

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz production
Week 51
Malachi

By far the book of Malachi is more quoted than any other scripture when the doctrine of Tithing is discussed. It is bold and straight forward. And it makes us all turn inward to analyze our commitment and dedication to this principle. He begins:

”Will a man rob God?” (Malachi 3:8)

This method of writing with questions and answers is a theme throughout the book of Malachi. We see several times, God questioning the children of Israel's commitment to Him. The sad part is that they usually respond with an elementary sort of whiny response.

‘Wherein have we robbed thee?’ (Malachi 3:8)

I think it's a great lesson to learn that even though we may not be totally committed to God and His work. When we pray He will still hear us and respond with love and mercy.

Juan Uceda of the seventy said this:

“At the very moment we say, “Father in Heaven,” He hears our prayers and is sensitive to us and our needs. And so His eyes and His ears are now connected to you. He reads our minds, and He feels our hearts. You cannot hide anything from Him. Now, the wonderful thing is that He will see you with eyes of love and mercy—love and mercy that we cannot fully understand. But love and mercy are with Him the very moment you say, “Father in Heaven.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2016/10/the-lord-jesus-christ-teaches-us-to-pray?lang=eng>

I love the truth that God is trying to reach all of His children no matter where they are in their life. And even though we may choose to not hear Him. I testify that He does hear us.

The principle of tithing is a hard one to discuss. It's something that one may only gain a testimony of by living it. The language used in Malachi is perfect in its explanation of how we are to understand and live this principle.

”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.” (Malachi 3:10-12)

Another way to phrase this is: Test me, Try me, sayeth the Lord of Hosts. It's a challenge. The principle of tithing is one of the most powerful promises we receive from God.

So let's address the elephant in the room, because I have heard it all. Most think that the wealthy and well to do can pay tithing because they have plenty and it doesn't hurt them to give God 10 percent. Those people should pay tithing. And those that are struggling who don't have enough to get by, those people shouldn't have to pay tithing. It's funny, even though we all think it, when you say it out loud it sounds ridiculous. I have had many challenge me on this topic because my testimony of the law of tithing is as strong as they get. I am a firm believer that God favors those that favor Him. And that those that are truly wealthy got that way because of their dedication to God and the principle of the Law of tithing and free will offerings. And while some will step up to challenge me on this, the doctrine is clear. God says: Prove me, test me. If you pay your tithes and offerings with a pure heart, for the right reason, God will open the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. AND He will rebuke the devourer for your sakes. AND all nations shall call you blessed.

Those are the words of God, the promises of God, Those are His words not mine. And it is true that if you pay your tithing without faith in those promises that God may be bound because of your faithlessness. But what if... what if we do believe God's words? What if our faith is strong enough to take God at His word. Mary Fielding Smith had this kind of faith:

“After she lost her husband in the martyrdom at Nauvoo and made her way west with five fatherless children, Mary Fielding Smith continued in her poverty to pay tithing. When someone at the tithing office inappropriately suggested one day that she should not contribute a tenth of the only potatoes she had been able to raise that year, she cried out to the man, “William, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Would you deny me a blessing? If I did not pay my tithing, I should expect the Lord to withhold His blessings from me. I pay my tithing, not only because it is a law of God, but because I expect a blessing by doing it. [I *need* a blessing.] By keeping this and other laws, I expect to ... be able to provide for my family.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2001/10/like-a-watered-garden?lang=eng>

I think that some are afraid to say with certainty that If we pay our tithing and offerings that we will be able to prosper and succeed in this mortal life. Because what about the few that don't receive that blessing even though they were faithful in this principle? Well, the fact of the matter is that God is all knowing and He is just and good. And we can safely assume that if God didn't give that person a temporal blessing even though they faithfully obeyed that law, then they have blessings stored up in Heaven that none of us could even imagine. Because one thing we can be sure of is that God will never ignore or leave one of His children alone or abandoned. Do you remember His declaration in Doctrine and Covenants:

“20 There is a **law**, irrevocably decreed in **heaven** before the foundations of this world, upon which all **blessings** are predicated—

21 And when we obtain any **blessing** from God, it is by **obedience** to that law upon which it is predicated.” (D&C 130:20-21)

Or His explanation of these laws as communicated through King Mosiah:

“23 And now, in the first place, he hath created you, and granted unto you your lives, for which ye are indebted unto him.

24 And secondly, he doth **require** that ye should do as he hath commanded you; for which if ye do, he doth immediately **bless** you; and therefore he hath paid you. And ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be, forever and ever; therefore, of what have ye to boast?

25 And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were **created** of the **dust** of the earth; but behold, it **belongeth** to him who created you.” (Mosiah 2:23-25)

So I believe that if anyone questions the validity of any law of God and the blessings that come because of it, they should really be questioning their own faith in His word and promises. As for me and my house, we know that God is good to His word and that His promises are sure. And I'm not the only one. Jeffery R Holland gave a heart piercing testimony on this very topic when he said:

“I can’t list *all* the ways that blessings will come from obedience to this principle, but I testify *many* will come in spiritual ways that go well beyond economics. In my life, for example, I have seen God’s promise fulfilled that He would “rebuke the devourer for [my sake].”⁶ That blessing of protection against evil has been poured out upon me and on my loved ones beyond any capacity I have to adequately acknowledge. But I believe that divine safety has come, at least in part, because of our determination, individually and as a family, to pay tithing.”

You can only rely on someone else's testimony for so long before you have to know for yourself that God's blessings are real and worth trusting in. There are some people that I work with that have always struggled to make ends meet. I wish there was a way to transfer my testimony of tithing to them so that they could see that there is a way out of poverty and struggle. But let me be very clear on this. If you hear nothing else that I have said please please hear this: “The law of tithing is NOT a monetary principle, meaning that it has very little to do with money and tangible things.” The law of tithing and free will offerings has everything to do with our mind set, our relationship with money and more importantly our relationship with God. Elder James E. Talmage described it as a contract between us and the Lord:

“He imagined the Lord saying: ““You have need of many things in this world—food, clothing, and shelter for your family ... , the common comforts of life. ... You shall have the means of acquiring these things; but remember they are mine, and I require of you the payment of a rental upon that which I give into your hands. However, your

life will not be one of uniform increase ... [so] instead of doing as mortal landlords do—requir[ing] you to ... pay in advance, whatever your fortunes or ... prospects may be—you shall pay me ... [only] when you have received; and you shall pay me in accordance with what you receive. If it so be that in one year your income is abundant, then ... [your 10 percent will be a] little more; and if it be so that the next year is one of distress and your income is not what it was, then ... [your 10 percent will be] less. ... [Whatever your circumstance, the tithe will be fair.]’

“Have you ever found a landlord on earth who was willing to make that kind of [equitable] contract with you?” Elder Talmage asks. “When I consider the liberality of it all,” he says, “... I feel in my heart that I could scarcely raise my countenance to ... Heaven ... if I tried to defraud [God] out of that [which is rightfully His].”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2001/10/like-a-watered-garden?lang=eng>

And that is the mindset or relationship we should have towards God and all of His gifts that He so generously bestows upon all who serve Him with a pure heart and with real intent. Paying tithing for the purpose of receiving a blessing from God is not how faith increases in this principle. Paying tithing and a generous fast offering with gratitude for all of God's gracious gifts and the desire to give back to a loving Father that which He so freely gave to you is how faith increases and how testimonies flourish. Most importantly it is how our relationship will grow with the creator of all. My challenge to you if you struggle with the law of tithing is to take God at His word; Prove Him, Test Him, Trust Him. Pay your tithing with the intent to give back to Him who so freely gave to you and see what happens in your life. I pray that your eyes will be open to see the marvelous wonders that God will work in your life simply because we are obedient.

May we come to know Him and love Him, because He first loved us, and gave us the greatest of all gifts: the sacrifice of His beloved son who saved us all, who willingly died for us all. Because of this gift we owe Him all we have, all we are, and all we will be.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.