

What Is The Tithe Anyway? Malachi 3:7-10

Intro: Today we begin a three part series; just maybe the most important series I will ever preach. In many ways if we don't get the lessons of these next three Sundays right in our lives then all the teaching on Spiritual growth will be a waist of time. That said it is crucial to the health and welfare of your church and your own survival that you make a commitment today that you will be here for the next three Sundays so you don't miss any of these three messages.

I will tell you that if you get what we are going to look at these next three Sundays and begin to put them into practice in your life right away the rest of your life will be radically changed for the good. In fact, until you come to understand what is going to be taught and begin to practice it the way the Scripture intends you will always struggle spiritually, physically and financially.

[Read Malachi 3:7-10/pray]

[Play into video – tithe – funny] Today, if you haven't figured it out already we begin a three part series on tithing. The tithe has been around since Abraham first ran into Melchizedek back in Genesis 14, long before the law was given. The tithe was formalized in the law, especially in Leviticus 27:30-32. When you move into the NT you find that 1 out of every 10 verses in the NT deals w/ our attitude toward money! Verses about faith...about 500/prayer—500/money—over 2,000. It is very apparent that Jesus was concerned with our attitude regarding money.

More than your attitude, God is interested in your money. Not because He needs your money...He certainly does not!...but

because YOU need it! Since you are important to God, your money is important to God.

God is interested in how you secure it/spend it/save it/share it. Immediately, some people say...don't talk about money, preacher, talk about something spiritual. That kind of statement shows a lack of Biblical knowledge, and a lack of spiritual insight. For nothing is more spiritual than how you handle your money. It is the supreme test of where our heart is.

Matthew 6:21 – ***“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”***

Adrian Rogers: *“a faith that hasn't reached your wallet, probably hasn't reached your heart.”*

Money is something we use everyday, it's our medium of exchange, our very survival depends on it. How can Jesus Christ be Lord, and not be Lord over our money? How can he care about us, and not care about that which is so intrinsically tied to our very survival?

“Don't talk about money, preacher, talk about something spiritual...wait just a minute! The Bible says that the love of money is the root of all evil! If all the evil in this world is directly or indirectly traced back to a love of money, then that means there is nothing more spiritual that we can talk about today, than our attitude toward money.

Eccles. 10:19 – ***“... money answereth all things.”***

“But, it's uncomfortable...I don't like it when the preacher talks about money.” If that's true, you would not have liked the

preaching of Jesus Christ since 16 of Jesus' 36 parables had to do with our attitude toward money!

Remember the story Jesus told about the widow's mites? Unjust steward—Lk. 16; Rich Young Ruler all of these have to do with our attitude regarding money.

It is clear that God is interested in our money. But there is someone else who is interested in our money and that is Satan. It is his desire to keep you under a curse/in bondage. And the best way he can do that is to affect your attitude toward money in a negative way. There is one more person who is interested in your money...you are.

Some churches these days hold their people accountable to the tithe, even requiring them to show what they make in salaries, and calling them in if they get behind! While I don't agree with that method, studies done in such churches have revealed some startling statistics: 3-7% total giving. Folks: that's not tithing! In fact that is incomplete obedience and therefore disobedience, in fact it is downright sinful. As Baptist we believe that baptism is an act of obedience to the Lord. When a saved Baptist doesn't tithe it would be like them not getting baptized, or if they give less than the tithe it is like getting "part way baptized" it just isn't right.

Take out your bulleting and on the back I want you to write down your weekly salary, make sure you shield what you write so those around you can't see what you write, write it out like this **[show power point slide]** But obedience is not about a church average, it's all about what YOU give.

The word "tithe" literally means tenth...ten percent...it's God's perfect plan. The wisdom of God planned for us a method of giving which is completely fair and equal to all who will obey, no matter

what you make!