

The Blessed Life

Week 2

It's only a test...WHAT TEST?

This can be a touchy subject, I thought of teaching it in a bunker 1 mile underground. Or have having security in front of me! Or from home LOL

Member of the church "This is a message that causes us to trust God more than we think is possible. There is nothing we should hold back from God. He held nothing back from us - Gave us His best and never leaves us in a pinch. You go pastor and don't worry the outcome of your message - all we have belongs to Him."

Its test day; you got this. Don't panic.

If you fail the test you are going to the "Principal's" Office.

Many believers don't know there is a test in the Bible. I hate tests! I freak out, get nervous, give birth to anxiety. I don't do well with tests, so when I heard there was a test in the Bible, I was like...Oh Great! Another one to flunk!
I found out that we all take this test every time we get paid!

The 1st question on the test is, "Who are you going to thank for your income?"
You take that test by what you do with the first 10% of your income. Now, the outcome of this test has nothing to with your salvation. The answer does not dictate your eternal home either. It does not mean you are bad, selfish, stingy or greedy.

PROVERBS 3:9-10 "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. ¹⁰ Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine." **NLT**

"Glorify God with all your wealth, honoring him with your first fruits, with every increase that comes to you. Then every dimension of your life will overflow with blessings from an uncontainable source of inner joy!" **The Passion Translation**

Sheryl and I have been taught young about the principles of tithing. I know this is a touchy subject for some people who struggle with the idea that you have to pay to come to church.

Some Christians even debate whether it is before or after taxes. You can tell when you are free when it doesn't matter to you. People even take a popular scripture out of context that says, "Money is the root of all evil" when it actually says, "the *love* of money is the root of all evil."

That is why I only "like" money LOL

My motive in this message today is not to convince, coerce or convict you but to show you the benefits of this blessing after all this series is called, THE BLESSED LIFE and this message is a part of it. Tithing is connected to our faith and is a by-product of our faith. Do I have the faith to trust him? After all it is only a measly 10 cents on the dollar

I want to show you how being a tither can revolutionize your world by unlocking this realm of blessing over your life and connect you to the supernatural flow of provision.

ARE YOU READY? In today's message entitled, IT's A TEST

Malachi 3:6-12

“For I am the Lord, **I do not change**; (UNDERLINE) therefore, you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. 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?’

(The God who does not change is talking)

Ordinance-a principle of ordinary behavior.....God said you have gone away and they say in what way have we gone away?

8 Will a man rob/steal/cheat/take away 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.

What is a curse? It is a consequence for disobedient behavior

But we must make one thing very clear: While there are spiritual and financial consequences for failing to give to God, we should never make the mistake of thinking that we will be "cursed" if we haven't tithed. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written: Everyone who is hung on a tree is cursed" (Gal. 3:13 HCSB).

In my opinion, we are cursed if we are not blessed. Living below your inherited position as royalty is settling. We are settling for lack, want and relying on others by playing it safe and following this world's mindset of looking out for ourselves. We also rob ourselves of living the blessed life.

The sad ending to Malachi is that God's people failed the test. They ignored God, the nations did not see God through His people, and it takes 400 years of silence before Jesus comes to fulfill every law the Israelites disobeyed.

10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and **try Me** now in this," NLT SAYS **"PUT ME TO THE TEST"** 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.

Note: This is not just about Money it's about a principle. "If you give God what is his, he will give you what is yours! This promise is about rain, drought and famine, not about other material or financial blessings as **Malachi 3:11** makes clear, **"I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit, says the Lord Almighty."**

In other words, your tithe is spiritual pesticide! There is a supernatural provision and protection. The devil can't take it and it can't be stolen either. I believe there is a supernatural line of defense around your finances as you tithe.

The blessing is explained right in the passage. If they pay their tithes, they will receive rain, the drought will end, and so will any famine. There is nothing of finances mentioned here.

It was a command to take the first step of obedience so the nation could get out from under the curse of all their sins! Malachi recognized that this robbery of God's tithe was merely a symptom of a more serious cancer.

The stinginess of these was rooted in apathy and unbelief. Only by returning to a posture of faith and reverence could the people experience God's presence and blessings.

The primary purpose of a tithe in Scripture is *never* simply for us to receive back a blessing. The primary purpose of a tithe is always to remind ourselves that God is Lord and King over everything!

This is true of the passage in Malachi, and it is true in the rest of Scripture. We know at the time of Malachi, it was a sin for the Israelites to withhold tithes because when God gave the Israelites the land of Canaan, He also wanted them to remember that it is God alone who supplies all their needs. This acknowledgment was to be expressed by the Israelites observing the Festivals, the Sabbath, and in their sacrifices, tithes and offerings As **Deuteronomy 14:23** says, all of these commands are **"So that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always."** *These commands were not given so that God's people could be enriched materially, but*

so that they would remember their strength is in God, not in anyone or anything else! If the land and its produce belonged to God as **Lev 25:23** declares, then all the more, so did the tithe. So, when the Israelites withheld the tithe, this action amounted to robbing not only the poor but also God. It meant primarily that they were not trusting in God but were instead selfishly taking measures into their own hands. **Tithing has always meant to remind us that God is in charge, it is NOT meant to be a way to get God to give us even more financial reward.**

The law demands a tenth part of his people's possessions, the Spirit translates us to become God's possession with all that we have. Because of Christ, everything of ours belongs to God. **We are but stewards not of a tenth, but of all we possess.** The Old Testament "Ten percent – tithe" rule is for the New Testament Christian like training wheels are to a bike.

Malachi 3:12 concludes by showing WHY God is commanding His people to test Him and tithe in the first place. It says, "**Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,' says the LORD Almighty.**"

All of this testing and tithing is not only so His people would receive rain and protection from drought and plagues. There is more. These immediate blessings are simply a means to something better!

More important than all the promised blessings of rainfall and protection from drought and pestilence is this: If God's people would simply obey God's commands, then something amazing would happen:

The peoples of other nations would see how good and beautiful it is to be God's people, and they would come and follow Jehovah Jirah God (Our provider)! *Giving a tithe in **Malachi 3:8-12** was a form of mission! It was a way for the Israelites to expand God's Kingdom!*

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.

⁶ "I am the Lord, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already destroyed. ⁷ Ever since the days of your ancestors, you have scorned my decrees and failed to obey them. Now return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. "But you ask, 'How can we return when we have never gone away?' ⁸ "Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! "But you ask, 'What do you mean?

When did we ever cheat you?’ “You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. ⁹ You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. ¹⁰ Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! **Put me to the test!** ¹¹ Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. [a] Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies. ¹² “Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.

1. Tithing is a test of our heart.

The word tithe means “a tenth part”. The 10th part is a fair % for everyone regardless of economic status. A penny on every dime

- What does the number 10 represent?
- The number 10 represents testing all through scripture:
How many plagues were there in Egypt? 10
How many commandments are there? 10
How many times did God test Israel in the wilderness? 10 Numbers 14
How many times were Jacob’s wages changed? 10
How many days was Daniel tested? 10
How many virgins were tested in Matthew 25? 10
How many days of testing are mentioned in Revelation? 10
How many disciples were there? 12 LOL Just a test

Through the concept of the tithe, God is testing our hearts!

- And this is also the only area where God says that you can test Him!
- "Test me!" "I dare you!"

This passage seems so simple to me.

- If I tithe, I'm under a blessing. If I don't, I'm not.
- “I’m not a smart man, but I think I would like to be blessed!”

But Jesus bore the curse of the law so I can't be cursed as a Christian!

- Did He also bear sin? Have you ever sinned?
 - Did He also bear sickness on the cross? Have you ever been sick?
- Tithing was part of the law and I'm not under the law so I don't tithe!
- I want to tell you some lies about someone and I can because I'm not under the law!
 - Let me see your wallet. I can take this because I'm not under the law!
- If it was wrong under the law, is it now right or is it still wrong?

- If it was right under the law, is it now wrong or is it still right!

2. Tithing is biblical.

Not saying your bad or rebellious if you don't tithe. I'm saying you are missing out on a blessing. It's like opening a few gifts under a tree at Christmas when the room is full of gifts. You are picking and choosing when they are all yours.

Genesis 14:18-20

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; 20 and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."

And he (**Abram**) gave him (**Mel**) a tithe of all.

NOTE: This was about 500 years before the Law. Hebrews says Abraham was our spiritual father by example. And MEL was a type of Christ with no birth or death and some say he was Jesus. Next week I will give you an example of 2500 years before the law the principle of tithing as well.

22 "And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Leviticus 27:30

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy (**set Apart**) to the Lord." The tithe was holy and set apart for the Lord.

Deuteronomy 26:1

"And it shall be, when you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, 2 that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that the Lord your God is giving you, and put it in a basket and **go to the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide.**" **Refers to the church**

Deuteronomy 26:13

"then you shall say before the Lord your God: 'I have removed the holy tithe from my house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them. 14

I have not eaten any of it when in mourning, nor have I removed any of it for an unclean use, nor given any of it for the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the Lord my God and have done according to all that You have commanded me. 15
Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people”

I have removed the Holy Tithe from **my house** and taken it to the place where you have chosen to make your Name abide!

- I haven't used any of it in a time of need!
- I haven't used it to pay my visa bill, vacation savings, rent, mortgage etc.

QUESTION: IF JESUS HIMSELF SAID YOU SHOULD TITHE-WOULD YOU? Sadly some still would not. Even stranger some would pray about it or think about it. LOL

Where is the word “Tithe” in the New Testament? I found it! **IN RED!!**

Matthew 23:23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, **without leaving the others undone.**”

MESSAGE NSV Nova Scotia Version 3-24 “You’re hopeless, you religion scholars and Pharisees! Frauds! You keep meticulous account books, tithing on every nickel and dime you get, but on the meat of God’s Law, things like fairness and compassion and commitment—the absolute basics!—you carelessly take it or leave it. Careful bookkeeping is commendable, but the basics are required. Do you have any idea how silly you look, writing a life story that’s wrong from start to finish, nitpicking over commas and semicolons?”

JESUS (NEW TESTAMENT) said you ought to tithe!

- These you ought to do without leaving the others undone!

Hebrews 7:8 Msg. 8-10 Or look at it this way: We pay our tithes to priests who die, but Abraham paid tithes to a priest who, the Scripture says, “lives.” Ultimately you

could even say that since Levi descended from Abraham, who paid tithes to Melchizedek, when we pay tithes to the priestly tribe of Levi they end up with Melchizedek.

3. Tithing is a blessing.

2 Chronicles 31:4-10 READ IT NLT

Malachi said bring tithe to the storehouse so there is natural food, Hezekiah now says Spiritual food.

Do you enjoy the food you get at Impact Church? Someone is paying for the building, bills etc. We are not at a point where I get a salary.

Would anyone go to a restaurant, eat a meal and leave without paying for it? Some might LOL

- The King commanded them to contribute support to the priests
- That they might devote themselves to the Word of God!
- I forgot my wallet! Can you get this one?

This series is all about you not the church. You can be blessed by your efforts, your striving, your sweat, your aches and pains or you can let God supernaturally assist you. Wouldn't it be great to have Jesus as a business partner?

Vs 10.....THE LORD HAS BLESSED HIS PEOPLE

They tithed and the king saw how much it was and was worried about the people but God had blessed the people for tithing!

When the king saw heaps during the harvest...he thought, "Are these people OK?" The Priests knew that as soon as the people gave God's way rather than their way, the manifestation **was massive multiplication** .

The Priest was like, "This is only the 10% of what they gave-Go look at the 90%

People who tithe: God has blessed me and is still blessing me!

- People who don't tithe: I can't afford to tithe!
- You will never be able to afford to tithe UNTIL you tithe!
- Tithing is what breaks the curse!
 - His principles in His Word don't change and
 - He said, "Test me!"
 - I challenge you to Test Him!

God is testing our hearts.

- Tithing is a test

- And God wants to change our hearts
- And He blesses us when He is able to do a work in our hearts!

3 people- I tell them I am going away. I will give you 10,000 each month I'm gone. but while I'm away I want you to give 1,000 to my wife Sheryl to help her out. After awhile I check in with Sheryl. How are the funds coming in from my 3 friends? (1) gives 1,000 on time each month without fail. (2) Gives 2,000 a month even though I only asked for 1,000 (3) only gave 700 month 1, 400.00 month 2 and nothing month 3. I would I feel? How would you feel? I gave him 10,000 a month and I only asked for 10% for my wife. He can keep the 90%

Well guess who's blessing stopped and who got an increase?

Jesus said, I'm going away for awhile but while I'm gone, I want you to take care of my wife! The church is the Bride of Christ. Have you ever thought that tithing might be more personal to Jesus than you thought?

Read parable of the talents; how GOD gave to the one who was faithful.