

Gracious Giving

Malachi 3:7-12

Introduction:

- A.** Tithing under the Old Covenant – 1/10 of one's produce and income were to be given for the purpose of:
1. Supporting the p_____ (Num 18:21ff)
 2. Maintaining the t_____ system (Num 3:14ff)
 3. Providing f_____ for the needy (Deut 26:12)
- B.** Last week we learned that the New Covenant replaced the Old Covenant but some argue that the tithe should support
1. Pastors as paralleling priests – but the N.T. teaches that Jesus is our H_____ priest (Heb 4:14-16) and every believer is a priest of God to the w_____ (Rev 1:6).
 2. Church buildings as paralleling the temple – but the N.T. teaches that Jesus put away the temple system by becoming our s_____ and making each believer's b_____ a temple (1Cor 6:19).
- C.** Yet the N.T. urges believers to give
1. We are going to learn some principles from Malachi about the tithe.
 2. We are going to learn how to give graciously rather than legalistically.

Gracious giving begins with f_____ with God (7)

- A.** The people of Judah's root problem – self – c_____
1. They disobeyed God's c_____ to give
 2. The Lord told them to r_____ to Him
- B.** We must value the Lord a_____ all else.
1. We fall to s_____ because for that moment we place a higher value on it.
 2. The Macedonian Christians were examples of gracious givers (2Cor 8:1-5)
 - a. They lived in p_____
 - b. They heard that Jerusalem Christians were starving due to a famine and wanted to h_____ by giving relief.
 - c. They gave themselves to the Lord f_____, then gave.
- C.** Have you given yourself to the Lord?
1. Is He the center of your life?
 2. Are you fellowshiping with Him?
 3. Gracious giving begins with fellowship with God.

Gracious giving acknowledges the ownership of God (8,9)

A. The people of Judah's situation

1. Financially oppressed by the Persian government through heavy t_____
2. They had no thought for the needy because they were needy themselves. They viewed all they had as their own.
3. But God charged them with r_____ Him

B. The principle of the tithe is that God owns everything

1. Ps 24:1,2 – the e_____ is the Lord's and ALL it contains
2. All we have is what God has e_____ to us to manage wisely.

C. How can we give in a way that demonstrates wise stewardship?

1. 2Cor 9:7 – have p_____ giving (don't give God the leftovers, but make Him a priority)
2. 1Cor 16:1 – have r_____ giving (set aside your gifts as you receive your paycheck)
3. 2Cor 8:11,12 – have p_____ giving

D. What if you are locked into a lifestyle that has burdened you financially?

1. Follow the baby steps of Financial Peace (books available, course available, counseling available)
2. Break the chains of finances and experience the freedom to g_____ to the Lord.

Gracious giving results in blessings from God (10-12)

A. The Lord challenges Judah to t_____ His word by bringing in the tithe.

1. He promises to meet all their n_____ and more (v. 10)
2. He promises to cause their l_____ to produce so plentifully that the world will consider them blessed.

B. God decides what blessings we receive

1. It might be f_____ blessings
2. It might be s_____ blessings
3. It might be just the satisfaction of being useful to God in making a difference.

C. Legalistic giving – selfish motive

1. The Pharisee in Lk 18:10-13 tithed from everything he received but was c_____ by God.
2. The apostle Paul said that if he gave everything he had to the poor but did it without l_____, it's nothing (1Cor 13:3).

D. Gracious giving – selfless motive

1. Because you l_____ God
2. Because you love o_____

Conclusion:

- A. The church is called the b_____ of Christ (Col 1:18); each local church is also called this (e.g Rom 12:5)
 - 1. Jesus commanded the church body to make d_____ of all the nations by going, baptizing, and teaching (Matt 28:18-20; Eph 4:11-13).
 - 2. By giving to the church, you are giving to the Lord, His body.
- B. Believers are called Jesus's brothers (Matt 25:35-40) – by giving to meet the p_____ needs of believers, we are giving to Jesus.
- C. We are to l_____ our neighbor as ourselves (this includes unbelievers) which includes meeting spiritual and physical needs (.e.g. Good Samaritan Fund, Positive Alternatives, Family Promise of Tuscola County)
- D. Will you give graciously?