### **2 Corinthians 9:7 ESV**

*<sup>7</sup> Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

*"I don't believe in tithing ... but it's a good place to start." - James L. Kraft (Founder of Kraft Foods)*

Friends - You are not your own, you have been bought with a price.

The Lord Jesus Christ gave his very blood on the cross to GIVE you eternal life.

This world is just a vapor. A hiccup. A blip. The next life is the important one.

We are to live for Christ now! We are to live our lives as servants of the most-high King, not as Kings of our own lives.

“Only one life, twill soon be past. Only what’s done for Christ will last.

God was quite upset with his children in verse 9. They had willfully gone against his will for their lives in the area of tithing and offering.

**Malachi 3:9 ESV**

*<sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you.*

As a New Testament Christian, I believe we are under the dispensation of Grace and not the Law.

However, Christian, I believe you can rob God as a New Testament follower of Christ by taking all the resources he has entrusted to you to manage and spend those resources on yourself.

I know that tithing and giving offerings is pleasing to the Lord and I make it my goal to live my life so that he is pleased. Not so he will save me, but because I am saved. I am his child and I desire to be like him! And I want to continue to have his blessing in this life and the next.

Don't take from God what is rightfully his and use it all on yourself.

Go home today and look over your finances. How much of your finances are you giving to the work of the Lord?

I think every member of this church should give 10% to this ministry. Certainly, you can give more, but this is a great starting place. I think you should then give offerings to ministries of this church or outside this church that further the gospel of Jesus Christ. God gives you the freedom to make those decisions.

However, your money reveals your heart. As you look at your financial situation, I wonder what it will reveal about your heart.

I used to think that if I gave God a 5 spot, I was doing him a favor. Now I realize that He's the one doing me a favor by allowing me to breathe. And I should live with gratitude and loyalty to Him!

**Review** - God is Faithful, Are You?

- God's faithfulness protects his people but his great blessings depend on their faithfulness.
- God withholds his blessing as a punishment for ingratitude and disloyalty



**3. God challenges his people to prove his promises by being faithful stewards (3:10–12)**

a. God challenges his people to act in faith on his promises of provision and protection (10)

***Malachi 3:10 ESV***

*<sup>10</sup> Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.*

Friends, do you want to be pleasing to God? Do you know how to be pleasing to God as a Christian?

***Hebrews 11:6 ESV***

*<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*

One of the best ways for a Christian to exercise faith is by entrusting their money back to the one who gave it in the first place.

Do you think if you use your money the way God intends for you to use His money that he will leave you? That he will forsake you?

***Hebrews 13:5–6 ESV***

*<sup>5</sup> Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." <sup>6</sup> So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"*

We put so much confidence in our financial portfolio and little confidence in the one who funded our portfolio in the first place!

God, in Malachi 3 says to His children, *thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.*

Do you think God would leave you high and dry if you were to put him to the test? I don't think so, either!

Imagine what the church could accomplish in this world if we used just 10% of the resources He has given us for Kingdom purposes!!

Be faithful with what He has entrusted to you!

b. God declares that if his people are faithful, he will be faithful to them (11–12)

**Malachi 3:11-12 ESV**

*<sup>11</sup> I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>12</sup> Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.*

You give to God's purposes and God, in turn will care for you. And, by the way, you'll be way more joyful too!

**Our story on being challenged to give...**

Don't you want to have the blessing of God on your life?

Then be a giver. Give to the work of the Lord freely! It's his anyway. Don't lavish it on yourself!

**James 2:14–17 ESV**

*<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

That \$20 bill in your wallet is not yours. It is God's. He has entrusted it to you to use for His purposes. Certainly, His purposes are to care for yourself with that money. But His purposes are also to use those resources to care for His church (people). And to reach more people with the gospel.

What do you do with the money he has entrusted to you?

Are you a regular, systematic giver to God?

**Review** - God is Faithful, Are You?

- God's faithfulness protects his people, but his great blessings depend on their faithfulness.
- God withholds his blessing as a punishment for ingratitude and disloyalty
- God challenges his people to prove his promises by being faithful stewards

**John Wesley**

*While at Oxford, an incident changed his perspective on money. He had just finished paying for some pictures for his room when one of the chambermaids came to his door. It was a cold winter day, and he noticed that she had nothing to protect her except a thin linen gown. He*

*reached into his pocket to give her some money to buy a coat but found he had too little left. Immediately the thought struck him that the Lord was not pleased with the way he had spent his money. He asked himself, Will thy Master say, "Well done, good and faithful steward"? Thou hast adorned thy walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold! O justice! O mercy! --Are not these pictures the blood of this poor maid?"*

*Perhaps as a result of this incident, in 1731 Wesley began to limit his expenses so that he would have more money to give to the poor. He records that one year his income was 30 pounds (\$1.18 or \$35.4) and his living expenses 28 pounds, so he had 2 pounds to give away. The next year his income doubled, but he still managed to live on 28 pounds, so he had 32 pounds to give to the poor. In the third year, his income jumped to 90 pounds.*

*Instead of letting his expenses rise with his income, he kept them to 28 pounds and gave away 62 pounds. In the fourth year, he received 120 pounds. As before, his expenses were 28 pounds, so his giving rose to 92 pounds.*

*Wesley felt that the Christian should not merely tithe but give away all extra income once the family and creditors were taken care of. He believed that with increasing income, what should rise is not the Christian's standard of living but the standard of giving.*

*This practice, begun at Oxford, continued throughout his life. Even when his income rose into the thousands of pounds sterling, he lived simply, and he quickly gave away his surplus money.*

*One year his income was a little over 1400 pounds. He lived on 30 pounds and gave away nearly 1400 pounds. Because he had no family to care for, he had no need for savings. He was afraid of laying up treasures on earth, so the money went out in charity as quickly as it came in. He reports that he never had 100 pounds at any one time.*

Everything you have is God's. Are you managing God's stuff well? Are you using His resources to grow your wealth and portfolio? Or are you managing his things to further his kingdom? He actually gives you the choice.

*"There is a common, worldly kind of Christianity in this day, which many have, and think they have enough—a cheap Christianity which offends nobody, and requires no sacrifice—which costs nothing, and is worth nothing."*

**— J.C. Ryle**

**Are you serving Him or robbing Him?**

Connection Group Questions

1. God is faithful, are you? How can we grow in faithfulness to God.

2. Do you agree or disagree with the statement – “God’s faithfulness protects his people, but his great blessings depend on their faithfulness.” Why or why not?
3. According to point two, God can and does withhold his blessings. For what reasons would he do this (vs. 8-9)?
4. How can believers today rob him?
5. You are a manager of God’s resources. What does this thought do for all you own?