

Malachi 3:7-12 – Try Me

Huntingdon Missionary Baptist Church – Sunday, February 4, 2024 AM

GoLast Time: 4th of Six Discourses [Charge (God), Question (Israel), Response (God), Foundation];

- **Sunday Jan 7 AM** – “I Have Loved You” **Despite their blindness, there was evidence of His love in front of them.**
Foundation: “The Lord will be magnified beyond the borders of Israel.”
- **Sunday Jan 14 AM** – “I Am a Great King” **Their worship of a great God was weak and they were unaware.**
Foundation: His name would be great from rising of son to setting of the same & pure incense.
- **Sunday Jan 21 AM** – “A Godly Seed” **Their actions were undermining His desire to perpetuate Israel.**
Foundation: He is seeking a godly generation to be raised up by the prior generation.
- **Sunday Jan 28 AM** – “An Unchanging God” **God was frustrated by their ignorant complaints about His inaction.**
Foundation: His faithfulness to His people & promises is anchored in His unchanging character.

Mal 3:7-12 – Fifth Discourse

Context: Not only were the priests delinquent in their instruction of the people and allowing weak sacrifices, but the people had grown lax in their tithes and offerings, causing the priesthood to suffer.

- They were not experiencing spiritual or material prosperity.
- Their crops and herds were not fruitful as in the days of “milk and honey” – **Likely a lack of rain and rampant pests. They believed it was God’s fault... His unfaithfulness.**

Charge: Robbing God

Mal 3:7a, 8a *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.... Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me.*

Israel had a consistent pattern of turning away from God’s laws, from the golden calf to the present situation.

- Return – repent
There was a separation between the people and the Lord.
It looks like the people are called to initiate, but the Lord is the true initiator here.
- Rob – forcibly taking what belongs to Him.
 - **Stewardship**
Psalm 24:1 *The earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof; The world, and they that dwell therein.*
Our responsibility is to use the resources God grants us according to His will.
The problem with Israel is that they were using His blessing in a selfish way that dishonored Him.

Question: How have we robbed God?

Mal 3:7c, 8b *But ye said, Wherein shall we return?... But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?*

These questions are a bit reminiscent of response John the Baptist received to his message, except they repented.

- Returning to God
They were unaware of their distance from God. This insensitivity is a primary problem.
NOTE: Prior to final judgment, God’s abandonment doesn’t mean death, destruction, or removal of common grace.
Some people may not even notice it.
- Robbing God
They were unaware of robbing God. They either didn’t really see it as His or didn’t understand how He wanted it used.

Response: In Tithes & Offerings

Mal 3:8c-10a *In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, Even this whole nation. 10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be meat in mine house,*

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Understanding Tithes & Offerings

- Tithes – A tenth
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 unto the LORD.*
- Offerings – all contributions made for other purposes
The tithes were used to support the Levites, who had a charge to teach the people the Word of God.
We see a downward spiral of priests neglecting their duties to the people and the people to the priests.

Under a Curse

Deut 28:15-20 (24) – God promises that the people and the land will be cursed if they disobey His commands.

Here is the problem: They were experiencing EXACTLY what the Lord said would happen if they didn't obey.

They thought God was letting them down. They never stopped to hear the Word and to look in the mirror.

Foundation: Try Me

Mal 3:10b-12 *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. 11 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. 12 And all nations shall call you blessed: For ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.*

Prove me – Try me, test me

Isn't testing God bad?

- **Mal 3:15** – Testing God is called bad.
- **Matt 3:7** – “It is written again, ‘Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God’ (Jesus quoting **Deut 6:16**)

How do we reconcile this?

It is wrong to test God by stepping outside of His will. It is good to test (prove) God by stepping into His will.

God's Promise

- I will open the windows of Heaven and pour out a blessing you cannot contain. **Illus:** Kettle Corn at the Fair
- I will rebuke the devourer. **He would mend the hole in their sack.** **Illus:** Bailing water out of a boat with a thimble
- All nations will call you blessed.

This is exactly the blessing they were missing, and the Lord showed them the pathway to it.

How is “try me” a foundation? Because the very thing they were to test was the character of God.

Our foundations have been: I Have Loved You, I am a Great King, a Godly Seed, An Unchanging God

Stepping into His will would demonstrate His power, His patience, His continued presence, and His faithfulness.

APPLICATION

NT Truths for Translation:

Does the NT teach teaching?

1. It doesn't discourage it.

Luke 11:42 *“But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.”*

2. A specific percentage is not prescribed in the NT.

3. Everything still belongs to God and we are Stewards

James 1:17 *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.*

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4. Give Cheerfully

2 Cor 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

5. Give Regularly

1 Cor 16:2 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.

6. Give Proportionally

1 Cor 16:2 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. **This implies a percentage.**

7. Give Sacrificially

2 Cor 8:7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. **Paul urges them to excel in giving.**

8. There Remains a Connection between Reaping and Sowing

Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

9. Commit to give cheerfully, regularly, proportionally, and sacrificially as you are inspired by the grace of God.

Hebrews 12:18-24 – Mt. Sinai versus Mt. Zion

The tithe was mandated by the OT Sinai law, cheerful sacrificial giving is inspired by Christ's blood of the NT.

Illus: Early Christians after Pentecost sold all for the common good.

Does Christ's blood inspire you to give a bit when available or commit yourself to sustained, sacrificial generous giving?

Try Me

1. Charge: Robbing God

Can a NT Christian rob God?

Matt 22:21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. **There are things that belong to God.**

1 Cor 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

As a Christian, you are truly His along with all you have. You have been Redeemed.

2. Question: How Have we Robbed God?

Can Christians become spiritually insensitive to sin? Yes. Illus: Laodicea

3. Response: In Tithes & Offerings

Do Christians have obligations to give?... time, attention, commitment, resources

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Time to Prayer & the Word; Obedience to a Calling; Giving

4. Foundation: Try Me

Are you waiting for things to loosen up (time, finances) so that you have EXCESS to give God? This is mis-ordered.

He didn't ask for your excess, He gives excess. He has asked for your first fruits.

We must get out of the "when... then..." mentality.

Illus: Felix – at a more convenient season

God will Prove Himself Faithful: Sometimes by providing more; sometimes by fixing the hole in your sack.