

Malachi 3:7-12 Do you Love me?

(The Major Point of the Minor Prophets)

Intro: In the classic musical Fiddler on the Roof – Tevye asks his wife of Golde – Do you Love me?

A) She responds – Do I love you – we have been married 25yrs – silly question

B) Really do you love me – She says – look for 25 yrs I have been cooking your meals – washing your clothes – giving you children – What do you mean do I love you.

C) She was doing what a lot of us do – Equating her love in her actions –

1) True actions sometimes speak louder than words!

The problem though in our relationship with God is he is able to see the motive of those actions.

A) See if the heart is right in our actions

B) Knows when we are just going through the motions

C) In the book of Malachi the last book in the OT – God is questioning the Love of his people as seen in their actions

D) In fact the book begins with God saying V. 2 “I have loved you,” says the Lord.

1) Issue is the people of Israel have not loved Him back and it has been plainly seen by their actions

Ch.1 God says: I have loved you but you have despised me –

A) The people ask with a bit of a scorn in what ways have we despised you? (like he is crazy)

B) and God reveals exactly how – Look at on Wed night

But in Chapter 3 we see the heart of God and the love of God in asking his wayward people to return to Him

A) Always God’s heart – He is waiting for the prodigal to come to his senses and come home

B) God says will you return – and the people respond by asking – In what way shall we return?

C) God’s answer to that question is both surprising and revealing! – He answers by talking about their giving – their tithing!

V.7 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?’”

8 “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.

9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me,

Even this whole nation.

10 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.

11 “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,

So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,

Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,”

Says the LORD of hosts; ¹² And all nations will call you blessed,

For you will be a delightful land,” Says the LORD of hosts.

Now why would God tie their giving to their love?

A) We have a saying: Put your money where your mouth is! –

B) Song Pop singers – “Put a ring on it”
Don’t just tell me – Show me!

B) We understand that and so does God! –

1) Speaks to a great principal – DL Moody said if I want to know where you are spiritually with the Lord, I don’t want to read your prayer journal, I want to read your check book or your bank statement

C) What we love – what is important to us – We invest in! – Buy over priced Jersey’s to support our Favorite teams

1) Pay a fortune to take the person we love on a nice dinner – to show them they are special – what you do when you are IN LOVE!

Now if you are visiting today and you haven't been to church in a while and one of the reasons – Church is always talking about money.

A) Well I want to assure you today – that here at CV we working our way through the Bible

B) Minor Prophets – text – Major Point – this happens to be it

C) God gets to the heart of the issue or their heart problem – Their love is going to be seen in two areas – Trust and obedience

1) And our finances are involved in both of those.

D) Issue people struggle with – ISSUE that has been abused in the church – but we shouldn't shy away because there is a great blessing in tithing –

1) hope you see that before we are done today

3 fold outline today:

- 1st The Principle of Tithing
- 2nd The Reasons behind Tithing
- 3rd The Blessings that go with Tithing

1st The Principle of Tithing: Start in the OT

Leviticus 27:30-33 – “**And all the tithe (which means a tenth) of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's.**”

God says everything is from me – I have given to you – STEWARD

I am letting you keep and take care of 90% - use it as you see fit – enjoy it

I am asking you to give 10% back to me - AWESOME DEAL!

It is holy to the LORD. 31 If a man wants at all to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. 32 And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. 33 He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.'

God speaks to His people and says, the Tithe, a tenth part of what I have given you – is mine

A) He calls it holy – that Word means “set apart”

B) In other words – 10 percent of what God has given us is not for food,

1) It's not for clothing, it's not for a place to live or gas for our cars –

C) It is for Him, it's holy, is set apart for Him

God did not ask for the tithe, He commanded that it be given to Him - The tithe is the Lord's

A) Now this is Heavy thought - it is NOT ours to give, it is ours to steal

B) That is where the wording of Malachi comes from

1) The tithe is not yours, it belongs to God – Not giving the tithe – **God says – You are robbing me!**

C) Tithe vs Offering – God mentions both in Malachi

1) Tithe is the tenth – was required – an offering was over and above that

2) The tithe Malachi 3:10 was to be brought into the storehouse – the offering was more discretionary – Compassion International, etc – Pottersfield – Solutions for Change

Now Some of you – might be thinking wait Rob / tithing is a part of the Law & we are no longer under the Law /

A) So we are really not required to give a Tenth / or to give at all

B) Now you are partly right in saying that – and you are not **“required to give”** - but this is what we need to understand.

C) Tithing is SEEN in scripture Prior to the Law – Genesis 14 – Long before it was every commanded

Genesis 14 Abraham after the Battle – Kings

A) Kingly High Priest – who is a type of Christ – Christophony - Abraham Gave him a tithe of all

B) Abraham instinctively understands – It is proper - it is appropriate response for how good God is to give Him a tenth of the spoil

1) Does this 500 yrs before the law was even instituted. -

C) Abraham is called the Father of Faith - Great Example for us

So the idea and concept is seen BEFORE the LAW

A) YES – True it is in the Law & it is AFTER THE LAW - Tithing in the NT

B) JESUS COMMENDS THE IDEA OF TITHING

1) Luke 11:42 Jesus rebukes the Pharisees because although they paid their tithes / gave of the first fruits of their spices /

C) They neglected Love & Justice

But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

Other translations put it this way: **the First you ought to do / (in other words it is good that you are tithing) but you shouldn't have left the others undone**

A) Good you are tithing – Jesus commends it – but shouldn't neglect love & justice

B) So Jesus commends tithing after the Law

C) And Paul – also instructed the Corinthians non Jews 1 Cor. 16:2 “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper”

D) Giving is to be regular – **1st day of the week** – Sunday

1) Giving is to be proportionate: **as you have prospered.**

When you read our Lord's sermons & parables, (GOSPELS) you REALIZE THAT JESUS had a great deal to say about material wealth.

A) **IN FACT** – Jesus had more to say about Money than almost any other subject

B) **Did you know that one 6th of Matthew / Mark & Luke's GOSPELS & 12 of the 38 parables have to do w/ MONEY MATTERS**

C) WITH MONEY & the STEWARDING OF MONEY –

1) It was something that Jesus taught on a lot ! Why?

Perhaps this is a REASON – Back in 1990 the RAN CORP. did a study where they discovered that the average American male

A) Spends 50% of his FOCUSED thinking time / thinking about money

B) How to get more / how to spend what he has / how he is going to pay the bills / should he switch jobs in order to make more

1) 50% of his focused thinking time spent thinking about money

C) Jesus knowing that would be the case – Spent a great deal of time instructing us in this area / IMPORTANT

1) Why Jesus said – **Where your treasure is your heart will be Also –**

The last thing I want to mention about the Principle of tithing is that Tithing is a heart issue: 2 Corinthians 9:7

A) Tithing is really a matter of the Heart – v. 7 **So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.**

B) God is looking for Cheerful givers – those who realize all that the Lord has done for them & want to respond to that by giving of tithes

C) And if you Can't see it as a blessing – **Don't bother –**

But understand that is not a cop out –

A) “I guess I don't have to give – because burden – can't cheerfully”

B) God is saying – Deal with your heart first

C) Until you really understand all that I have done for you and how much I love you

1) and what I did to save you and make you mine – Rescue

D) When you are ready to respond in love to that – GIVE – until then KEEP IT – need to grow

Now before we move on I want to say this: I had a couple not long ago come up to me – realized they needed to be tithing

A) Problem was they had got themselves into major debt and they could not tithe 10% -

B) So they came up to me to ask me – This is our situation – We realize we made some mistakes got ourselves into this jam –

1) But we are working hard to get our finances in order so that we can give 10% but right now all we can give each month is 3% Is that ok? –

C) Absolutely 1 Corinthians 16:2 “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper”

Not only is it ok – it is Wise and commendable –

A) Too often people say I will wait until I can give 10% but they never get there.

B) This couple was establishing a priority on giving that was only going to grow

C) That couple was doing everything they could to get there and they were starting by giving what they could!

1) And they are being blessed for their decision

So first of all we see the principle of tithing –

2nd The Reason behind tithing - Why does God want us to do that?

A) Well it is not because he needs our Cash! – God is not broke and about to go under unless you GIVE!

B) ON the contrary – He owns Cattle on 1,000 Hills – He is self sufficient and self sustaining.

C) So why does God ask us to do that? –

3 REASONS

#1 Giving is not God’s way of raising Funds – It is His way of raising Kids!

A) God is a giver and he wants his kids to be givers too!

B) It is one of the ways that we become like the Lord – TRUE LOVE COSTS !

1) For God so loved the World that He gave

C) Jesus gave the ultimate sacrifice – in order to show us how much we were loved

1) Philippians 2 Jesus left heaven came to this earth

1) He sacrificed for the will and plan of the father! – Trusted the Father – provision

D) So #1 Giving God’s way raising Kids - GIVING helps us become like our Lord !

#2 Giving Builds Trust – Widows Mite:

This woman gave from her poverty – She gave of her all! Why?

A) She was willing to trust God for her PROVISION.

B) She actually could have kept one of the coins for herself – but by giving them both – she was saying:

1) God I am trusting you to take care of me!

C) Point of this Passage – Her giving revealed her trust in God for His Provision .

1) Giving builds trust –

I will be honest – I have always tithed – principle my parents instilled in me – and I am glad

A) Been times – thought – man – that could really help in this area – or we could do this a lot sooner if we were not tithing

B) I have wrestled with thoughts like that – Even weird – I work for the church – giving back part of my salary every week – who does that?

C) Remind myself – IT IS NOT MINE – this belongs to the Lord – all of it is His – He is letting me take care of 90%

1) Giving it to the Lord –

D) Trust Him for our provision – and He has always been faithful

A while back someone told me about a family in our church – Husband was out of work –

A) They were struggling – getting side jobs - always tithed

B) Thought wow – That is trust - Took about 3 yrs – God did a lot in that family – provision – supplied – yes sacrificed – blessed – Amazing Job

C) #1 Giving makes us like our Father - #2 Giving builds trust

#3 Giving gives us an opportunity to partner with God in His mission!

A) In 2 Corinthians chapter 8 Paul is commending the Corinthian Church for the fact that they abound – in faith, love, in diligence and speech.

B) **In other words they had grown a lot** – from the time of Paul's first letter where he had to rebuke them on so many fronts.

C) But as he is commending them for their faith, and love and diligence and knowledge.

D) He adds this exhortation about giving: **"See that you abound in this grace as well!"** 2 Corinthians 8:7

E) I find it interesting that Paul would refer to giving as a grace!

1) **Grace = undeserved favor!**

But why would GIVING be considered an undeserved Favor?

A) Think of it this way – God who doesn't need us to do His work/ to accomplish His ministry on earth.

B) But He says to you & I - I am going to let you partner w/ me in my work!

1) One way is thru your giving

C) You give – God uses that tithe that offering to help fund what he is doing here at CV – Kids being disciple – marriages strengthened

1) People saved – Churches planted - Missionaries sent out –

D) As you give – Everything that God is doing through this ministry – becomes a part of your reward!

E) God says I don't need it – but I am going to bless you NOW and reward you later - by giving you the opportunity to partner with me – Giving

Why Jesus declared - Matthew 6:19-21

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

E) One of the easiest ways we lay up treasures – through our GIVING

So REASONS #1 Giving is Gods way of raising kids – #2 Giving builds trust – #3 Giving allows us to partner with God in His mission.

#4 The Blessings of Tithing:

#1 There is a reward – Malachi 3:10

Malachi 3:10

10 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.

So the Lord says – **TEST ME** – only place in the entire Bible where the Lord says – **TEST ME / put me to the TEST**

A) Bring your tithes into the Storehouse / **Storehouse is the Place of congregational meeting** { Church / Place of meeting & dispersing

B) God says: **You put me to the test – Precious child – I am wanting you to learn that you can trust me –**

1) I will provide for you. I will take care of you.

C) Big lesson: **You can never out give God!**

1) God says put me to the test –

D) Consider this Promise: Proverbs 3:9-10

"Honor the Lord with your possessions, And with the first fruits of all your increase; 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine."

Not suggesting that we give to Get! – Not the point at all!

A) But there is a Biblical Principle – seen throughout the Bible – taught in many Places – **THE LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING!**

B) The law simply states: **That we reap – what we sow!** Same kind

1) Apple seed = apple tree – not an orange.

C) **Flesh = Destruction - / Spirit everlasting life!**

D) So reap what you sow (IN KIND) but also reap **HOW** you sow!

1)Sparingly – reap sparingly / bountifully – reap bountifully

E)SO HERE in Malachi 3:10 – God says test me – You tithe –

1)YOU TRUST ME and then watch how I take care of your needs –

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.

F)1ST BLESSING GOD PROMISES TO TAKE CARE OF US

#2 It makes us Christ like: - Talked about already – reason –

A)God uses it to transform us – Romans 8:29 transform you into image of Jesus

B)Purpose of Christian life is not to make a new and improved you -

C)SEEKING TO MAKE US LIKE JESUS

1)Giving is part of the way – God accomplishes that

#3 Giving protects us from the enemy! – Mal 3:11 – I will REBUKE THE DEVOURER.....

ALSO IN Abraham in Genesis 14 Abraham gave a tenth to Melchizedek – all that he had

A)Afterwards out came the King of Sodom – wanted to bless Abraham – Sodom means perversity – So the King of Perversity

B)The King of Sodom comes & says to Abraham give me the people - take what you want no strings attached/

1)Lie – always strings attached - we read in v. 22

22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 "that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'; Genesis 14:22,23

C)The implication is this because Abraham had given to the Lord his heart followed & he was protected from the ensnarement of the world

D)Because He gave to the Lord – **Abraham heart was in the right place – he had the right perspective** – when the King of Perversity came along.

E)Abraham was not interested because he was already investing in the Lord!

Put Matthew 6:19-21 on the screen again:

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Now that last phrase is Key – Where your treasure is your heart will be also

A)Not an indictment – just a fact – birds fly – fish swim – where your treasure is your heart is going to be also

B)**Stocks** – **You were not interested** – suddenly invest – now you are interested – little announcements on your computer screen - signals

C) God is Smart - He wants our hearts to be in His Kingdom - Happens when we invest there

D)So Jesus isn't interested **in getting our finances** but He is interested in capturing our hearts –

1)When He captures our hearts – everything else falls into place!

E)He invites us to invest with Him and partner with Him in His kingdom - -

1)When we are investing in the Kingdom – heart follows –

God saying to you today: I love you so much! – Question is Do you love me?

A)Will you trust me – Provision – Gave son – give you everything else –

B)Trust me – Open up the store houses of heaven Poor blessing on you

C)Will you let me bless you and transform you by investing in what is important to me ?

The Choice is yours -