



# FAITHFUL IN STEWARDSHIP

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# Faithful in Stewardship

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Malachi 3:7-12

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #1836

At its core definition, stewardship is our relationship with money: how we obtain, save, invest, spend, and give our wealth. God is interested in this relationship, as is Satan—our enemy who would love to keep us in financial bondage.

If money increases our worries, or if we have plenty in the bank, but we have no treasure in Heaven, we are in financial bondage. We all want to be free from the curse of debt, but freedom is only found when we are faithful in stewardship.

Malachi 3:7 says, “Yet from the days of your fathers, you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” Says the Lord of hosts. “But you said, ‘In what way shall we return?’”

In order to obtain financial freedom, we must first personally return to God; He does not need our money, but He wants our fellowship. When we remember tithing is God’s way of revealing our priorities to ourselves, we will see tithing as a great blessing. It is our privilege to show God that He is first in our lives and everything else is secondary.

Adrian Rogers says, “God is not raising money; God is growing Christians. God wants us to grow in grace and knowledge and to love Him.”

After our personal return, there is a financial release: “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try 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 such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:8).

By biblical definition, tithing is ten percent given to the temple of God (church), for the work of the temple. Giving to charities or ministries is good, but it is not a replacement for our tithes.

When we learn to give back to God freely, there will be a spiritual renewal. God will renew our faith, rebuke our foes, and restore our fruitfulness. Our offerings are like seeds for a crop: when we sow bountifully, we will reap bountifully.

## Life Application

Are you in financial bondage, seeking freedom from an indebted spirit? Remain faithful in stewardship; return to God, understanding He wants you first and foremost. Then, show your faithfulness through tithing.



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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Malachi 3:7-12
- b) Stewardship is how we obtain money, how we save money, how we invest money, how we spend money, and how we give money.
- c) God is interested in our stewardship.
  - i) Over and over in the Bible, God talks about our stewardship.
    - (1) God does not need our money.
      - (a) God is God.
      - (b) He owns everything.
    - (2) God is not interested in what we have but in who we are.
  - ii) God wants us, and He wants to bless us.
    - (1) God wants to give to us.
  - iii) 16 the 38 parables that Jesus taught deal with stewardship.
  - iv) About one out of every ten verses in the New Testament deal with this matter of stewardship.
    - (1) In the New Testament, there are about 500 verses that deal with faith.
    - (2) There are about 500 verses in the New Testament that deal with prayer.
    - (3) There are over 2,000 verses in the New Testament that deal with stewardship.
  - v) God is interested in how we acquire and use our money.
  - vi) One of the great tests of our spirituality and how much we love God and how much we believe the Word of God is stewardship.
- d) Satan is very interested in our stewardship.
  - i) Satan knows that if he can defeat us in this way and keep us in bondage, then he has us right where he wants us.
  - ii) God has come to set us free.
  - iii) Eleven ways to know if you are in financial bondage:
    - (1) Do you charge daily expenditures because you do not have enough money to pay for them?
    - (2) Do you put off paying a bill when it is due?
    - (3) Do you borrow to pay fixed expenses, like taxes and insurance?
    - (4) Does your debt requirement (money that you owe long term) exceed 20% of your income?
    - (5) Are you unaware of how much you owe?
    - (6) Do you have creditors calling you about past due bills?
    - (7) Do you borrow from savings to pay current bills?
    - (8) Are you making new loans to pay off old loans?
    - (9) Do you and your spouse ever argue about money?
    - (10) Do you ever think about being dishonest with money?
    - (11) Do you have difficulty bringing your tithe to God's house on God's day?
  - iv) Many Americans are in debt today.



- (1) Someone has described the average American as a person who drives a bank-financed car over a bond-financed highway with gasoline that he bought with a credit card.
- (2) We buy things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't like.
- v) Many people are in financial bondage.
  - (1) Those who are rich may be in financial bondage.
    - (a) The rich are in financial bondage when they try to find satisfaction in their money and cannot do it.
      - (i) Ecclesiastes 5:10
    - (2) People are in financial bondage if their money increases their worries.
      - (a) Proverbs 15:6
    - (3) A person is in financial bondage when he is a slave to his money.
      - (a) His chief aim in life is to make money.
      - (b) Proverbs 23:4
        - (i) Someone whose goal in life is to be rich is a miserable person.
          - 1. The Bible never condemns riches.
            - a. Deuteronomy 8:18
          - 2. But when you make it your goal to get money, money is going to get you.
    - (4) People are in financial bondage if they have plenty of money in the bank but no treasure in Heaven.
      - (a) Proverbs 23:5
        - (i) Money talks; it says goodbye.
          - 1. It flies away.
      - (b) Luke 12:16-21
- e) You are interested in your stewardship.
  - i) It takes money and finances to live.
  - ii) It's part of our normal life, and God knows it.
- f) Today's message will share three principles from the Bible that will help us obtain financial freedom.

## 2) THERE IS A PERSONAL RETURN TO GOD (MALACHI 3:7)

- a) Malachi 3:7
  - i) "Mine ordinances" in this verse means "My laws".
  - ii) God does not want your money; He wants you.
    - (1) He states in this verse, "Return unto Me."
- b) God loves us for ourselves.
  - i) He wants our fellowship.
  - ii) The gift without the giver is bare.
- c) What you do not joyfully, lovingly, and freely give, God neither needs nor wants.
  - i) Psalm 50:12
  - ii) 2 Corinthians 12:14
    - (1) "For I seek not yours but you."
- d) Before you give your money, you have to give yourself.
  - i) 2 Corinthians 8:5
  - ii) God is not raising money; God is growing Christians.
    - (1) He wants us to grow in grace and knowledge and to love Him.



- e) Malachi 3:7-8
  - i) One of the greatest signs that we have returned to God is in our finances, when we stop robbing God.
  - ii) The repentance that does not reach the pocketbook has really not reached the heart.
- f) Many people are in financial bondage and away from God because they've tried to put things first and God second.
  - i) Matthew 6:33
  - ii) No gift or tithing can please God if it does not come from a loving and surrendered heart.
  - iii) The point of return is always the point of departure.
    - (1) For many, the point of departure has been in the matter of stewardship.
- g) When we fail in stewardship:
  - i) We rob God.
  - ii) We rob the church.
  - iii) We rob missions.
  - iv) We rob the needy.
  - v) We rob ourselves.
    - (1) Tithing is God's way to enrich us.
- h) Matthew 22:21
  - i) Do you fear Caesar more than you fear God?
  - ii) Are you more careful with Caesar than you are with God?
- i) We don't really give the tithe; we return it.
  - i) It is already the Lord's.
  - ii) Leviticus 27:30
- j) Tithing is God's way to bless.
  - i) There's always a blessing when we give it.
  - ii) There's always a curse when we steal it.
  - iii) When a person robs God, he robs himself.
  - iv) God is not seeking our money; He is seeking us.

**3) THERE IS A FINANCIAL RELEASE (MALACHI 3:10)**

- a) Financial freedom begins by tithing.
- b) The tithe is a definite proportion.
  - i) The word "tithe" literally means "tenth."
    - (1) Genesis 28:22
  - ii) Some say that tithing is legalistic and puts us under the Old Testament law.
    - (1) Tithing began long before the Old Testament Mosaic law.
      - (a) The Bible tells of Abraham giving tithes to Melchizedek.
        - (i) Melchizedek is a type, a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ.
        - (ii) Abraham came centuries before Moses.
      - (b) Jacob, a descendent of Abraham, made a covenant with God to tithe before the Mosaic law was in existence.
        - (i) Genesis 28:22
  - iii) Matthew 23:23
    - (1) There is no competition between tithing and the New Testament.
      - (a) Abraham commenced it.
      - (b) Jacob continued it.



- (c) Moses commanded it.
    - (d) Jesus commended it.
    - (e) Who are we to cancel it?
  - iv) Some say that tithing is just a part of the law; that the people were commanded under the Old Testament law to tithe.
    - (1) They were also commanded under the law not to kill.
    - (2) There were commanded under the law not to commit adultery.
      - (a) Since that is Old Testament law, do we think that we're free to kill or to commit adultery?
      - (b) Romans 3:31
  - v) We don't tithe because we're under the law.
    - (1) Jesus never revised the law backward or downward.
      - (a) He never told us to do less than they did under the law.
      - (b) Any Christian who would let a Jew do more under the law than he would do under grace is a disgrace to grace.
        - (i) This doesn't put us in bondage; it gets us out of bondage.
    - (2) We don't make void the law; we establish the law.
- c) With the tithe, there is a designated place.
  - i) Malachi 3:10
    - (1) At the time when this verse was written, there was a place in the temple called the storehouse.
    - (2) The people brought their tithes to the storehouse so that there would be the necessities in order to make the sacrifices.
  - ii) We have a temple today.
    - (1) 1 Corinthians 3:17
      - (a) We are the temple of God.
    - (2) 1 Corinthians 16:2
      - (a) The word "in store" is the same word that is translated "storehouse" in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament).
  - iii) God's tithe is to be brought to God's house on God's day that God's work will be done in God's way.
- d) With the tithe, there is a definite purpose.
  - i) Malachi 3:10
    - (1) The work of the temple was to be carried out through the tithe.
  - ii) We can give offerings to other good projects, but we are to bring our tithe to our local church.
    - (1) We're to be faithful to God's family.
      - (a) Bring your love gifts to the church, also.

**4) THERE WILL BE A SPIRITUAL RENEWAL (MALACHI 3:10-12)**

- a) Malachi 3:10-12
  - i) This passage contains a three-fold blessing.
- b) God will renew your faith.
  - i) Malachi 3:10
    - (1) God says, "Prove Me. Put Me to the test."
  - ii) Your faith will begin to grow.



- iii) Luke 16:10-11
  - (1) This passage does not say, "He that is faithful or unjust in the least could be unjust in much."
    - (a) It says that he already is.
  - (2) True riches is not money, it is faith, love, spiritual power, and knowledge.
    - (a) If God cannot trust you with ten cents out of every dollar, why would He trust you with Holy Spirit power?
- c) God will rebuke your foes.
  - i) Malachi 3:11
    - (1) We all have foes, and we need God to rebuke them.
    - (2) Our crops will not wither in the field.
      - (a) In this day, the people were farmers.
  - ii) We all have foes:
    - (1) Hospital bills
    - (2) Car repairs
    - (3) Job loss
    - (4) Recession
    - (5) Depression
- d) God will restore your fruitfulness.
  - i) Malachi 3:11-12
    - (1) This does not mean that you will get rich if you start tithing.
    - (2) When you tithe, you will do more with nine-tenths and God as a partner than you would ever do with ten-tenths by yourself.
  - ii) Tithing is a key that unlocks the windows of Heaven.
  - iii) Offerings are a seed that bring a crop.
    - (1) If you sow bountifully, then you will reap bountifully.
  - iv) You will not out-give God.

## 5) CONCLUSION

- a) Mark 8:36
  - i) Are you saved?
  - ii) The most important thing is that you know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.
  - iii) Once you know Him, then you can trust Him in a way that He can open the windows of Heaven and bless you.
- b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- c) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16





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SERMON REFERENCE: Malachi 3:7-12

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Be finding Malachi chapter 3 if you would. That's the last book in the Old Testament; Malachi chapter 3. Keep it open in your hand because I want you to see that the message today is coming right from the pages of God's wonderful Word. We're talking about factors of faithfulness, and, today, how to obtain financial freedom through stewardship. How to obtain financial freedom.

You know, I watch the ads now. As a matter of fact, about the only thing worth watching on television anymore are the ads. Some of them are really wonderful. And I like the Corn Flakes ad, "Taste them again for the first time." Now many of us were raised on Corn Flakes, and what they're trying to say is, you need to discover Corn Flakes again. You remember, how many of you have seen that ad? Yeah, see. Boy, the, Madison Avenue knows how to do it. "Taste them again." Corn Flakes, "Taste them again for the first time."

Now the Scripture that I'm going to bring to you today is one that you've heard. If you've gone to church at any time, you've heard the Scripture that I'm going to share with you. And many of you are just going to kind of mentally check yourself out because you say, "Oh, I know that. Oh, I've heard that." All, I want you to hear it again like you've never heard it before. Hear it again for the first time. It's one of the most incredible promises in the Word of God.

And so listen as we read here in Malachi, beginning in verse 7 through verse 12, "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from Mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto Me," would you underscore that, "return unto Me, and I will return unto you," saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, "All right, Lord, "Wherein shall we return?" God answers an honest question. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, 'Wherein have we robbed Thee?'" God answers, "In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation." Hey, would you like to have a curse lifted off of you? Well, pay attention. "Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation." Now here's the command and the promise, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now," that is, "Put Me to the test." God has thrown a challenge in your lap this morning. "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 thee shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he will, 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. 'And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land,' saith the Lord of hosts."

Now we're going to talk today about stewardship. And stewardship is really how we obtain money, how we save money, how we invest money, how we spend money, and how we give money. And when I do that, I want to say that there're at least three that are very interested in what I have to say today.

Number one: **God is interested.** Do you know God over and over and over in the Bible talks about stewardship? Now why does God talk about stewardship? Come up here close and I want to tell you something. God does not need your money, okay. God is God. He owns everything. God is not interested in what you have. God is interested in who you are, and God wants you. And God wants to bless you. God wants to give to you. And over and over again in the Bible we see God dealing with the matter of our finances or our resources. Of the 38 parables that Jesus taught, 16 of them deal with stewardship.



As a matter of fact, about one out of every ten verses in the New Testament deal with this matter of stewardship. You take the verses in the New Testament that deal with faith, there are about 500 of them. Take the verses in the New Testament that deal with prayer, there are about 500 of them. Take the verses that deal with stewardship, there are over 2,000 of them. God is interested in our stewardship: how we acquire and use our money. As a matter of fact, one of the great tests of your spirituality and how much you love God and how much you believe the Word of God is stewardship.

Now I'll tell you someone else who's interested in your stewardship. Not only is God, but **Satan is very interested**, because Satan knows if he can defeat you in this way, if he can keep you in bondage, if he can keep you under a curse, he has you right where he wants you. I'm talking today about freedom. God has come to set you free. Many of you will see me today as trying to put you into some kind of a straitjacket. I'm trying to do just the opposite, to set you free: and not from my ideas, but from the Word of God.

Now what if you are cursed with a curse? What if you are in bondage? As a matter of fact, some economists have given us about eleven ways that we can know whether or not we're in financial bondage. You want to take the test? All right, listen, and just check these off mentally. Now don't do it where your neighbor can see it, but just mentally. Do you charge daily expenditures because you don't have enough money to pay for them? Number two: Do you put off paying a bill when it is due? Number three: Do you borrow to pay fixed expenses, like taxes and insurance? Next, does your debt requirement, the money that you owe long term, exceed 20% of your income? Next, are you unaware of how much you owe? Next, do you have creditors, people calling you, about past due bills? Next, do you borrow from savings to pay current bills? Next, are you making new loans to pay off old ones? Next, do you and your wife, or you and your husband ever argue about money? There was a perfect marriage, but for one feminine flaw; he was quick on the deposit, but she was faster on the draw. Do you ever argue about this? Next, do you ever even think about being dishonest with money? And here's the final one: Do you have difficulty bringing your tithe to God's house on God's day?

So many Americans today are up to their neck in debt. And somebody has described the average American as a person who drives a bank-financed car over a bond-financed highway with gasoline that he bought with a credit card. He's on his way to open a charge account at a department store so he can fill his house, that he owes the Savings and Loan for, with installment-purchased furniture. That's an American for you. We're buying things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't like. That's Americans for you. We're in financial bondage, so many of us. You say, "Well, I'm not in financial bondage. I've got plenty. I've got it salted away. I've got it stacked in a bank account somewhere. Man, if you could just see what I've got." You may have plenty and be in financial bondage. Rich people are in financial bondage when they try to find satisfaction in their money and can't do it. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 5 verse 10, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver." Someone asked J. D. Rockefeller, "How much was enough?" He said, "Just a little more."

You're in financial bondage if your money increases your worries. Proverbs 15 verse 6, "In the house of the righteous is much treasure, but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble." You're in financial bondage when you're a slave to your money, when your chief aim in life is to make money. You labor to be rich, then you're in difficulty because Proverbs 23 verse 4 says, "Labor not to be rich." I can tell you this: if your goal in life is to be rich, you are a miserable person. "Labor not to be rich." "Cease from thine own wisdom." Now the Bible never condemns riches. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 8 verse 18, "It's the Lord thy God that giveth thee power to get gain." The Bible is not against that. But when that is your goal, you are a miserable person because when you make it your goal to get money, money is going to get you.



Have you ever seen in the old time? I can remember when I was a little boy, they used to have a thing called fly paper. Now I don't know whether they still sell that or not. Do they still sell fly paper? It was a thing of sticky paper that came in a roll and you stuck it on the ceiling somewhere and it just kind of swirled down like that. And it had something that flies really liked, just an aroma that would attract flies, but it was real sticky. And the fly would light on it and he couldn't get loose. And, you know, that old fly would buzz around that thing and he'd be saying, "My paper, my paper, my paper." But then he'd light on it and the paper would say, "My fly, my fly, my fly." That's the way these people are going to get rich. First of all, they want to get the money, and then the money gets them.

You are in financial bondage if you have plenty in the bank but no treasure in Heaven. Proverbs 23 verse 5, "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not, for riches certainly make themselves wings. They fly away as an eagle toward Heaven." Money talks. It says, "Good-bye." It flies away.

Now, suppose you have plenty in the bank, but you don't know God? Suppose you have plenty in the bank and you're a miserly person and a miserable person? You have to feel sorry for a person like that. Jesus told about a man who had plenty in his barns. And he died. He said he had much goods laid up for many years. And God said in Luke 12:20, "You fool. This night your soul will be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Now, God is interested in your finances. Satan is interested in your finances because he wants to keep you in bondage. I'll tell you who else is interested. **You are.** Now don't tell me you're not. You are. I'm not talking today about how many angels can dance around on a head of a pin; I'm talking to you about something that's very vital because it takes money and finances to live, and it's a part of our normal life, and God knows it. Okay.

Now how are you going to obtain financial freedom? We're going to look in the Bible. Right out of the Bible, I'm going to give you three principles and I want you to see them. First of all, **you must personally return to God.** Look again in Malachi 3 verse 7, "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from Mine ordinances," that is, My laws, "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?" Now again, let me tell you this, God doesn't want your money; God wants you! Did you hear that? He is saying to you, "Come to Me. Return unto Me." God loves us for ourselves. God wants our fellowship. God does not need our money. And the gift without the giver is bare. What you do not joyfully, lovingly, freely give God neither needs nor wants. Got it? You're not doing God a wild favor. I mean, listen, God says in Psalm 50 verse 12, "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is Mine and the fullness thereof." You're not about to bail God out of bankruptcy. God loves us for ourselves. He says, "Return to Me." Second Corinthians 12 and verse 14, the apostle Paul says, "For I seek not yours, but you."

You know what the devil does? I said the devil's interested in your finances. The devil has some guy who's not saved and he just engineers that man to come about twice a year when Adrian preaches on tithing. And he'll get up and he'll go out and he'll begin to grouse and complain, and he'll say, "Money, money, money. That's all they ever talk about down there." That is a lie, and he knows it." And he says, "Well, he's just interested in my money." That is a lie! God loves you! "I seek not yours, but you." That's what the apostle Paul said. God is saying, "Return unto Me." Before you give your money, you've got to give yourself. Second Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 5, "They first gave their own selves to the Lord."

I've often used the story of a farmer who made his boys work in the cornfields a little harder than the other boys had to work. And sometimes the other boys would be playing baseball or down in the old swimming hole, and these boys would be out there in the cornfields. Someone said to the farmer,



he said, "You're working those boys too hard. Why don't you lighten up? You don't need all that corn." He said, "Mister, I'm not raising corn; I'm raising boys." You see, God is not raising money; God is growing Christians. God wants us to grow in the grace and knowledge and to love Him. So, first of all, there must be a personal return. And many of us say, "Well, Lord, if You want me to return, where shall I return?" Well, God says, "I'm glad you've asked." They say in Malachi chapter 3 and verses 7 and 8, "Wherein shall we return?" Well, God says, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, 'Wherein have we robbed Thee?'" And God's answer, "In tithes and offerings."

One of the greatest signs that you have returned to God is not the songs you sing, it's in your finances when you stop robbing God. The repentance that does not reach the pocketbook has really not reached the heart. You see, why are many people in financial bondage? And why are many people away from God? Because they've tried to put things first and God second! It never works that way, never works that way. One of the greatest promises in the New Testament is Matthew chapter 6 and verse 33. It says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and," what, "all these things will be added to you." Well, you say, "Well, I'll seek things first, and then if I have time, I'll seek God." But that's backward. That's backward. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." "Return unto Me." Come to God. "Return unto Me."

Now God wants you, not yours. And no gift and no tithing can please God if it does not come from a loving and a surrendered heart. And the point of return is always the point of departure. And for many, it's been in the matter of stewardship. When we fail in stewardship, we rob God. But not only do we rob God; we rob the church. Not only do we rob the church; we rob missions. Not only do we rob missions; we rob the needy. But let me tell you something, when you don't tithe, you rob you! Did that get in? You rob you! Tithing is not God's way to impoverish you. It's God's way to enrich you! Why don't we just return to God and do it God's way? You know what Jesus said? He said in Matthew 22 verse 21, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Now you know what's coming real soon? April 15th. Right? April 15 is coming real soon. And Caesar says, "Fill out that form. How much did you make? How much you got left? Send it." "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." Now most of you are going to be very careful to do that. Also, the Bible says, "Render to God the things that are God's." I want to ask you a question: do you fear Caesar more than you fear God? I mean, are you more careful with Caesar than you are with God? You see, we don't really give the tithe; we return it. It's already the Lord's. Put this in your margin, Leviticus chapter 27 and verse 30, "All the tithe of the land, whether it be of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, it is the Lord's. It is holy unto the Lord." It'd be better to rob a bank, in my estimation, than to rob God. Tithing is God's way to bless. Look up here, there's always a blessing when we give it; always a curse when we steal it. Always a blessing when we give it; always a curse when we steal it. Will a man rob God? When he robs God, he robs himself. So here's the first point: I want the Holy Spirit to rivet it in your heart. There must be a personal return to the Lord. Again, God is not seeking your money; He is seeking you.

Now when there is a personal return, **there is a financial release**. Look, if you will, in Malachi 3 verse 10, "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat," that literally means food, "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, there shall not be room enough to receive it.'" Now there are a lot of ways that people can talk about financial freedom, but you'll never jump over this: you begin by tithing. You begin to tithe.

Now, first of all, what is the tithe? Well, **it is a definite proposition**. The word tithe literally means tenth. Genesis 28 verse 22, Jacob said, "And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." Now I know that I know that



I know what's happening in the minds of many of you right out there. You're saying, "Wait a minute, pastor. You're trying to put me back in the Old Testament. You're trying to put me under the Old Testament law. Pastor, don't you understand that tithing is legalistic?" Let me tell you something now. Tithing began far before the Mosaic Law. The Bible tells of Abraham giving tithes to Melchizedek. And Melchizedek is a type, a picture, of the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham came centuries before Moses saw the light of day. And then Jacob, a descendant of Abraham, is the one that I just read to you about. Out there in the wilderness, seeking God, made a covenant with God way before the Mosaic Law to tithe, Genesis 28 and verse 22.

And after the Mosaic Law, in the New Testament, Jesus said in Matthew 23 verse 23 to the scribes and the Pharisees, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law: judgment, mercy, and faith. These ought ye to have done to tithe and not leave the other undone." There's no competition between tithing and New Testament. You ought to tithe, but don't leave off judgment, mercy, and faith. You see, friend, Abraham commenced it. Jacob continued it. Moses commanded it. Jesus commended it. Who am I to cancel it? Well, you say, "But that's a part of the Law. They were commanded unto the Law to tithe." They were also commanded under the Law not to kill. They were also commanded under the Law not to commit adultery. Now, since that's Old Testament Law, do you think you're free to kill? Do you think you're free to commit adultery? Listen, Romans 3 verse 31 put this in your Bible, "Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid. We establish the law." Hello! Listen, Romans 3 verse 31, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." You say, "I don't understand what that means."

Well, I have raised four wonderful children, and it's been my joy to feed them and care for them. Do you think I fed my children because the law said I had to? No! Because I'd get arrested for child abuse and neglect if I didn't feed my children? Of course not! Why do I feed my children? Why did I clothe my children? Because I love them! But now, suppose I decide well, I'm not going to do it. Standing in the wings is the law. You understand what I mean? We don't do it because we're under law. I have said this so many times, and see if you don't agree with me. Jesus never revised the law backward, downward, and said, "Now you do less than they did." He never did that. Any Christian who would let a Jew do more under law than he would do under grace is a disgrace to grace! I'm not trying to put you in bondage; I'm trying to get you out of bondage! We don't make void the law; we establish the law. There's a definite proportion.

And not only is there a definite proposition, **there's a designated place**. What do you do with your tithe? Well, according to this verse, look at it in Malachi 3 verse 10, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house." Well, you say, "Well, what does that mean?" Well, when this verse was written, it was a place in the temple. They had a place in the temple called the storehouse and there the people brought their tithes, that there would be the necessities to make the sacrifices, and so forth, in the Old Testament. Well, you say, "We don't have a temple today." Wrong again. We do have a temple today. First Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 17, God said to the church at Corinth, "Ye are the temple of God. Ye are the temple of God." And then He said in First Corinthians chapter 16 and verse 2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store according as God hath prospered him." And the word in store is the same word that is translated storehouse in the Septuagint, or the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

There was a definite proportion, a designated place. God's tithe is to be brought to God's house on God's day that God's work will be done in God's way. A definite proportion. A designed place. And **a definite purpose**. "That there may be meat in Mine house." The work of the temple was to be carried out through the tithe.



Now you can give offerings to other good projects, and I do and I know that you do, to many other projects. And Joyce and I give to help feed Russian orphans. We help support some little children in Brazil. We have adopted and are sending a girl through school in Romania. And we give to Billy Graham. And we give to Josh McDowell. And we give to other things, Focus, and so forth. But we bring our tithe to Bellevue every Sunday, here. And we've done that since we've been married and did it before I was married when, of every dime since I learned about tithing. I made, I returned it to God, and I'm so glad I did! I believe in the local church. I believe the Bible says in Ephesians 3:21, "To Him be glory through the church." We're to be faithful to God's family. Bring the tithe to God's house on God's day that God's work will be done in God's way.

Now, you give offerings to other projects; bring your tithe to the church. And then bring your love gifts to the church also. Do you know what somebody came up with these statistics: that if every member of the average church were on welfare and tithed, the offerings in that church would double. Don't you think that's a disgrace? If every member in the average church were on welfare and they all tithed, the income of those churches would double. We need to be faithful in our finances.

Now here's a third thing and I must be very quick about this. There must be a personal return. There must be a financial release. And then **there will be a spiritual renewal**. Look again, if you will, in Malachi 3 verse 10 through 12 and see what God says. Here's the promise, "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. 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. 'And all nations shall call you blessed.'"

Here's the three-fold blessing. Number one: **God will renew your faith**. God says, "Prove Me! Put Me to the test!" Your faith will begin to grow. You say, "Well, pastor, I want faith." Do you want faith? Would you like for God to be real to you? God says, "All right, you put Me to the test. Prove Me." Let me give you one of the most insightful Scriptures in all of the Bible. Put this in the margin, Luke 16 verses 10 and 11. Listen, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." It doesn't say he could be; he already is. But then he says in Luke 16 verse 11, "If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon," that's just money, that's another word of money. "If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" What are the true riches? Not money; faith, love, spiritual power, knowledge. I mean, if God can't trust you with ten cents out of a dollar, what makes you think He can trust you with Holy Spirit power? I mean, if you haven't been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will give to you, as a steward, the true riches? Number one: God will renew your faith. "Prove Me," He says.

Number two: **God will rebuke your foes**. Look, if you will, in Malachi 3 verse 11, "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sake." We all have foes. Many of us have foes, and we need God to rebuke them. In this day, they were farmers. And so he said, "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." Your crops are not going to wither in the field." Well, you say, "I'm not a farmer." Yeah, but you've got foes: hospital bills, car repairs, the loss of job, recession, depression, all of these things, they are your enemies. And God says, "I'll come against those enemies with you. I will renew your faith. I'll rebuke your foes."

And **I will restore your fruitfulness**. Look again in verse 11 and 12. And He says, "Neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field,' saith the Lord. 'And all nations shall call you blessed; and



ye shall be a delightsome land.” Do you know what you say, “Pastor, you mean to tell me if I start tithing I’ll get rich?” No, I don’t mean to tell you that, and I never will tell you that. It may not be God’s plan for you to be rich. But I’ll tell you this, and I believe it with all of my heart: When you tithe, you’ll do more with nine-tenths and God as a partner than you will ever do with ten-tenths by yourself. That I believe. God will restore your fruitfulness.

You say, “But Pastor, I’m poor, I know you’re talking to the wealthy people, but you’re not talking to the poor people today. Would you tell a little widow on a pension that she ought to tithe?” Of course! You say, “Well, you’re so hard-hearted.” No, I’m not! I’m sweet. If there’s anybody who needs the blessing of God, it’s that little widow on a pension, isn’t that right? God doesn’t want her money; He wants her. He wants to bless her. He says, “Come now and trust Me. Prove Me!” Listen, tithing is a key, it unlocks the windows of Heaven. Offerings are seed, they bring a crop. You sow bountifully; you’ll reap bountifully. You see, put them together. You rob God in tithes and offerings. You pay the tithe; you give the offering. The tithe is the key; the offering is the seed. And learn to do it God’s way. You’re not going to out-give God. You’re not going to get God in debt to you. Oh, I’ve got to quit, but I wish I had more time to tell you all of these wonderful, wonderful things.

I have visited Pompeii. If you ever go to Naples, you need to go to Pompeii and see the ruins of that magnificent civilization. And it was buried under volcanic ash when Mount Vesuvius erupted so many years ago back in the biblical times. And there in Pompeii you can see the body of a man that’d been encased in ashes. He’s on the floor of a magnificent home. And just off of his fingertips is a bag. It was a bag of gold. And he’s reaching for that bag. The ashes are falling all around him. And in seeking to gain that gold, he lost his life.

Jesus said in Mark 8:36, “What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his soul?” Are you saved? I want to say one more thing to you, and please listen to me. If you think I wanted you here this morning so I could twist your arm into giving, you missed it by light years. I want you to know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord. And once you know Him, I want you to trust Him in such a way that He can open the windows of Heaven on your head and bless you.

Bow your heads in prayer. While heads are bowed and eyes are closed, if you don’t know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, I want to invite you to pray a prayer like this right now, “Dear God.” Just speak to Him. “Dear God, I know that You love me, and I know that You want to save me, and I need to be saved. My sins deserve judgment. I need forgiveness. I need cleansing. I want a place in Heaven. I want power in my life. Jesus, thank You for dying for my sins on the cross. Thank You for paying my sin debt. I now trust You as my Lord and Savior. Come into my heart, into my life now. Receive me, Lord. Save me, Lord.” Just pray that. “Save me, Lord Jesus.” The Bible says, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Pray it, say it, and mean it. “Save me, Lord Jesus, save me.”

Did you ask Him? Then by faith pray this way, “Thank You for saving me. I receive it by faith and that settles it. You’re now my Lord, my Savior, my God, and my Friend. And, Lord Jesus, if You’ll just give me the strength today, I’ll make it public. I’ll not be ashamed of You. You died for me. I’ll confess You as my Lord and Savior. Just give me the strength, Lord Jesus, to do it. In Your name I pray, Amen.”



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