

1. The title of the message last week was, “Stewardship” and was based on Genesis 1:27-31.
2. The first thing we did was identify the fact that God’s greatest desire is to bless us, especially in the area of our finances.
3. Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
4. Deuteronomy 28:11-12 The LORD will grant you abundant prosperity-in the fruit of your womb...12 The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none.
5. From our text in the book of Genesis last week we saw that the first thing God did after creating man was to bless him. God’s plan since the beginning of time has been to bless you and me. God is a God of blessing.
6. We also said however, that with the blessing that God gave Adam & Eve came a command. The command was that while God was giving Adam & Eve the entire world, that they had to do with that blessing or they had to administer the world as God desired and not as they desired.
7. The principle that God emphasized is the principle of Stewardship. The dictionary defines a steward as a person who manages another’s property or financial affairs; one who administers anything as the agent of another.
8. That is what God desires from us. He desires that we be stewards of what he has blessed us with.
9. Does God desire to bless us more than we can handle? You better believe he does. But the great blessing of God cannot and will not be released until we have a heart attitude that says I am responsible to God.
10. We looked at a biblical example of stewardship in the book of Matthew 25 where we talked about the parable of the talents, or the faithful and un-faithful servants.
11. From that passage of scripture, we discovered 3 stewardship principles that serve to help us unlock and unleash the blessing of God in our lives.
12. The first principle was **Size – it’s not how much but how faithful.**
13. In the parable the master entrusted three different servants with three different amounts of money. But when it came time to settle accounts with the servants one of the servants was called un-faithful while the other two were called faithful.
14. We asked the question. What was the determining factor in whether they were called faithful or un-faithful? Was it the size of the talent or amount

of money? No. The determining factor was how responsible the servants were with what had been entrusted to them.

15. We said last week, it doesn't matter how large or how small your bank account, it doesn't matter if you have been blessed with much or if you have been blessed with little, we still have a responsibility to be a good steward.
16. The second principle was **Expectation – we must be prepared to meet God's expectations.**
17. A good steward doesn't strive to meet his own expectations; a good steward strives to meet the expectations of the owner.
18. When we begin to understand that all the blessing we have comes from God anyway, then it changes our perspective on who has a right to have expectations. Story of my tools.
19. The idea of stewardship says that God is the master/owner and we are the servant, and as the servant we must live up to his expectations.
20. The third principle of stewardship was **Absence - God's absence or silence does not nullify the fact that we will one day have to give account.**
21. God has established these stewardship principles for us to live by. He expects us to follow them, but he doesn't force us to follow them. Because he doesn't demand obedience, we can be tempted to believe that there will be no consequences for disobedience, especially considering the fact that Jesus delays his return to earth.
22. The wise steward understands that just because the master is gone for a long time doesn't change the fact that one day, we will have to give an accounting of what kind of steward we have been.
23. Absence may make the heart grow fonder, but it doesn't absolve the heart from responsibility.
24. God wants to bless his people abundantly, but in order to unlock and unleash that blessing we have to be willing to live by the principles he has given us in His word.

TEXT: **Malachi 3:8-10** "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. **9** You are under a curse-the whole nation of you-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 you will not have room enough for it."

TITLE: The truth about the Tithe

INTRO:

1. As I searched for a video to go along with today's message, I came across several videos with the same title as my message today. The truth about the tithe.
2. But most of them claimed that the truth about the tithe is that tithing doesn't matter. They would then either ignore the word of God all together, or they would twist the truth of Gods word to fit their belief.
3. So, this morning, my desire is not to share my opinion about tithing, (even though I have one) but instead to point us to the truth according to God's word.
4. As a pastor much of what I do is relate to people. My life is centered around relationships.
5. I learned many years ago that the quickest way to throw up a barrier in a relationship is to call someone a liar or a thief.
6. How many understand that if someone calls you a liar or a thief those are some pretty serious words.
7. I must admit when I read this passage of scripture in Malachi, I am kind of taken back. Because God through the prophet Malachi makes some pretty strong statements. In two verses, verses 8 & 9 God uses the word rob or robbing 4 times and he uses the word curse once.
1. Listen again to what God says in Malachi 3:8-9 "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse-the whole nation of you-because you are robbing me.
2. As I read those verses, my mind immediately began to go back to a number of experiences my family and I have had.
3. Because of where we have lived in the world, and the places we have been, unfortunately we have been robbed on several occasions.
4. We have had our home broken into, our cars broken into, we have had experiences with people pulling guns, knives, and other various weapons.
5. When God says to the nation of Israel you have in the past and are currently robbing me, you are stealing from me, that has significance.
6. Almost nothing will shake your security, almost nothing will make you feel violated as much as being robbed. There are very few other things that have the ability to shake your world like being robbed.
7. I was in the revenue office last week and I heard a young man on the phone telling a friend of a recent experience he had of being robbed. Motel room

with his brother and sister, middle of the night, computer stolen, cell phone stolen, MP3 player all while they slept in the room.

8. This was a pretty good size young man, and I heard him describe how scared and violated he felt at waking up and realizing that somebody had been just inches from him, but more than that that somebody, a thief had been just inches from his brother and sister.
9. When someone steals from you it is personal.
10. Several years ago, I had an interesting conversation with a man who had just been recently released from prison.
11. This man had recently accepted Jesus as his savior and was trying to live a life that would be pleasing to God, and so he felt the need to confess to me the things he had done.
12. The list was long, and it included almost everything you could imagine. But as he finished telling me all he had done he made sure to clarify one thing. He said I have done a lot of things wrong in my life, but I have never stolen from anybody. I am not a thief.
13. I thought that was interesting so I questioned him, and I asked why he would feel the need to make that clear to me? He responded by saying to me when you steal from somebody it's personal. Nothing says you can't be trusted like being a thief.
14. God through the prophet Malachi was dealing with an issue that was very personal to him. That issue was the way in which the people handled their finances or their money.
15. In verse 8 God is having a conversation but He is the only one doing the talking. He asks the question, Malachi 3: "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings.
16. You know I used to think that money was just about money. I used to think that when the bible talks about money it's just a money issue, but then I realized it's not just a money issue. As a matter of fact, I'm convinced it's not a money issue at all, it's a relationship issue.
17. God is basically saying to the nation of Israel, for centuries I have watched over you, I have protected you, I have provided for you, I have guided you, I have blessed you over and over again. The very least you could do is obey me when it comes to your finances.
18. God says you are robbing me. Now to understand the significance of what God was saying we have to understand that the one doing the robbing was not

some perfect stranger, but it was someone with whom God already had a relationship.

8. You see being robbed by a stranger is bad enough, but being robbed by someone you know is even worse.
9. I recognize this is a tough thing to think about, but I am convinced it is a conversation we must have, not only together, but with ourselves, if we ever hope to experience the fullness of God's blessings on our life.
10. This week I want to talk about the second key to unlocking the blessing of God and changing your finances. Last week the first key was stewardship.
11. This week the second key is the word Tithe. Let's look at the Truth about the tithe.

What is the Tithe?

1. Malachi 3:8, 10 "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.
2. The thing that was the source of contention between God and His people, the thing that was so personal to God, the thing that was being stolen was the tithe and the offerings. Today we are only going to focus on the tithe.
3. We will begin by asking what is the tithe? Tithe is a word meaning tenth. A tithe of something is the tenth part or 10 percent of something.
4. In this case the something is our income. When we talk about the tithe, we are talking about giving 10 percent of our income back to God.
5. I know we have a building full of smart people here today, but I want to clarify for you what that means.
6. That means if I make \$100 income = \$10 tithe.
7. That means if I make \$1,000 income = \$100 tithe.
8. That means if I make \$10,000 income = \$1,000 tithe.
9. That means if I make \$400 income = \$40 tithe.
10. The first thing that was damaging the relationship between the nation of Israel and God was the fact that the people were not giving their tithe to God. They were not giving 10% of their income to God.
11. The second thing that was damaging the relationship between God and Israel is the fact that they were not bringing the whole tithe.
12. Malachi 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse. What does that mean by the whole tithe?

13. I looked up the word tithe in the dictionary because I wanted to get the perspective of how non-Christian people view the tithe, and it was interesting to me that the dictionary compares the word tithe to a tax.
14. Most everyone who pays taxes understands the idea that when calculating how much tax we owe, we attempt to itemize deductions which will reduce the amount of income upon which we actually owe tax.
15. The idea is that we are trying to make the amount we have to pay in taxes as low as possible.
16. Sometimes people take that same view when it comes to paying tithe.
17. They want to pay the least amount of tithe possible.
18. One of the ways people often do that is by asking the question. Do I pay tithe on my gross income (before taxes), or do I pay tithe on my net income (after taxes)? Others ask, do I only pay tithe on what is left after I pay all my bills?
19. Let me answer those questions in two ways. First with a personal response. I have always tithed on my gross income. The amount I make before taxes are withheld.
20. You might ask pastor why would you pay tithe on your gross income. Because number one, my tithe is not a tax. My purpose in tithing is not to pay the least amount I can, my purpose in tithing is to be obedient to God.
21. The second reason I pay my tithe on my gross income is because I learned a long time ago, when you shortchange God the one you really shortchange is yourself. I don't tithe because God needs my money, God has all the money in the world at his disposal, I tithe because I need to be obedient to God in order to have a real, fulfilling, life giving relationship with Him.
22. Remember the tithe is not about money, it's about relationship.
23. From a biblical perspective the reason why I tithe on my gross is because I see the example of the nation of Israel. The fact that Israel was not bringing the Whole Tithe to God was a source of personal offense to God. God saw Israel as having robbed or stolen from him since they would only bring a partial tithe to him.
24. The third thing that was damaging the relationship between God and Israel was the issue of where to bring their tithe. **Malachi 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse.**
25. The storehouse here was the temple. The temple was where people regularly went to worship God. The reference here is to a passage of scripture in **Nehemiah 13:11-12** So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts. **12 All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and oil into the storerooms.**

26. The problem was the people were taking their tithe and were visiting pagan temples and foreign gods and were neglecting the temple where God had instructed them to bring their tithe.
27. What significance does that have for us today? Well just like in the days of Malachi believers have many options on where they can pay their tithe. In Batesville Arkansas, you can turn on the TV and in a matter of minutes find 15 different ministries that would love to have your tithe.
28. Now please do not misunderstand what I am about to say. There is not one thing wrong with supporting a TV ministry or any other ministry if that is what you so desire to do. There is great value in TV ministry and those ministries need support. But according to the word you should support that ministry only after you have given your tithe to the local store house, the place where you worship on a regular basis.
29. Failure to do so will have the same effect on your life it had on Israel, it will affect your relationship with God.
30. What is tithe? 10%
31. What kind of tithe does God want? The whole tithe.
32. Where should we pay our tithe? To the local storehouse. The place we worship on a regular basis.
33. The next question I want to ask regarding the tithe is...

How does the tithe affect my everyday life?

1. How does the tithe affect me on July 9th, 2023?
2. Obedience to the tithe brings blessing, but disobedience to the tithe brings cursing.
3. Malachi 3:9 You are under a curse-the whole nation of you-because you are robbing me.
4. Again, I read that verse of scripture and I thought to myself: God that is some pretty strong language. God that is in your face language. You are under a curse.
5. It would be easy to read that and think that God is just some mean, cantankerous, unloving God, but that couldn't be further from the truth.
6. God responds in this way because of the offense of robbing him. We said earlier that being robbed is personal, but being robbed by someone you know and who knows you is down right in your face.
7. God's response is an in-your-face response because the offense is in His face.
8. The offense to God is that God knows he has loved, he has supplied every need of, he has blessed, he has protected, he has delivered, and he has done

miracles for the nation of Israel. God figures the very least they can do is be obedient to him in the area of their tithe. But they were unwilling to do even the least.

9. Because they were unwilling to do the very least, they had removed themselves from the place of blessing that God had placed them in. They had in fact cursed themselves.
10. Some folks act as if paying their tithe is this major life decision. I don't mean to trivialize the issue this morning, but I don't have to decide from week to week if I am going to pay my tithe.
11. When I consider the fact that I have what I have because God has blessed me. When I consider that God is the one who gives me the strength to earn a living, God is the one who provides for my needs, God is the one who protects me and keeps me and guides me, God is the one who keeps me healthy and does miracles in my life. When I look at all of that I understand that paying 10% is the very least I can do.
12. I also understand that not paying my tithe doesn't hurt God, only serves to remove my family and I from the flow of God's blessing that he has for our lives.
13. Again, I don't mean to trivialize this morning but for me tithing is a no-brainer, especially when I consider Malachi 3:10 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 you will not have room enough for it.
14. You see, the principle of tithing has a tremendous effect on our everyday life when we consider that obedience to the tithe brings great blessing to our life.

Conclusion:

1. I want to challenge you to do something. I want to offer you a great opportunity.
2. Malachi 3:10 is one of the few places in the bible where God gives us permission to test Him. He says test me in this.
3. I want to help you to test God this morning. I don't want you to take my word for it; I want to ask you to experience the blessing of the tithe for yourself.
4. Here is what I want to ask you to do. Take the next three months. From July 9th to October 8th.
 - a. Begin by giving 10% of your income. Be faithful. Don't miss.
 - b. Give 10% of your gross income. Don't shortchange God. Bring the whole tithe to God.

c. Don't send your tithe someplace, give it to the local church where you attend and worship on a regular basis.

5. Test God and see if he won't honor his word and pour out so much blessing on your life that you won't be able to contain it.
6. And keep in mind that there are numerous blessings that have nothing to do with money. In fact, I'm convinced the greatest blessings have nothing to do with money.
7. Over the years I have had the privilege of seeing countless people test God in this way and then be overwhelmed at God's provision.
8. Their response is usually something like this. On paper it doesn't make any sense. When I looked at money purely from a physical perspective, being blessed as a result of tithing seemed foolish.
9. How can my life be better if I give 10% to God, and have less money to work with?
10. But when I started looking at money from a spiritual perspective, and I tried it, what I discovered is I can live better on 90% than I ever did when I kept 100% for myself.
11. Because keeping it all for ourselves blocks God's blessings, and obeying God's command to tithe opens us up to greater blessings.
12. Tithing has much to do with expressing faith in God.
13. Prayer. Lord, we struggle sometimes to trust your ways. Help us.
14. If you are here and you don't have a relationship with Jesus, forget everything I said about the tithe. Let's make things right between you and God.
15. I wish I always believed God's principles without struggling. But sometimes I struggle.
16. One of the more encouraging verses in the bible is found in the book of Mark.
17. A man's son was sick, and the man was struggling to believe that Jesus could heal his son.
18. So, in total transparency he said to Jesus; Mark 9:24 "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!"
19. I have faith, but I need more faith.
20. There is no shame in being in those shoes as it relates to tithing or any of God's principles.
21. Can we take the mask off this morning and be real with God?
22. Help our unbelief.

