

Why God Blesses the Tithe

I. Where is Your Trust

I Timothy 6:17-19:

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

This verse is not saying having riches is wrong, but putting your trust in them is wrong. God gives us richly all things to enjoy, but we are to always keep our trust in Him and not in uncertain riches. The wealth of this world is based on the economy of this world, which is constantly fluctuating. But we serve a God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He never changes!

II. God Desires to Work *With* You

One of the first ways we enter into God's plan is through the tithe. God desires to use seed to bless us. Of course, God could choose to work outside that plan, and has many times throughout the Word of God. He rained down manna from heaven. He sent quail. But this was not His best nor his desire. After the children of Israel reached the promised land of Canaan, God's desire was for them to use the principle of seedtime and harvest. After forty years in the wilderness and upon entering the promised land, the manna ceased and the people began to live off the produce of the land. This was God's best. Instead of working *for* the children of Israel He worked *with* the children of Israel.

Rather than God doing all the work for you, His desire is to work with you. We share in God's plan and the entry level of walking in His plan is to give tithes to the Lord.

III. Majoring on Money

Matthew 23:23:

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, and not to leave the other undone.

Although teaching on the area of tithing is important, it should not be the predominant teaching in a church. God's judgment, mercy, and faith are equally important to teach.

Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees, "You are so focused on the tithe that people are being required to pay tithes on mint, anise, and cummin—spices!"

Can you imagine your pastor asking you to bring a tithe of your cinnamon to church or a tithe of ten percent of your salt? I'm sure you would think your pastor had gone too far!

If a minister majors in one area of the Word of God, the result is things begin to become petty and the focus is on areas of the daily Christian life that do not matter.

There needs to be balance in the teaching of the Word of God!

IV. God Ultimately Prospers

Jesus confronted the scribes and Pharisees, not only because they majored on teaching about the tithe, but also because they were money hungry. The motivation behind their teaching was money.

Pastors should desire that their congregations tithe out of obedience to the Word, but they should never focus on the congregation as their source. Although God uses people as instruments of His blessing, He is ultimately the One through Whom prosperity comes. The Bible does not say, "Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from the congregational member." It says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). When God gives, He gives through the hands of men. And when we give back to God, we give through the hands of men. Again, finances come from God even though it is distributed through the hands of men. People are the agents through which finances flow back into the kingdom of God.

The scribes and Pharisees were looking to people as their source. They used every scheme they could to extract money from the people. Unfortunately, there are still people today who use schemes to get money out of the body of Christ. Our giving must be motivated out of a love for God and because we want to see people blessed and set free.

One of the reasons Jesus went to the cross was for God to bring finances into our lives. But the main reason for the cross was for people. Jesus died to redeem people from sin and sickness. Even though Jesus became poor that we, through His poverty, might be rich (2 Corinthians 8:9), the Bible does not say, “For God so loved money that He gave His only begotten Son.” It was because of His great love for people in the world that Jesus went to the cross.

V. Israel Departs from the Truth of God’s Word

There were two cases in the Word of God where the people of Israel had departed from the truth of God’s Word. In both cases, in returning to the Lord they were admonished to begin with the giving of the tithe. When they were released from Babylonian captivity, they built the foundation of the temple. That foundation represented the foundation of their life. Before the temple could go up, they had to have their foundation right. The people were admonished at that time to bring the tithe.

In Malachi, the people were once again admonished about the tithe.

Malachi 3:7-11:

Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, 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?

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

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.

Notice, the people asked, “How do we return to You, God?” God’s response was, “By the simple act of tithing. When you give of your tithe, I can use what you have given to begin to bless your natural life.”

VI. A Heart Turned Back Toward God

Natural blessings and curses usually begin with spiritual things. A person's heart attitude toward the Lord can determine poverty or prosperity. It all has to do with your heart attitude. In this passage from Malachi, God is saying, "If you want to show Me your heart is turned back toward Me, begin with something simple. Bring to me the tithes."

God said, "You have robbed Me." I used to wonder to myself "How I could rob God. If God owns everything, how can I possibly rob God? He owns the money in my pocket? The Bible says God owns the earth, the cattle on a thousand hills, and the gold and silver. So how could I possibly rob God?"

We have been made stewards over God's finances, from Genesis to Revelations. We were born without anything and we will die without anything. The only time we will need finances is during our time on earth. Once we leave, we will no longer need money.

VII. How Do We Rob God?

The first way we can rob God is by denying Him the ability to bless us. His heart's desire is to bless us. That is the reason He in essence says, "I can't do anything until you start by giving of the tithe. I could circumvent My Word and do a supernatural miracle in your life, but I choose not to do it that way. Instead, I desire simple obedience." The Bible tells us if we will be willing and obedient, we will eat the good of the land. It also tells us that no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly before Him.

When we choose to operate in simple obedience to tithe, God promises to open up the windows of heaven to pour out a blessing we cannot contain. When we choose not to tithe, it robs God of the opportunity to bless us. Probably all of us can relate to a prideful person who will not allow you to bless them. It robs us of the joy of blessing another person.

God's desire is for us to trust in Him. If we will trust Him enough to give Him some seed to work with, the channel is opened to blessing even greater than you can contain!

Tithing is an act of obedience and an act of love toward God. Tithing is *not* an attempt to buy God off. Tithing does not box God into a corner and force Him to bless us. He blesses us because of the attitude of our heart. Returning to God begins in the heart with an action that follows. Despite the world economy, despite Wall Street, despite First National

Bank, despite the world economy, God can bless us because His economy is not the economy of this world. He blesses us according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

VIII. What Has Not Changed

I Corinthians 9:13:

Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

In this verse we have the priests and the Levites. These were two ranks of ministers used by God. Both were from the priestly tribe, but the priests operated within the holy place and within the Holy of Holies. The Levites were the ones who ministered around the altar. They were assigned to take up the sacrifices. They cut up the sacrifices, did all the work, and then passed the sacrifice on to the priests who offered up the sacrifice to God.

We are no longer under the law. No longer do you have to bring a heifer or sheep or turtledove to church. And no longer does a pastor have to sacrifice these animals.

Back in the days of the priests and Levites, these ministers lived off of the sacrifices that were brought to them. After it was sacrificed and offered to God, the heifer fed the ministers. When a grain offering or any other offering was brought to the priests and Levites, after they were offered, the ministers lived off of them.

I Corinthians 9:14:

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

This verse is saying that one thing has not changed. No longer do we bring heifers to church to be sacrificed. Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice. What has not changed from the Old to the New Testaments is that ministers still live off of what the people bring into the church.

There are many pastors who must work a secular job because the church is too small to support them. The majority of these pastors are believing God for the time when they have a church large enough to support them full time.

IX. I'll Bless Those Who Bless You

Believers need to understand that to rob the pastor of their local church of the tithe is to rob God. Jesus said, "I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). When a believer robs the church by withholding the tithe, they are robbing God. God said to Abraham, "I will bless those that bless you." The reason God said this is because in blessing Abraham, whoever blessed him was blessing God! The same principle applied when Abraham gave to Melchizedek. In giving to Melchizedek, Abraham was really giving to God.

Hebrews 7:8 says, "And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth." Jesus does not receive the money we give because He would have no use for it. But this verse is saying men and women who represent the gospel receive what is given. To rob the men and women who represent the gospel is to rob God.

When a person willingly gives of their tithes to the Lord, when they willingly give, knowing they are actually giving to ministers who represent the gospel, not only do they bless the ministry, they bless God. The Bible says even when a cup of water is given with a giving heart the giver will be rewarded. God ordained for ministers on earth to live off the tithes and offerings that are given in the church. Again, to bless God's ministers is to bless God Himself!

X. The Firstfruits

I Corinthians 16:1-2:

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Paul is saying in these verses, when your prosperity comes, lay it aside and then bring it to church on the first day of the week and give it in the collection. We should come to church prepared to give. How often do people come to church and say, "Oh, I forgot my checkbook"? These verses are saying, when prosperity comes, we should automatically have the mentality that we are going to set it aside to give in the offering at church.

Verse 2 says, "...as God has prospered." God has prospered and blessed our lives financially.

When God blessed us financially, rather than automatically thinking about giving the tithe, it is often a temptation to think, "Boy, I sure could use that extra money to pay some bills!" But we must renew our minds to automatically think, "Praise God! He has blessed me with extra finances, I can give more into the kingdom of God!"

Proverbs 3:9-10:

Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

These verses are teaching us to give the firstfruits of all of our increase to the Lord. God's desire is to bless His people, even when the world economy is unstable. God's desire is to fill you with plenty and for your presses to burst forth with new wine. Give God the firstfruits and in so doing, God is able to bless you far above all you can ask, think, hope, dream, or desire!