

shall they that put their trust in riches enter into the kingdom of heaven. Easier is it for a thick cable to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The danger of (drugging the conscience). They felt they were alright. They not only robbed God with a clear conscience but they committed other sins and yet were unmoved.

A man who makes a reasonable amount of money is like a man (exchanging a bicycle for a powerful car). You can do a lot more good with a car than with a bicycle. You can give your friends a lift along a dusty road. But you are a far more dangerous person. You can injure others and land yourself in the ditch--even kill yourself.

So it is with money, you lose your head over it, you lower your moral standards because of it. You even hurt your loved ones because of it.

When you die, someone will ask, how much did you leave? They will say, so much money, etc. What did he take with him?

God said you are going to be (cursed with a curse). They were not paying God! God knows how to collect it in other ways. But there is no joy if he must take it away through trouble, hospital bills, soul anguish.

Do you think God had anything to do with this curse? Do you think that you are greater than God? Do you think you can do as you please with his money? It will cost you something not to tithe. It is expensive to disobey the Lord.

Maybe you are having a hard time right now. Maybe you can't pay your debts. This is your chance to allow God to bless you by being obedient to Him.

A farmer had been tithing. When he harvested his crop, paid his grocery bill, seed bill, fertilizer bill and other and other debts. He did not pay God. One night his barn burned to the ground causing the loss of two horses and much grain. The next day he went to the bank, borrowed some money and paid to his church what was due the Lord. He felt God was punishing him for his disobedience.

III A definite challenge V.10

1. That God claimed a (definite portion) of the income of his people.

2. Bring all of (God's money to his house).

Look at the first part of the challenge... God claims

"PROVE ME" Mal. 3:10

Intro: (Paul) said in writing to the Corinthians "I fear that I have sinned against you by not preaching about giving."

Money is a vital part of human life. It represents our brain, time, talents. Money does a lot of good in this world. Money also does a lot of harm.

The (love of money) is the root of a multitude of evils. Many troubles come up in churches over money. If the money is not spent to their liking, or upon projects of keen interest there are those who feel ruffled and in some cases they are like a little boy, "I'll take my marbles and go home." Just count me out. I have actually heard some people say, if that's the way the church wants to spend the money, I'll give mine somewhere else, or cut my giving down. There is something wrong with our giving if it is controlled like a thermometer according to our personal temperature. I'll go one step further, something is wrong with our hearts,--there may be some unconfessed sin there.

It is (impossible to adjust the budget) to the idea of 1500 people,--and if there is any unchristian item in it, let's cut it out right now!

When some of you die and head for glory land, one angel will nudge another and say, "Here comes old Jones. By slaving hard all his life he saved a small fortune. He was tight with his Lord's money, and he didn't lay up his treasures in heaven."

Most of us forget that a (shroud has no pockets) in it.

I. A definite charge V.8

1. God knows what's going on!

One Sunday morning Dr. John A. Broadus walked down out of the pulpit when the ushers were about to take the offering. He walked along with one usher and looked at every penny, nickel, dime, quarter, and dollar that went in the plate. You may well imagine that some of the people were angry. Some were confused. Others were shamefaced. Others filled with amazement. All were evidently surprised.

When Dr. Broadus went back to his pulpit to speak his morning's text, he said to his congregation, "My people, if you take it to heart that I have seen your offerings this day and I know what sacrifices you have made and what sacrifices you have not made, remember that the Son of God, your Saviour, goes about the aisles with every usher and sees with His sleepless eye every cent put into the collection by His people!"

A man usually can do more than he thinks he can, but he

usually does less than he thinks he does.

2. "You have robbed God"

Malachi was definite and to the point "Will a man rob God?" Will he? We know there are those who rob the government, there are those who will steal after being elected to a position of trust, there are brothers who will rob brothers.

But will a man rob God? We rob each other and dishonesty may never be detected. But this is not the case when we rob Him, He knows what's going on. Men will rob God. Malachi said some of you have robbed God.

Prove it, they said. Tell us wherein we have robbed God! Does Malachi apologize for his sermon? Does he confess in shame that his charges were only hearsay? No, he has nothing to take back. He reaffirms his charge and cites instances. Every preacher ought to be specific just like Malachi. All right, I will, he said. You have robbed God in tithes and offerings. You have been withholding your tithes, talk about the government withholding our taxes, how about the money you withhold from God?

He said you cannot plead ignorance...they had known from babies the tenth of all their increases belonged to God.

They could not plead poverty...some of them were poor, but most of them had small incomes.

Yes, they still attended church...they gave after a fashion. But their gifts were small and cheap.

How little can we give, not how much. There were offering the sick lambs, the worthless ones. They were plainly dishonoring God 1:13-14. Go offer such to your rulers and see how such will be received. They were offering to God what they dare not offer to man.

The definite charge,--robbers! That God's people had withheld money that belonged to God and spent it upon themselves.

II. A definite curse v. 9

This curse was applied in two realms:

1. materially - v. 11 they were losing crops and fruit upon their farms.

2. spiritually - upon the spiritual condition of God's people.

Robbery and spirituality do not go together. Spiritual causes are held back for lack of funds.

Told Why This Curse Was Upon Them

In relation to this curse we ought to notice two other things.

1. How they earned this money - this is very important especially to the Christian. Does he crush others to make money for himself? A man in business who runs on dishonest or on cut-throat competitive lines has many conscience problems to face.

Can we show Christ all our books? Can we claim his approval for the way in which our money is made?

Their forefathers were honest in their work and careful about how they got wealth.

2. Dangers in making money, is the second.

They had a feeling of false security. This was the trouble with the rich young ruler. "They that are whole", said Jesus, "have no need of a physician."

"People who say they have no need of anything will believe that they have no need of God."

Money gives people the illusion that it can buy anything...feeling they can buy off God, or purchase friends.

We don't need God now, cut down on our giving.

Making money had given them a

There was a sense of wrong values. The real value and use for money had disappeared.

Jenny Lind, Swedish soprano, disappointed many of her friends because she turned down so many big contracts that would have made her famous in the world. One day a friend found her sitting on the sunny seashore reading the New Testament. The friend rebuked her for not taking her big contracts when offered. Quickly Jenny Lind put her hand over her testament and said, "I found that making vast sums of money was spoiling my taste for this."

If we don't watch out our money will get our sense of values distorted.

There was a sense of selfishness. You would think it to be the opposite...that a man would say when he had made a bit of money, "Now I can afford to be generous."

But the facts are that the poor give better in proportion than the rich. Few exceptions to the rule...a man worth more than perhaps he can count, well over a million called me a few weeks ago on the phone...I asked him how he and his money were getting along. He said, "We're still working for the Lord."

Money makes you afraid you'll lose it. It makes you want to get just a little bit more. Wealth does not help us see the needs of others. Jesus said, "With what difficulty

10% of our income. The Bible says this. God is absolute owner of everything. Now God has set apart 10%, to be dedicated to him.

He has the right to set the amount. He has set even the amount of our time one day in seven.

There are some who say that tithing belongs to Moses an the law. Let me give you a shock...tithing was practiced 400 years before Moses was even born. We can't say this is according to the law and not grace. Because Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek long before the day of Moses and the law.

Jacob (Gen 28:22) "Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth to thee." This was before the day of Moses. God blessed Jacob and he became a wealthy man.

The tithe was required of Israel and they were accounted as guilty of robbery when they withheld it.

Jesus taught that men should tithe in Matt 23:23.

The book of Acts tells us that the Christian's went beyond the tithe in their giving.

Jesus, standing by during a collection watched the people bring their gifts. He said not a word about most of the gifts. A widow came up and gave her little bit. Quite often we hear people say I have given the widows mite...listen what Jesus said "She hath given all that she hath." This is an example of giving beyond the tenth.

The second part of the challenge...bring God's money to His house. Storehouse - your church of which you are a member.

This makes it business like. It does not leave our church to fate.

There are some who give when approached by the right individual. If the proper man taps him he will give, or if some woman flatters him with some luscious mush he looses his purse strings. There is not very much business like in such giving.

There are others who pay if their emotions are stirred. This leaves giving to a matter of chance and there is little conscience or system at all.

The man who gives his tithe to his church is able to support his church in an intelligent way and at the same time enable his church to operate on a solid business basis.

This is a sensible cheerful way of giving. Bring the tithe to your church should be a joy and done in a cheerful spirit. It is mighty painful to extract some offerings, but with tithing it is a joy.

Brentley April 29, 1987 Prayer meeting ✓

Putting aside the first tenth as the Lord's and bringing it to the Lord's house is no kill joy. Once you settle this battle with yourself.

This is an adequate way for church support. If the members of any church decide to tithe, all financial problems would disappear. There would be ample funds for all the enterprisers of the church.

The Bible does not give us grounds here for scattering our tithe to the four winds. You see I do not have to decide what I'm going to do with my tithe. It's already settled for me. Last year my tithe amounted to \$570.00. Suppose I had said I'll send 70.00 to my favorite radio program. Send 200 to a mission Sunday School, give another 100 to a poor relative I would have robbed God, and let me insert here what's fair for one member is fair for another. If some of you handle your tithe that way, I have a perfect right to handle mine in the same way.

Suppose all of our members practiced giving as you do? What would be the financial condition of our church? She would have to get out and peddle pies!

Follow God in giving. When did he say the tithes was due? "When it comes into your hand...the first fruits! Where is it to be paid? in your church."

IV. A definite change of conditions promised

"Prove me" --put me to a test...bring your tithe into my storehouse and see.

Don't wait for somebody to come with a corkscrew and open your hand.

I Kings 10:1 - Queen of Sheba "She came to prove him with hard question."

God says, prove me, put me to the test!

Hebrews 3:9 "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years."

They saw proof of my goodness and fulfillment of my promises.

I Thess. 5:21 "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

Prove tithing - now this preacher did not say this...God is the one who makes this promise. He said you pay the tithe and I will promise you certain blessings.

Here are the changed conditions promised for tithing:

1. Spiritual blessing - v. 10

Places you in partnership with God. Help you grow in grace. God blesses the life that gives. "He which soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

Personally a spiritual blessing will be yours.

The church will be spiritually blessed through you.

2. Material blessing v. 11

Told these people in 3:11 I will rebuke the crop pests and give abundant harvest.

Jacob left home with just a walking stick and the lunch his mother had prepared...a few years later he returned with the 12 companies, a wealthy man.

John D. Rockefeller tithed the first \$5 he ever made and his tithe enabled the Lord's work to prosper by his millions.

It is simply a matter of trusting God. He will make the other nine-tenths go farther.

Why not prove this promise? Maybe you are in debt now, never heard of a tither who didn't pay his debts. It's a matter of trusting God...doing your part and God will do his.

3. Witness a blessing v. 12

When was the time you won a soul to X? -

I mean your witness for God will be a blessing. When you talk to souls your influence will be greater.

All nations will see how you are blessed and will honour you for your faithfulness to your God.

Believe that God will do what he says he will do.

ONE LAST Word: 1. Obtain Why not begin today & prove God?

2. Last Person, Why not Prove God Today - He said he will save you - come now & claim Him -

Old Japanese Proverb says: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." My friend you must begin something. Take your step into God's Day - The Lord will surprise you -