

Malachi 3.6-15

More than All we Ask or Imagine

Best know Section of Malachi > MONEY gets our ATTENTION

Who wants be Millionaire? / over 120 countries / more 80 languages

Christianity spread Middle Ages > Barbarians in Europe heard GOSPEL

Baptized Warriors > RIGHT HAND held out of Water > SWORD Hand

THOUGHT: Keep on Killing and Plundering > Hand belongs to ME!

Today Xtians > Hold their Wallets > Out of WATER TODAY!

Theme Not Money > God's Faithfulness > Tithing: Illust. of Teaching

1. Faithless Followers

2. Faithful God

Twin Towers of the Old Testament > Banner over Book of Malachi

1. Faithless Followers

a. Past : Turned from God v. 7 "From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them"

1000 yrs before Moses WARNED > Unfaithful to Covenant > EXILED

Longsuffering & Mercy of God reached LIMIT > Babylonians Came

1. City Destroyed / 2. Temple Leveled / 3. Population Exiled

Faithfulness of God: He would not let them go, Brought back to Jerusalem

Nehemiah's LEADERSHIP > City Walls Rebuilt

Haggai's PREACHING > Temple was RECONSTRUCTED

Ezra's PRIESTHOOD > Worship and SACRIFICES RESUMED

NEW OPPORTUNITY > Same Rebellious OLD COVENANT Hearts

Covenant GOD: Stay on this course, you'll bring Judgment on selves

b. Present: Robbed God v. 8 "Will man rob God? Yet U R robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions"

Israel RETURNED from Exile: Rebuilt God's Altar, Lazy about Sacrifices

1.8 'When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts'

Gave Good?? EXCUSE for Cutting Back on Giving to God:

God NOT Helping, Prayers Not Answered, Sacrifices Ignored, Unjust!

Call Moratorium on Giving> STOP PAYMENT on their CHECK

“ROB GOD” > Steal from His Worship, Workers, and Widows

Gov. Nehemiah / contemporary of Malachi / Tithes were Mismatched

13.10-13 I found out that the portions of the Levites had not been given to them, so that the Levites and the singers...had fled each to his field. (to get food!) So I confronted the officials and said, “Why is the house of God forsaken?” And I gathered them together and set them in their stations. Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain, wine, and oil into the storehouses. And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouses...for they were considered reliable, and their duty was to distribute to their brothers.

Fail to Give > Justified because of Crop Failure, Drought, Pestilence

Few DECADES before Malachi > Haggai 1.6-11 You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes...You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. **Why? declares the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house.** Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors.”

Natural Disasters NOT Cause of Nation’s Disobedience > Cursed Result

Some People can ALWAYS find a REASON NOT to GIVE to GOD

Not a Good Day, Week, Month, Year > NEVER A GOOD TIME

GROWING GRIP of MATERIALISM > CHAINS ON US?

1. DISCOVERY: “I just found about it, now I cannot live without it!”

2. DESIRE: “I gotta have it now!” STAND IN LINE and PAY TWICE AS MUCH >

Be First to See this Movie!

3. DEJECTION: “I can no longer live with this OLD THING!”

3 VERY RICH AMERICANS whom MANY PEOPLE ENVIED –

John D. Rockefeller: "I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness"

Cornelius Vanderbilt: "The care of millions is too great a load... there is no pleasure in it."

John Jacob Astor: Called himself "the most miserable man on earth."

FORSAKING GOD'S AUTHORITY > Not Freedom but Foolishness

First Year Univ. Student > Free from Parental Authority

"I am so free, I have not brushed my teeth for a week!"

v. 9 U R cursed w a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you

Not just Withholding TITHE from God > Holding back VERY SELVES

vs. 13-15 "Your words have been hard against me, says the Lord. But you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evil-doers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.'"

Underlying DISCONTENT in Israel > GOD LET THEM DOWN

Never mind that their RELIGION had become EMPTY RITUAL

Never mind Marriage Covenant BROKEN thru Divorce & Remarriage

Never mind POOR, ALIEN, WIDOW, ORPHAN Ignored or Oppressed

c. Future: Cursed by God v 9 "You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you"

CURSE > Power to Effect Future // FEARSOME POWER

Reason that King Balak sought our Prophet Balaam > Curse God's People

City of Jericho destroyed by God: CURSED is anyone tries to REBUILD

Deuteronomy: "Moses ...recite to all the people of Israel in a loud voice: "Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!" Deuteronomy 27.1-26

Met many in AFRICA: "how'd UR brother die?" > Cursed by Someone

Young Man/Houseboy ODIPIO – Bro Died Stepped on Curse @ Door

v. 5 "Then I will draw near to you for judgment... against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

People DID MANY THINGS WRONG > WHY this Sin Brings Curse?

Tithe = Tenth: Ancient: ABE to Melchizedek / Jacob promised at Bethel

Offering: Part of Sacrifice for Priests / Voluntary: Gift for Special Purpose

One TENTH of crops and livestock go TO TEMPLE. WHY?

God's COMMAND / PROVIDE for the WORK of TEMPLE

MEET NEEDS of the POOR / SIGN of TOAL DEPENDENCE on God

> ACKNOWLEDGE Everything WE HAVE BELONGS to God

Act of Faith in God the Provider > All BLESSINGS > Now and Future

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” 2 Corinthians 9.6-8

Robert Thompson “Keeping what belongs to God makes us lose. No one ever lost anything by serving God with a whole heart, nor gained anything by serving him with a half a heart. If we want God’s blessings from His resources, then we must open ours.”

2. Faithful God

a. Constant v. 6 ““For I the Lord do not change”

God’s Response to Unfaithful: “I have not changed” God Cannot Change

Change > Something gets Better or Worse > IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD

Better? Then NOT Perfect, then NOT GOD > Sum of All Perfections

WORSE? Then BECOME IMPERFECT, which God CAN NEVER BE

Even IMPOSTER like Balaam to Balak: “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind.” Numbers 23.19

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” James 1.17

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” Hebrews 13.8

v. 6 “...therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed”

Not Changed > Not Consumed > Faithful to His Covenant and Character

Awesome Request > Moses asks SEE GOD > Hidden in Cleft of Rock

“The LORD came down in the cloud & stood there with him and proclaimed his name, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate & gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, & forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished" Exodus 34.5-8

“SLOW TO ANGER” > thus, Not Consumed > 1000 years of Mercy

Just Back Side of God! > Saw MORE GLORY on Mt. Transfiguration

Face of God in Jesus Christ: ETERNITY OF GRACE IN JESUS

“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” Colossians 3.4

b. Compassionate v. 7 “Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts”

God Never Changes: Justice, Holiness, Truth, Knowledge, Sovereignty

Emphasis on Mercy Unchanging 1.2 “I have loved you” > > Return!

Unchanging Mercy: “So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed”

GOD’S UNCHANGEABLENESS gives us a CHANCE TO CHANGE

“Come near to God and he will come near to you.” James 4.8

HOW? SOME SAY MUST “Come Forward” in Church

Separate ACTS: Salvation & Coming Forward > Not Always Go Together

SALVATION is GIFT > We do nothing to EARN or even to PROVE IT

God hears Prayers from Back of Hall & Front > Public & Private Prayer

Salvation Received Any TIME ANYWHERE > No Need Wait for Sunday

Theology of American Church > Bumper Stickers > Slogans of Faith

ONE CAR: “If you Love Jesus, Honk your Horn!”

ANOTHER CAR: “If you Love Jesus – TITHE – Anybody can Honk!”

c. Command v. 10 “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse”

PARENTS > Sometimes Children wear you down > “Go to Bed!”

Crying, Demanding, Arguing, Comparing, Complaining, More Crying

Parent “Oh its like that? Then U can stay up all night long!” give OSCAR

OR Parent > “Make as much fuss as you want, you are going to bed!”

GOD like 2nd PARENT > Love Unchanging and Law Unchanging

v 10 “Bring full tithe into storehouse, that there may be food in my house”

STOREHOUSE – THEN > Reserves for Priests and the Poor

TODAY > God’s Primary Instrument to Bless the World is His Church

1. We Sometimes Boycott Church, Giving Directly to what we think Best
2. COMMITMENT to do ministry REQUIRES FINANCES
3. INFORM the Church > Maybe we are all missing the mark
4. Refined by Church > Consensus of Wisdom may IMPROVE GIVING

Uganda 1980’s: Many Requests > Desperate > Collapsed, Civil War

SOME seemed NEEDY > Not Honest > SILENT ONES Greatest Need

MOST IMPT ask Local Pastors & Leaders > Knew own people BEST

GAVE > thru Church > Anonymously > Link to CHURCH, Not Us!

New Testament > Old Testament REQUIREMENTS are INCREASED

If Israel gave 10% in a Covenant ratified w the blood of animals, shall we do less when we belong to New Covenant, redeemed by Blood of Christ? > 100% BELONGS TO GOD

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colos 3.17 - TREASURE, TIME, TALENTS, TISSUE

JAMES BOICE “So long as we are thinking legalistically in terms of financial percentages and portions of our time we will be exactly like the self-righteous sinners of Malachi’s day. We will do little and think it much. We will resent God who, in our judgment, should do more for us. On the other hand, if we give God ourselves as living sacrifices, then the most we give will seem to be little and we will be overwhelmed that God is willing to use us in His service.”

Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20.35

d. Challenge v. 10 “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”

TEST > Four Parts

1. Obedience “bring the tithe into the storehouse” (home church?)
2. Challenge “test me in this” /
3. Promise “see what I will do...”
4. Result “God will be praised by the nations”

v 12 "Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight,
says the Lord of hosts”

God always has GLOBAL FOCUS > Nations He created will Give Praise

ISRAEL Gazing at “belly button” / God’s gaze Global, Galactical

Need Copernican Revolution > God, NOT US, is Center of Universe

Promise to Israel > Apply to us? Yes, if we are believers in Jesus. Why?

“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ.” 2 Corinthians 1.20

Strange: What we don’t want to do > Draw Near to God > Source of Life

What we don’t want to do > Tithe > Source of Blessing

GOD’S GIFTS 4 GIVING “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”
Luke 6.38

SIMPLE: “Give God your heart, and He will manage your money”

Afraid to Put God to Test? Take Him at His Word? Maybe He will Fail??

GOD INVITES THE TEST > Let Him be your Certified Financial Planner

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”
Ephesians 3.20,21

Psalms 89.1-18 // I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord forever; // **with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.** // For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up forever; // **in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness.**” // You have said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; // **I have sworn to David my servant:** // ‘I will establish your offspring forever, // **and build your throne for all generations.**’” // Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, // **your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!** // For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord? // **Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord,** // a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, // **and awesome above all who are around him?** // O Lord God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O Lord, with your faithfulness all around you? // **You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them.** // You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm. // **The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it, you have founded them.** // The north and the south, you have created them; Tabor and Hermon joyously praise your name. // **You have a mighty arm; strong is your hand, high your right hand.** // Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you. // **Blessed are the people who know the festal shout,** // who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face, // **who exult in your name all the day** // and in your righteousness are exalted. // **For you are the glory of their strength;** // by your favor our horn is exalted. // **For our shield belongs to the Lord, our king to the Holy One of Israel. Amen and Amen.**