

God Are You Really There? - Part 7

Sunday, August 20, 2023

For several weeks we have been making our way through the book of Malachi with this theme in mind - God, are you really there? While they continued to call themselves the people of God and while they continued to go through the motions of spiritual worship and activity, Each message from God exposes the people's true heart condition. They no longer believed whole-heartedly in the reality of God's existence and presence in their lives.

"YOU HAVE LOST YOUR WAY" - An overview of God's Messages in the book of Malachi that expose the condition of the people's heart and relationship with God.

"I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED YOU" - Malachi 1:1-5

"YOU ARE NOT LOVING ME" - Malachi 1:6-14

"LISTEN" - Malachi 2:1-9

YOU HAVE BEEN UNFAITHFUL TO ME - Malachi 2:10-17

REPENT AND RETURN - Malachi 3:1-7

Each message from the Lord calls upon them to recognize their lack of faith in Him, repent of their actions, and return to Him. Let's continue our journey as we look at God's next message to the people - and to us.

To Tithe or Not to Tithe?

Malachi 3:8-12

8 "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?'

"In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe," says the Lord Almighty. 12 "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty.

Once again, we must resist the temptation to believe that this has nothing to do with us. Many have done a great disservice to God's Word by relegating the practice of Tithing to and Old Testament concept. And yet Tithing's and Offerings have just as much to do with our faith in the New Testament as it did in Malachi's day.

Jesus commended that act of giving both of the tithe and of sacrificial offerings above the tithe...

Matthew 23:23

23 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.”

Mark 12:41-44

41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

Paul taught the church to continue its practice...

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

16 Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

2 Corinthians 8:7

7 But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you[a]—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

I like what [Vines Expository Bible Notes](#) says about Malachi 3:8-10...

The Tithe

“Will a man rob God?” (3:8). That is an amazing question. How can anyone rob God? God says we have robbed Him in tithes and offerings.

When you get that paycheck that you get every week or every two weeks, what do you see? If that paycheck is yours, then you are free to do whatever you want with it. However, if you realize that it doesn't really belong to you, but it belongs to God who has entrusted it to you to be faithful in your stewardship of it, then that changes altogether how you look at it.

God says, “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse” (3:10). This is an Old Testament command. Tithing began with Abraham when he committed a tenth of all he had to the Lord ([Gen. 14:20](#)). Then Jacob consecrated a tenth of his possessions to the Lord ([Gen. 28:22](#)). Moses codified it ([Lev. 27](#)).

Leviticus 27:30

30 “A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.

Here, Malachi commands it.

In the New Testament, we read that Jesus commended it ([Matt. 23:23](#)). Then we see that the apostle Paul continued it ([1 Cor. 16:2](#)). The New Testament has no direct command concerning the tithe, and believers are not under the law but under grace. But for a believer under grace to give less to the Lord than a Jew would give under the law is inconceivable. In fact, tithing is the first step of giving in the life of a believer. Every believer should begin with the tenth. Most believers should go beyond the tenth. Giving of the tithe reminds you of all that God has given you.

The tithe is the initiation of our giving to God and of our experience of His blessings but we are not limited to it. We have unlimited opportunity to go beyond tithing and experience even more blessings of God. We give, He blesses. We give, He blesses. Now don't try to reduce this to some kind of formulary... It may not be a check in the mail or even a monetary blessing, but you will be blessed - *exceedingly abundantly more than we can ask or imagine* (Ephesians 3:20)

But let's back up to our Key Text and look at three principles that God exposes concerning their hearts toward Him and how those principles can be developed and strengthened in our lives through the practice of Tithes and Offerings

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FAITH

The first principle is that of FAITH (or in the case of the people of Malachi's day, their lack of Faith)

Hebrews 11 tells us what faith is..

Hebrews 11:1-6

11 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Giving of Tithes and Offerings exposes our faith in God, but it also develops it. We give because we have faith that God exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek him. We give because we are confident in what God has said and we believe that He will bless us when we give in faith.

It is faith that leads us to believe that 90% can go farther than 100%. It is faith that causes us to give sacrificially, like the widow that Jesus observed, believing that God is faithful to His word to *“throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”*

A story from the life of Peter illustrates the kind of faith we need...

Matthew 14:22-33

22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

29 "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

- Faith is based upon Jesus' Word
- Faith steps out of the boat
- Faith keeps going despite the circumstances
- Faith is supported by Jesus
- Faith is rewarded

TRUST

The second principle that must be exercised in giving is TRUST

- Peter stepped out of the boat because he trusted Jesus
- Do you trust that God will be true to His word?

Luke 5:1-7

1 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret,^[a] the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. 2 He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

5 Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

- Richard's testimony,
- Kerry Mauldin's Testimony

Jan last year we had no clue how to get funds to (the field where they work) as chaos in world was everywhere. (They haven't been able to travel their physically for three years due to covid restrictions)

An AG pastor called and shared God spoke to his heart to send money to (this field) for Bibles.

"Can I send money thru you?"

I said yes, but had no clue how to do.

12 hours later a brother from (that region) East called to tell me he had a friend in (this particular country) that printed Bibles and would give at good price. "Do you know anyone (there) that needs Bibles?"

That day we sent hundreds of Bibles

I asked the Brother how we could get money into the country for churches and wells.

He said he'd get back with me.

2 days later he called and said I could deposit money in the company that he did business with that did business in both countries. "Take \$15,000 and deposit and share where to distribute."

We did as a test.... We drilled 287 wells and 192 churches!

The brother gave a tithe on top of every church and well. (to help with cost of exchange rate losses)

This year he called—

"All the years I've done import and export, last year I made double the profit I've ever made"

"We are going to do more churches and wells this year?"

We are on pace to do more than last year. Best year we ever had in 27 years. 1896 churches and 1444 wells given!!

OBEDIENCE

- Test me in this
- You have to step out of the boat
- You have to cast the net on the other side
- Jacob at Bethel

Genesis 28:10-22

10 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. 11 When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. 12 He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 There above it stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.” 17 He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.”

18 Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. 19 He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz.

20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear 21 so that I return safely to my father’s household, then the Lord will be my God 22 and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God’s house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.”