

The Test of Generosity

Intro. Malachi 3:6-12

Illustration

School year is winding down.

Light at end of tunnel.

Final exams coming up in a few weeks.

Are you ready?... For What? - For the test?... What Test?

Difference in college and High School or Middle School

- In H.S. and M.S. the teacher tells you over and over again that you have a test.
- In college it's in the syllabus and they might not mention it again until test day.
- The thinking is that in college you are mature enough to read and follow the original instructions you were given.

Many people are not aware that every few weeks you get to take a test.

- How many get paid weekly, biweekly, bimonthly, or monthly
- Who are you going to thank for the increase? - Some thank Visa, mortgage payment.
- Tithe is the only place the Bible says we can test God.

Set up Malachi 3

- God can't change because he is perfect. If he could change he could get better if he could get better he would not be perfect. He can't get better because he is the best!
- What he is about to say does not change.

Malachi 3:6-12

⁶ "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. ⁷ Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty.

"But you ask, 'How are we to return?'

⁸ "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. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty. ¹² "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty.

Malachi is about returning to God.

Ch.1 Returning to God in our faith

Ch.2 Family

Ch.3 Finances

Ch.4 God returning to us.

Motivation for teaching this.

1. The Lord does not change.
2. Malachi 6 is only 6 verses from Matthew.
3. So many people say well tithing is OT.
4. There is an OT and NT but there is not an old God and new God. God can't change.

I. Tithing is a test

- A. Tithe means a tenth.
- B. Ten in Bible represents a test.
 1. How many **plagues in Egypt?**
 2. How many **commandments?**
 3. How many times did God **test Israel in the wilderness?**
 4. How many times did God **change Jacobs wages?**
 5. How many days was **Daniel tested?**
 6. How many **virgins were tested in Matthew 25?**
 7. How many **days of testing are mentioned in Revelation?**
 8. How many disciples were there? - That was just a test.

One of the biggest tests we will take is in the area of our finances.

Illustration

- Hold hands out... - "If I tithe I am blessed if I don't tithe I am cursed."
- Simple decision - Not that hard

Straw Man

Opposition to tithing

1. **I cannot be cursed because I am a believer and Jesus died for the curse of sin.**
 - a. Does that mean as a believer I can live any way I want and have no consequences?
 - b. Did Jesus bare my sin on the cross?

I Peter 2:24

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness..."

- As a believer have you ever sinned?
- Did Jesus bare our sicknesses on the cross?

Matt. 8:17

“This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:
‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.’”

- As a believer have you ever been sick?
- Does that mean no matter what we do or how we live we will never come under a curse?

2. Tithing was under the Law and I am under grace.

- a. So... I am going to lie because I am under grace.

Illustration

- Give me your wallet.
- b. To say I don't tithe because tithing was under the law and I am under grace doesn't make sense.
 1. If it was wrong under the law does that make it right under grace?
 2. If it was right under the law is it now wrong?

Matthew 5:17-20

¹⁷ Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

- Their righteousness was based on the Law.
- Righteousness of Grace always exceeds righteousness of the Law.

Matthew 5:21

²¹ You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.

- Law says don't commit murder.
- Grace says don't even have it in your heart.

Matthew 5:27-28

²⁷You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

- Law says don't do it and Grace says don't even think about it.

Grace always goes farther. Grace always gives more.

- If you were to say that I don't tithe because I am under grace, then you are saying you give more than 10%.

II. Tithing is Biblical

A. Many people don't tithe because they really don't believe it is in the Bible.

Genesis 14:18

¹⁸Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High,¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying,

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.

²⁰And blessed be God Most High,
who delivered your enemies into your hand."
Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

- **This is 500 years before the Law. Tithing predates the Law.**

Genesis 28:22

and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.

- This is Jacob... 400 years before the law.
- There is no law that says to tithe -- and they are already tithing.

Leviticus 27:30

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.

- God said the tithe is holy. It is holy
- This is why God said to Malachi you are robbing me... The tithe is the Lord's

Deuteronomy 26:1-2

¹When you have entered the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, ²take some of the **firstfruits** of all that you produce from the soil of the land the LORD your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name.

Deuteronomy 26:13-14

¹³Then say to the LORD your God: "I have removed from my house the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the widow, according to all you commanded. I have not turned aside from your commands nor have I forgotten any of them. ¹⁴I have **not eaten any of the sacred portion while I was in mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor have I offered any of it to the dead.**

I have obeyed the LORD my God; I have done everything you commanded me.

¹⁵ Look down from heaven, your holy dwelling place, and bless your people Israel and the land you have given us as you promised on oath to our forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey."

- I have removed the tithe from my house and brought it to your house.
- Realized it did not belong there.

I love this next one because it is NT and it is in red.

If Jesus said to you, you ought to tithe would you do it?

Matthew 23:23

²³ "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

- Jesus is saying you have neglected **justice, mercy** and **faithfulness**.
- You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former is saying...
- You should **NOT** neglect justice, mercy and faithfulness while you practice tithing

If this is the only verse in the Bible that talks about tithing I'm tithing

Hebrews 7:1-3

This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, ² and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means “king of righteousness”; then also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace.” ³ Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, **like the Son of God** he remains a priest forever. ⁴ Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! ⁵ Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, their brothers—even though their brothers are descended from Abraham. ⁶ This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷ And without doubt the lesser person is blessed by the greater. ⁸ **In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living.**

- Men and women might pass the bags and count the money but...
- Jesus receives my tithe.

III. **Tithing is a benefit**

II Chronicles 31:4

He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD.

A. How many enjoy the spiritual food at LifeChurch? - **Somebody is paying for it.**

Illustration

- How many would go to a restaurant and eat the meal and skip out on the check?
 - Someone is tithing so there is still food in the house but the sad thing is some of you are under a curse.
- B. Testimony.. tither **“I am so blessed”**... non tither **“I cannot afford to tithe”**
1. You may have to downsize so that you can get under a blessing.
 2. You may have to make some changes in your lifestyle so you can quit robbing God.

II Chronicles 31:5-10

⁵ As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything. ⁶ The men of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of their herds and flocks and a tithe of the holy things dedicated to the LORD their God, and they piled them in heaps. ⁷ They began doing this in the third month and

finished in the seventh month. ⁸ When Hezekiah and his officials came and saw the heaps, they praised the LORD and blessed his people Israel. ⁹ Hezekiah asked the priests and Levites about the heaps; ¹⁰ and Azariah the chief priest, from the family of Zadok, answered, “Since the people began to bring their contributions to the temple of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare, because the LORD has blessed his people, and this great amount is left over.”

- Hezekiah is concerned because he saw all that the people brought in.
- Since the people began to tithe... As soon as they started tithing the blessing began.
- This is only a tenth you should see the people.

Illustration

Three men.

Conclusion

- Jesus said, I am going away for a while.
- While I am gone I want you to take care of my wife. The church is the bride of Christ.
- Do you realize how personal tithing is to Jesus?
- Do you realize how personal it is to Jesus when you do not love his wife?
- Do you realize how personal he takes tithing because it is supporting his wife?
- Do you realize how personal Jesus takes tithing because it is supporting his wife.

Every time you get paid...

1. You are telling Jesus how much you love him.
2. How trustworthy you are.
3. How much you love his wife.

The reason is there is a test and you need to know about it.

The great thing is if you pass the test you are blessed.

The bad thing is that if you fail the test you and your family are under a curse.

God doesn't want you to be under a curse.

Illustration

Three men

I am going away and I am going to send you money every month. \$10,000

I want you to channel some of it to my wife. I want you to give her \$1,000 that's 10% and you can keep 90%.

How is it going?

1st man \$1,000

2nd man \$2,000

3rd man well we need to talk about him. \$700 then \$300 this month nothing.

This is my wife and I am the one giving him the money and he can keep 90% of it.

What am I to do to the third man. I am cutting him off. I can't trust him, he is stealing from me.

I am going to take his \$10,000 and give it to 2nd man because I can trust him.

These three guys are telling me how much they love me, how trustworthy they are, how much they love my life.

Conclusion

- I. Tithing is a test
- II. Tithing is Biblical
- III. Tithing is a benefit