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A Tale of Two Tables

Text: Malachi 3:8-11

**8**

“Will a man rob 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.

**10**

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,

That there may be food in My house,

And try Me now in this,”

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.*

**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;

Throughout this book, when the prophet Malachi rebukes the people of God, Israel responds with an innocent-sounding “wherein?” or “what”? It is almost whining, in print.

1. “In what way have You loved us?” (Malachi 1:2)
2. “In what way have we despised Your name?”(Malachi 1:6)
3. “In what way have we defiled You?” (Malachi 1:7)
4. “In what way have we wearied Him?”(Malachi 2:17)
5. ”In what way shall we return?” (Malachi 3:7)

Can you hear the “what?” In the text? “What did *we* do?”

1. “In what way have we robbed You?” (Malachi 3:8)
2. “What have we spoken against You?” (Malachi 3:13)
3. “What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance?”(Malachi 3:14)

Four observations:

1. Tithing has a clear **definition**. It is one tenth(10%) of one’s income. Abraham tithed(Genesis 14:18-20). Jacob tithed(Genesis 28:20-22). If one thought that tithing was too legalistic, that it isn’t expected of “New Testament believers”, then let it be a baseline, minimum place to start grace-filled giving.

**Illus*.***

During the year leading up to the 2020 presidential election, I was curious about the generosity of the field of presidential candidates. There is not, necessarily, a correlation between one’s charitable giving and one’s ability to lead. However, I was just curious. Here’s what I found.

From [forbes.com](http://forbes.com). August 14, 2019. Article: How Charitable Are the 2020 Presidential Candidates?

*The most charitable 2020 hopeful, in terms of percentage of income donated, is Cory Booker. The Newark mayor turned U.S. senator has given $485,000 over the past decade, according to his tax returns. About half of that came in one year, 2013, when he donated some $130,000 in cash and another $130,000 worth of stock in REIT American Tower Corporation and Russian search engine Yandex to New Jersey charities. Every other year, his tax returns show gifts of between 2% and 16%.*

*Joe Biden and his wife donated just $70,000 to charity in the two decades leading up to 2017, per their tax returns. But when* [*their earnings skyrocketed in 2017*](https://www.forbes.com/sites/michelatindera/2019/07/10/bidens-made-nearly-twice-as-much-in-2017-than-previous-19-years-combined/#22acb32e68ef)*, so did their giving. That year they handed more than $1 million, or about 9% of their income, to 26 charities—including their family’s Beau Biden Foundation for the Protection of Children ($150,000) and the Joseph Biden Foundation ($100,000).*

From [WashingtonPost.com](http://WashingtonPost.com). April 10, 2016

Article: Missing from Trump’s List of Charitable Giving: His Own Personal Cash.

*Since the first day of his presidential campaign, Donald Trump has said that he gave more than $102 million to charity in the past five years.*

*To back up that claim, Trump’s campaign* [*compiled a list of his contributions*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/apps/g/page/politics/a-94-page-list-of-donald-trumps-charitable-contributions-from-the-last-five-years/2013/) *— 4,844 of them, filling 93 pages.*

*But, in that massive list, one thing was missing.*

*Not a single one of those donations was actually a personal gift of Trump’s own money.*

*Instead, according to a Washington Post analysis, many of the gifts that Trump cited to prove his generosity were free rounds of golf, given away by his courses for charity auctions and raffles.*

Tithing, by definition, is the giving of 10 percent of your own money, not someone else’s.

1. Tithing also has a clear **destination**. It goes to (belongs to) God (Leviticus 27:30). Speaking of destinations, some preach storehouse tithing, which suggests that the tithes go to your home church and your home church only. That is, the tithes go to the storehouse, the church house. I don’t teach storehouse tithing. I think, practically, we ought to give the largest part of our tithe to that place from which we derive our most significant benefits. Support the place where we are fed, I say. However, you and I have the freedom to spread our resources around, giving to organizations in whom we have confidence. I remind the people I serve that if they send money to Creflo Dollar he will not visit them in the hospital but I will. They ought to give their money in the place from which they receive services and pastoral care.
2. Tithing is a **dare** from God. One can almost hear The Eternal **daring** His people to trust Him. “Try me and see....”(v. 10b)

From [preceptaustin.org](http://preceptaustin.org):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TWO WAYS  TO TEST GOD | |
| [Malachi 3:10](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Mal%203.10) | [Malachi 3:15](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Mal%203.15) |
| Testing God to see how far  He would go in blessing | Testing God to see how far  they could go in evil |

The Hebrew word, *bachan* (baw-khan’) is variously translated “to try”, “to test”, “to prove”, “to examine”.

Psalm 139:23- *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;*

Job 23:10- *But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.*

To those who are reluctant to tithe: You might be robbing yourself of the benefit of an experiment with God. *Try* God and see windows of blessing open in your behalf.

The frustration of making money and still not having any is addressed in the OT book of Haggai, chapter 1:

**6**

“You have sown much, and bring in little;

You eat, but do not have enough;

You drink, but you are not filled with drink;

You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm;

And he who earns wages,

Earns wages *to put* into a bag with holes.”

**7**Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Consider your ways! **8**Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the [a]temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,” says the Lord. **9**“*You* looked for much, but indeed *it came to* little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?” says the Lord of hosts. “Because of My house that *is in* ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. **10**Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit.

1. Tithing produces measurable/observable results.
2. The windows of heaven are open(v. 10c)
3. The devourer is rebuked(v. 11a)
4. Fruitfulness will be yours(v. 11b). Cf. 2 Chronicles 31:5-12a.

**Applying the word:**

1. Plan your spending rather than letting your money slowly disappear each month. Someone has said that a budget is a way of telling your money where to go instead of wondering where it went.
2. While planning, set aside money for kingdom purposes **every time** you receive income(each pay period; every month when you receive your income)
3. Try God. Suppose He is trustworthy? Suppose this text which we have read is true?

Let me ***show*** you what tithing looks like.

(Here, call for those who have brought items to worship, for the sermon.)

**Closing**

A mother wanted to teach her daughter a moral lesson. She gave the little girl a quarter and a dollar for church "Put whichever one you want in the collection plate and keep the other for yourself," she told the girl. When they were coming out of church, the mother asked her daughter which amount she had given. "Well," said the little girl, "I was going to give the dollar, but just before the collection the man in the pulpit said that we should all be cheerful givers. I knew I'd be a lot more cheerful if I gave the quarter, so I did."

This pastor’s prayer is that we will all be more cheerful when we give the first ten percent of our resources back to the God who so graciously gave to us.

Amen