

**OPENING THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN  
MALACHI 3:6-12**

**NEED:** A COMMITMENT TO TITHING.

**PROPOSITION:** THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S BLESSINGS ARE BESTOWED UPON THOSE WHO FAITHFULLY BRING A TITHE TO GOD'S HOUSE.

**OBJECTIVE:** TO LEAD CHRISTIANS TO MAKE A COMMITMENT TO TRY THE TITHE.

**INTRODUCTION:**

When almighty God decides to bless a person, He knows how to do it. He can bring to bear upon that project all of His wisdom, heavenly resources, love, grace, and power. In fact, the blessings will become so abundant that the person will not have room enough to receive them. The prophet Malachi lifted up the possibility of such blessing in his little book that closes the Old Testament.

He wrote, "Test me in this and see if I will not throw open the flood gates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." Wouldn't that be a wonderful situation in which to find yourself? Would it not be wonderful to know in your heart that the almighty God of this universe has decided to surround and overflow your life with His blessings?

In explaining the dimensions of this to that ancient people, He used their agricultural language. He said, "I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit. Then all nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a

delightful land." When God chooses to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing, it involves holding back anything that would keep your business and efforts from prospering. It involves adding such a special dimension to your life that it will attract the attention of the world around you and they will know that you are "blessed!" You will notice that these assurances are given in each case by "the Lord almighty." He is the one fully capable of making this become realty in the life of the person.

Now, is there something that I can do that will put me in a position that God can open the windows of blessing over my life? There is! This is the burden of the prophet's message. At that point in history, the returned exiles in Israel were not under an open window from heaven. In fact, they found themselves frustrated day by day by the divine disfavor, a curse from the Lord. The prophet invited the people to come back to God and put themselves where God can put such a blessing upon their lives. When they wanted to know exactly what returning to God would mean, God pointed them to their withholding of the whole tithe. He said to them, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house. Test me in this!" There is something about God's people bringing 10% of their income to the house of worship that put their lives in a position where God can bless them. You do understand that the tithe is 10 percent. The "whole Tithe" would be the whole ten percent.

As they do this, they will experience the immeasurable outpouring of the favor of God upon their lives.

Is this promise still relevant today? Since we have moved from the old covenant to the new covenant, did this promise transfer into the new covenant? This question has been debated by many students of Scripture and some have concluded that it did not transfer. While I acknowledge that we are not under the law of the old covenant, I am persuaded that the blessings of the old covenant can be experienced in the new covenant. If you will bring at least 10% of our income to the Lord for the same reasons that the people of Israel brought it when they were at their best, I believe that the windows of heaven will be opened over our lives. In fact I am ready to testify that after about fifty-five years of living by this principle, I know it to be true. I want us to explore together what this involves so we can indeed have the windows of heaven open.

## **I. GOD OPENS THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN WHEN WE ACKNOWLEDGE HIS OWNERSHIP BY BRINGING THE TITHE.**

This is basic in understanding the tithe in the Old Testament. It was a grateful way of acknowledging God as being the source of every good and perfect gift. It was a way to acknowledge God as being the rightful owner of everything.

1. God owns everything because He made it.

We have recently considered this truth, but it is so important that it is worth considering again. The Psalmist declared it, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell there in. For He hath founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods" (Psalm 24:1-2). It all goes back to Genesis 1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." If it is true that God is the owner of everything, how

do I acknowledge His ownership? God established the principle of the tithe as a way for His people to regularly and gratefully acknowledge Him as the owner of all. For me not to be a regular giver is for me to act as though I am the ultimate owner of everything.

2. We bring the tithe in acknowledgement of our stewardship.

If God is the owner, then who are we? We are stewards! We are trustees! We have been entrusted with God's property and we over see it for Him. He asks of us that we bring Him on a regular bases a tenth of that which He puts in our hands as an acknowledgement that He is the owner and we are the stewards. So, if you want the windows of heaven to be opened over your life day by day, then begin to practice giving the tithe that belongs to the Lord. You cannot separate His ownership and our stewardship. When you acknowledge ownership, you are also acting as a faithful steward. This delights the One who owns all things.

## **II. GOD OPENS THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN WHEN WE OBEY HIS COMMANDS BY BRINGING THE TITHE.**

This is where God began this message to His people. When He indicated that the people needed to return to Him, He said to them, "Ever since the time of your forefathers have you turned away from my decrees and have not kept them." Then they wanted to know where they had departed from his degrees.

1. God has commanded the bringing of the tithe.

Even though the first incidents of tithing in Scripture predated God's giving the law to His people, when He finally gave the law at Mt. Sinai He did include a command about the tithe. In Leviticus He declared, "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" (Leviticus 27:30) Then He added, "The entire tithe of the herd and flock — every ten animal that passes under the shepherd's rod — will be holy to the Lord" (Leviticus 27:32). Nothing could be clearer. God had given to His people clear instructions about the tithe. When they gathered the harvest, every tenth bushel of grain belonged to the Lord. When they gathered the flock and set aside the new lambs, every tenth new lamb belonged to the Lord. When they gathered the grapes, every tenth basket of grapes belonged to the Lord. When you and I calculate our income, every tenth dollar belongs to the Lord. Indeed, God has declared that it is "holy unto the Lord."

This is the reason for the command in our text, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house." When a person brings the tithe they are obeying this command from the Lord.

2. Our disobedience takes what is rightly His property.

The words that God addressed to Israel are very sobering. He asked, "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me." This is a serious accusation. Robbery of a fellowman is a serious matter. Can you imagine someone robbing the eternal God? There might be an opportunity for me to steal something from you and you would never know it. Even if you knew it, you might be helpless to do anything about it. There is absolutely no way

you can ever take something that belongs to God without Him knowing. He is surely also able to bring whatever punishment might be deemed appropriate for stealing from Him. So, the charge of robbery is a serious charge. The people wanted to know where they might have been guilty of taking something that was sacred.

God answers them, "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse — the whole nation of you — because you are robbing me." Can you consider the significance of this for a moment? Let me assume that you are a businessman. You have entrusted the management of one of your businesses to me. I have become the steward, the one responsible for your business. It comes to your attention that I have been skimming out of the business monies for my own personal use. Monies that should have gone to you as the owner of the business are ending up in my bank account. Would you be inclined to raise my salary and see if there was not a larger business some place that you could put me in charge of? Unthinkable! Do you not figure that God is as capable in managing His resources as you are in managing yours? Do you think He is going to promote some one who had not proven faithful in management of His affairs? NEVER!

3. Our obedience gives Him the honor He deserves.

As the owner of all things, as the Lord of our lives, as our God and Savior, He is deserving of our honor. How do I honor Him most? I honor Him most when I faithfully and lovingly obey Him. When I do the things that He has instructed me to do, I honor Him. When I manage His affairs in the way that He has given instructions, I honor Him.

Is not God more likely to open the windows and pour out a blessing on those that so honor Him?

But you want to protest, "Pastor, this is an Old Testament matter!" Reason with me for a moment about this. Did not Jesus teach the same principles in His instructions to us? Did He not assure us that if we are faithful over a few things, manage them well, God will entrust to us greater things? Surely He did! This is exactly what tithing is. It is a way of honoring God by obeying Him. God has given a commandment and I respond not out of a sense of legal duty, but out of grateful respect, and I obey Him! It is when God sees this level of obedience that He opens the windows, the flood gates of heaven and bestows upon us a full measure of His kindness.

### **III. GOD OPENS THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN WHEN WE TRUST HIS PROMISES BY BRINGING THE TITHE.**

You cannot separate faith and obedience. They are always found together. Whenever I obey God, I am trusting Him. Whenever I trust Him, I will obey Him. That is what it comes down to when we are bringing to Him the tithe.

1. We trust His faithfulness to provide what we need.

This is precisely what the bringing of the tithe involves - it is an act of faith.

Mathematically, it may not make a bit of sense to believe that a person can go further on nine-tenths than they can on ten-tenths. From a business perspective, it may appear to be an act of folly. The thing that keeps it from being an act of folly is the activity of God.

When we trust Him, and God opens the floodgates of heaven and that which we have left is blest and multiplied beyond measure.

Alice and I have had so many experiences of the faithfulness of God in this matter. Ever since we began our marriage together, there has never been a payday in which we did not bring at least a tithe of it to the Lord. Many years ago, we stopped tithing and moved beyond the tithe to His church. In addition to this, God has granted us opportunities to give to other opportunities that came our way. He has been faithful along the way.

I can still remember seminary days in which there were some financially lean times for us. We came to Texas as newly weds with nothing except an old beaten up Plymouth and what we could put in a u-haul trailer. The things that were in the u-haul trailer had been given to us in showers and through the generosity of her parents. I still remember a payday while we were in seminary before I was called to be a pastor of a church when we had more month than we did money. Alice was teaching school, which was our only source of income, and there was still about two weeks to go until the end of the month. We had, as I recall, less than \$10 to make it to the end of the month. We made it a matter of prayer. We gave our tithe to the Lord and trusted Him to get us through the month.

One day I went by the Seminary Hill post office to check our mail. We had a letter from my grandfather. When I read the letter I noticed that there was attached to the letter a check for about \$70.00. In the letter he shared with me that he and a great-aunt had gotten together. In their conversation he said to my aunt, "I've had D. L. on my mind all day. I

just have a strange sense that he needs something." She said to my granddad, "Lawrence, I woke up this morning thinking about him. I had a strange sense that I ought to send him some money." They put their money together and it came to about \$70.00. That may not sound like much money today, but our total monthly income at that point was \$300.00 a month. That \$70 allowed us to live rather luxuriously until the next payday came. Again, God had proven His faithfulness when we trust Him.

2. We trust His ability to multiply our efforts.

Again, I remind you that He identifies Himself in this passage as, "the Almighty God." Indeed, He is the Almighty God. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we might ask or think. He is able to open the windows of heaven over your business, over your work, and to prosper the work of your hands day by day. There are dozen of testimonies in this congregation to the ability of God to multiply and prosper the efforts of His people.

Now, my challenge to you is God's challenge — "Test me in this!" There is not another statement just like this in all of Scripture. In this admonition, God invites us to give Him an opportunity to prove that He is God. He wants the opportunity to demonstrate in your life that He does control the windows of heaven, they are not controlled in Washington, and they are controlled in heaven! You are blaming all kinds of exterior forces for the difficulties you have been having, could it be that God has shut the windows over your life and over your business. I challenge you before the Lord that you give Him an

opportunity to prove to you that He is able to open the windows. He will not disappoint you.