
LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

TEXT: Malachi 3:6–12

MAIN IDEA: True worship of God includes faithfulness in generosity.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- We are **collecting new or lightly used coats, blankets, hats, gloves, and socks** for our neighbors in the Greater Paterson area. You can bring these to the lobby of either campus between October 30 and November 16.
- 'Tis the season ... to get on up to Ringwood for the **Christmas Kickoff, on Saturday, December 6, 9–11:30 am**. We're going to deck the halls, and have food, and do kids stuff, and do outreach. What's not to like?? RSVP on the Digital Bulletin!
- **Winter Sessions** is right around the corner! The topic for this year is **How We Got the Bible**. Come on out as Pastor Doug guides us through the story of how the books of the Bible were written, chosen, preserved, and translated throughout the centuries to the present day. We will kick off on Monday, December 1, at 7 pm at the Totowa campus, and will go for six weeks, with a break for the week of Christmas.
- Our **Student Ministry's Winter Retreat** is happening **February 20–22**. We'll be rocking out at High Point Bible Camp in Pennsylvania. This is a great way for our teens to connect with each other, their leaders, and the Lord. Sign up on the Digital Bulletin.

GETTING STARTED:

- Watch this week's Community Extras Video.
 - **Optional Icebreaker:** Why can money be such a sensitive topic for Christians to talk about?
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Return

Read Malachi 3:6–7a (through "... says the LORD of hosts").

♡ In verse 7, God promises his people, "Return to me, and I will return to you." This is a wonderful promise that, no matter how far gone we think we are, God will accept us back. What does it mean to "return" to God after a time of sin and backsliding?

Leaders: Here are some other passages that contain similar promises: Psalm 51:10–12; Isaiah 55:7; Ezekiel 18:21–23; Joel 2:12–13; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Luke 15:7, 10; Acts 3:19; 1 John 1:9; Revelation 3:19.

♡ How might the promise that God will always accept us if we repent be abused?

Robbing God

Read Malachi 3:7b–12



The people in this passage are failing to bring their full tithes to God. Why does God call this “robbing” him?



In the sermon, Ryan said that everything we have is a “stewardship” from God. What does that mean?



What are some things in your life that you have a hard time truly treating as a stewardship from God? Why do you think those things are hard to treat as a stewardship?



Ryan pointed out that some Christians justify poor giving habits by saying that the tithe was just an Old Testament thing and that we’re no longer obligated to follow the Law of Moses. What is wrong with this reasoning?



The truth of the New Covenant in Christ should motivate us to give more, not less, than what was required of Israel by the Law of Moses in the Old Covenant. Can you think of other ways where we, as Christians, are expected to do more, not less, than was required under the Law of Moses?

Don’t Listen to the Lies

Here are the two great lies that money whispers to us. **Lie number one:** Money will make you secure. **Lie number two:** Money will make you satisfied.



Why is lie number one wrong?

Leaders: Ryan mentioned three reasons “money will make you secure” is wrong:

1. Money can’t protect you from most tragedies.
2. God is the one who takes care of you (he loves you more than he loves birds, Matt 6:26).
3. True security can only be found in a relationship with God.



Why is lie number two wrong?

Leaders: Ryan mentioned two reasons “money will make you satisfied” is wrong:

1. It makes you spend a lot of time fantasizing.
2. Satisfaction is not a stuff issue, but a heart issue.



Can you think of a time when you thought buying something would make you satisfied, then you bought it, and just moved on?

♡ Ryan observed that not only does our treasure reveal our heart, but it also directs our heart (remember the illustration about his son's college football team). How have you found this to be true in your life? When have you given money to something and suddenly found yourself caring about it a lot more?

PRAYER TIME

Praise God for always welcoming us with open arms when we return to him.

Pray that God would enable you to honestly examine your heart in how you steward what he has given you.

Pray for God to bless you as you are led to be generous with what you have.