

## “Robbing God” - Malachi 3:6-15

A. **The God who never changes (v. 6):** God asserts that because He does not change, the sons of Jacob are not consumed, they endure, they will not be destroyed. The people of Israel have missed so much that has been in their history. Most notably, how many peoples have vanished from this world during the time the people of Israel have existed? So many have faded from this life, and even though God never enjoyed perfect faithfulness from His people, His people still exist at the time of Malachi! They are still present; highlighting God’s faithfulness in an unchanging existence despite Israel’s apathy, compromise, wayward attitude and blatant disobedience.

B. **The God who calls (v. 7):** God commands the people to return to Him, to which they respond with confusion, asking “How shall we return?”. Though God does not change, and He communicates within that unchanging nature clearly and succinctly, and He has NEVER actively walked away from His people’s side. Imagine here the same, faithful, honorable God has so little cooperation from His people, not to mention the leaders and priests of His people, that He must actually CALL to them to return to Him for their own sake! Lets be clear as well, this is not a one time call! This presupposes that God calls out to His people constantly because like little children, they are not listening! And not only are they not listening, they even claim that God has abandoned them, and never told them how to return to Him. Truly an example of purposeful ignorance!

*“Call to me (talking to Israel) and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.”  
-Jeremiah 33:3*

If you ever wonder if God has really been calling the people of Israel to Him throughout their existence - look at prophetic works like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and Ezra. God has always called His people to Him.

C. **The God of generosity (v. 8-9):** God accuses the nation of robbing Him by failing to bring tithes and offerings, resulting in a curse upon them. Not only is God fed up with the lack of tithes and offerings - not just money but time, attention, love and service - but what offerings are brought - remember the start of Malachi 2, the quality of that offering was refuse! When they bothered to bring offerings they were the last and least quality not the “first fruits”, that has always been expected by God historically. It was never an expectation that what you brought had to be perfect, but it should be your best. Israel had allowed their love of God to be transactional and then after that it became active placation! The people have robbed God because they are actively withholding time, resource, and their affections from the very God who gave all to them!

*“Every good thing given and ever perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”*

*James 1:17*

**D. The God who challenges (v. 10-12):** God challenges the people to bring the full tithe into the storehouse, promising to open the "windows of heaven" and pour out overwhelming blessings, and to rebuke the “devourer”. God chastises the people for their apathetic reaction to God who has been faithful throughout history, and their faithfulness have fallen through the floor. The suggestion here about bringing “full tithe” into the storehouse is God calling out the leaders of the people - the priests, the politicians the elites in particular - who have led God’s people to a flawed perspective - that the God of Israel can be halfheartedly placated and not obeyed!

*“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord you God is with you wherever you go.”*

*Joshua 1:9*

**E. The God who is long-suffering (v. 13-15):** The people are accused of saying it is ‘useless to serve God’, noting that “evildoers” seem to prosper while they suffer. Though sin and selfishness can seem powerful for a time, it ultimately is self defeating! As God calls His people back to Him, He remains faithful - though He could bring up example after example of a largely unfaithful and apathetic populace. Once again, people judge others by the worst of their examples, while judging themselves by the best of their intentions. And while neither is a completely clear way to judge right from wrong, single humans persist - all the while God continually calls to His people to listen to Him in discerning this world and lighting a proper path. God’s faithfulness is tied to a supreme character, and His patient instruction and dedication to His people should still be the most important factor that decides where they place their trust!

**Both the People of Israel then, and today the Body of Christ today must now:**

*1. Trust in God's Unchanging Nature Rest in God's Immutability: Verse 6 famously states, "For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed." In a world of shifting values, apply this by grounding your security in God's character and His steadfast covenant promises rather than your own performance or circumstances.*

Despite Israel's history of rebellion, God offers a gracious "return to Me, and I will return to you." Use this as a daily prompt to practice repentance—turning away from self-reliance and back to God. It takes no time at all for the people of God to wander.

*2. Practice "First-Fruits" Stewardship*

God chastises the people for "robbing" Him by withholding tithes and offerings. Apply this by reviewing your own dedication to God asking if you are being a faithful steward of the resources God has provided - resources, time, and your heartfelt trust.

Take the "Test" of Faith: Verse 10 is one of the few places where God invites people to "test" Him. Challenge yourself to give sacrificially, trusting that God is able to provide and giving Him the "first fruits" of all your efforts, knowing He will provide all you need.

Beyond Money: While the text specifically mentions tithes, broader application includes giving God your time, talents, and entire life surrender.

*3. Guard Your Heart - Flee Cynicism*

Watch Your Words: Verses 13–15 describe people speaking "harshly" against God, claiming it is "vain to serve" Him because they don't see immediate profit. Guard against a transactional faith that only values God for what He gives you. One of the greatest mistakes you and I make is to make grand gestures - when God prefers simple, consistent obedience.

Instead of focusing on what we think we lack or the apparent success of “wrong doers,” practice deliberate gratitude for every example of God's provision. See how your attitude toward God shifts and improves when we adopt an attitude of thankfulness!

PRAYER

## Small Group Questions

### **1. The God who Never Changes (Malachi 3:6–7)**

Read verse 6. God's unchanging nature (immutability) should serve as both a comfort and a warning to His people.

God invites Israel to "Return to me, and I will return to you." What does it look like to actively "return" to God in your daily life?

### **2. The God of Generosity (Malachi 3:8–9)**

Read verses 8–9. God tells his people that they are actually "robbing" His provision. He shares that withholding tithes and offerings is more than just a financial issue, but a matter of the heart. Instead of being generous and grateful, people are instead tempted to view resources as completely theirs.

How does the biblical concept of the giving challenge our priorities, budgets, and time spent?

### **3. The God who Challenges (Malachi 3:10–12)**

Read verses 10–12. God tells Israel to test Him in this - that God will honor heartfelt giving of time and resources for God's purposes.

Have you ever stepped out in faith regarding giving? What was the result, and how did it impact your relationship with God?

### **4. The God of Long Suffering (Malachi 3:13–15)**

Read verses 13–14. The people were complaining that serving God was useless because they didn't see an immediate, prosperous payoff.

How do we combat the temptation to serve God only for temporal and "immediate" rewards?