

The Gift of Giving (Malachi 3:6-12)

1. When we are confronted with truth we can respond in 2 ways. We can become angry and defensive and try to justify ourselves like Adam's son Cain. Or we can be humble, broken and teachable like David. *How do you normally respond? Are you teachable?*
2. A recent community survey revealed that a major objection people have about churches is that they are always talking about money. *Do you agree?*
3. We may say that we are prepared to give our lives to God but can't even trust him with 10% of our money. John Wesley said that *'the last part of a man to be converted is his wallet.'* *Why is this the case?*
4. Tithing can be a solution to some of our personal spiritual problems. Are you struggling with the same old trials and temptations? Do you really desire to grow in faith, and obedience? *Isn't giving just another test of obedience?*
5. Malachi regarded withholding the tithe as robbing God. He said v9 *'look around you people. Haven't you noticed? You are cursed with a curse. You are in trouble as a nation. The reason is that you have robbed God!'* The Christian Church is struggling to pay its bills and maintain its influence in society. *Could it be under the same curse?*
6. Malachi makes one of the most incredible claims in the whole bible v10. We are told to *put God to the test in tithing and see if blessing will follow.* Are you prepared to take up this challenge? Discuss
7. God has a way of making the 90% that we keep for ourselves go even further than the 100%. *Have you experienced this? Have you a story to tell about God's provision and blessing?*
8. OS Hawkins said *"The principal hindrance to the advancement of the kingdom of God is greed. It is the chief obstacle to heaven sent revival. It seems that when the back of greed is broken, the human spirit soars into regions of unselfishness.* Discuss
9. Paul said: *"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.* (Phil. 4:12). Does this mean that no amount of obedience - at any level - will guarantee smooth sailing all the time?
10. Malachi refers to more than just spiritual blessing. v11 *'I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit, says the Lord Almighty' ('I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes' AV).* Do you know of people who seem to go from one disaster to another? Do you believe that obeying God in our giving can help to break that curse?
11. Pray for each other: for obedience, blessing and fruitfulness.