

February 23rd, 2025

Malachi 2:3:6-12 - How Great is the Generosity of God! (Sermon Transcript)

Go ahead and turn in your Bibles to Malachi chapter 3. We'll be starting in verse 6 this morning. As you turn there, I know Brother Darren will be a little disappointed. We're not going to be in a science classroom this morning. We're going to be in an English classroom. We're going to be in an English classroom.

Idioms are fun little turns of phrases and They're very common things that maybe have a particular word picture. If you're stuck in a difficult situation and then it seems like you turn around and there's nothing else that's gonna be good, we say that you're stuck. Between a rock and a hard place.

See, or you take a test and then you have to get a 70 percent to pass. You get a 70. 1%. You'd say you pass that test by skinnier teeth. Yeah. Someone's going to a job interview or an audition and you don't want to tell them, Hey, good luck. But you don't say good luck. Cause that's bad luck to say good luck.

You say, yeah. So these are very common things and it's fun to, to look at the origins of some of those. So you just said break a leg. The origin of that is in theater. Cause the idea was you went to an audition, and then if you got the job, breaking a leg meant that you passed the curtain.

The curtains are the legs in the theater. So if you broke the leg, that means you got the job. Yeah. Really cool. The skin of your teeth is biblical. It comes from Job 19. It's a weird Hebrew phrase. But that's how it got translated. That he, is surviving by the skin of his teeth. Job 19, if you want to go look that up later.

Rocking a hard place. I didn't look up the origin of that because I feel like that's pretty self explanatory, but So in Malachi, although a phrase doesn't get used God is really charging the people as we look in this text The idiom that I think God would use here would be you need to put your money where your mouth is So I already gave you the warning early on that's we're talking about today So just wanted to break the ice a little bit so that we're not super uncomfortable for the next 35 or so minutes let's read what God says through Malachi to the Israelites here in Malachi 3.

It says, in verse 6, For I, the Lord, do not change. Therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my



statutes, and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, How shall we return? Will man rob God?

Yet you are robbing me but you shall say how have we robbed you in your tithes and contributions You are cursed with a curse for you are robbing me the whole nation of you Bring the full tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house and thereby put me to the test Says the Lord of hosts if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need I will rebuke the devourer for you So that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear Fail to bear says the Lord of hosts then all nations will call you blessed for you will be a land of delight Says the Lord of hosts.

This is the word of the Lord as we look at this passage this morning. Just give us just the correct view of the topic being discussed here, just the situation that these listeners at the time would have been in, and the thing that God is saying to them, and what you're teaching us through this message through Malachi.

And just give us open hearts and open minds and let your spirit lead us this morning. It's your name we pray, Amen. At the very beginning of this, verse 6, and some of your Bibles, if you have titles, some of them that will put the little kind of subtitle after verse 6, attaching it to what we talked about last week, and other ones put it above here where we've broken it out.

Cause 6 is this transition, so if you remember last week, or if you weren't here, We talked about God being the righteous judge and the deserving nature of judgment not just to those who don't follow him, but even to his people, because they are also not following him. Verse 6 says, for I, the Lord do not change.

Very important, right? And it's also an implication that his audience, that he's speaking to here, does change, right? Because he says, Therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. From the days of your fathers, you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. He's thinking back to this covenant promise that he has made with the Israelites.

And that even though they don't hold, uphold their side of the covenant, God, because he is faithful, Does that's why he has not consumed them. We know that the correct response to God's unchanging love ought to be obedience to his statutes Which is just a fancy word for rules or codes if you think about like government codes But instead they've been doing the opposite and we've seen different case studies throughout this book and Today's as we've already read is



about their giving and then we have this beautiful picture in verse 7 the middle of it says return to me And I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts.

Now, what's important here is that God, as he also said he does not change, he hasn't moved, right? He hasn't changed where he's at. But the people of Israel have moved away from him. The picture I think about this is what God is saying is return to me and I will return to you. I think about magnets.

We are, so we are getting some science there, but if you have ever played with magnets in school or if your kids have magnets when you put two of the same pole towards each other, it pushes away, right? But if you turn that around and you have the two magnets and it's the opposite poles, as you bring one closer, suddenly the other one starts to get attracted and starts to come to it.

You don't have to bring it all the way. There's a mutual. coming together. That's the picture God is saying here. If you'll come back, if you'll return to me you're gonna find the things that I've asked and the things that I've said to you are going to come from me to you as well, right? There's a mutual attraction there.

And so we see in this invitation from God that God generously invites us to follow Him. God generously invites us to follow Him. We see this opportunity presented in various prophecies. And even implied throughout the law, basically do what I say and things go well, go against my law and things go poorly.

So there is a choice implied implicated in that. But it's not just an Old Testament thought. Although we've been in the Minor Prophets for a while we know that, again, if God doesn't change, then those principles are found in the New Testament. In James, the same exact concept is addressed. James 4, 1 says.

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly to spend it on your passions.

You adulterous people, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world and make him, makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the scripture says, He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us, but he gives us more grace.



Therefore it says, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep, but your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. Again, if Malachi had a New Testament parallel, James is a pretty good one. The way that he is speaking about the issues that they're facing. And there's nothing new under the sun, right? So the people of Israel, the things that they're being called to do, it's the same thing that we're being called to do, right?

We must repent from our old sinful lives. We must repent from our old, sinful lives and pursue Jesus. One commenter talks about this struggle like this, he says that Christians often struggle with a sense of dissonance between their victory through Christ and the present reality of their lives.

Basically saying, I want to live the way that God wants me to, but I just have a hard time always doing that. Paul also addresses that in Romans 7. So the conflict of desiring to be rid of sin, but not yet being perfect, makes even more of a case that we should continually repent and return to God.

But, part of repentance is not just a general acknowledgement of, okay, yeah, I'm bad, I'm a sinner, right? It is a specific naming of those places in which we are at fault. As we look at this text, the place that they are at fault comes up at the end of verse 7. First they ask a question as they have been asking throughout the book of Malachi.

At the end of verse 7 says, But you say, how shall we return? How easy it is for us to become complacent and not realize just how far off we have gotten. It's easy to look at this and judge the Israelites, but instead what we need to do is consider our own hearts and realize, where am I asking this same question?

How do I get back to God if I'm not? If I'm not doing the right thing, God should have already fixed that in me, but that's not the right attitude. And then, again, the case study here, in verse 8, God turns the question around, Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. Now, this is hyperbole, this is an extreme example, just like we've seen throughout this text.

Because can anybody rob God? No I think, man, just imagine someone going up and trying to pickpocket God, like it's just not, it's just not a thing. But he's using



this extreme example, this human example to help us to understand. And so the Israelites ask, they say, but you say, how have we robbed you?

And the response is in your tithes and contributions. Now. As we get into this, let's take a few notes here about, about thinking about what are tithes, what are contributions, what's being talked about here. Okay? First, we have to realize and recognize that God already owns everything. Right? Psalm 24 1, The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell within.

Exodus 19 5 says it this way, Now, therefore, if you indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples. Acts 4 All the earth is mine, right? There is nothing that God didn't create. There is nothing that man earned or made that isn't part of all of the earth.

The second thing is we talk about tithes and contributions is we have to realize, although tithing is established in the law, The idea of tithing actually was recognized before the law was established. There's a couple of examples but the clearest one is Genesis 14, 18 20. This is Abraham meeting with Melchizedek.

And it says this, And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said blessed be Abram by God most high Possessor of heaven and earth and blessed be God most high who has delivered your enemies into your hand and Abram gave him a tenth Of everything.

This is even before God has established his covenant, right? Abraham hasn't even had his name change yet. And yet we see that Abram is giving to The priest of the most high God. We also see this Jacob is another example. And you could even argue if you think back to Cain and Abel, right? The very first death in the Bible happens because there's two brothers who are giving to God and one of those offerings is accepted and one isn't because they haven't followed what God has told them to do.

The third thing is we talk about tithing and contributions. Is that part of God's expectation of our stewardship of giving is that we are giving back specifically to God. We're not just giving generally to charity. But as we look at the way that it is established in the law, there is a giving back to the Lord, to his house, and to his people.

In Deuteronomy 14, I won't read the entire passage on tithing there. It starts in verse 22, but at 28, it gives a summary. At the end of every three years, you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. And



the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the Sojourner, the Fatherless, and the Widow who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

So again, we see that this contribution is for The Levites, who are God's priests, as well as the people who cannot provide for themselves that we know the church is called to, and when even the people of Israel are called to take care of, the fatherless, the sojourners, the widows that, that contribution that they are getting comes out of this idea of tithing.

Now, if you want to argue and say we're under grace and not under the law, then we don't have to tithe. I would say, you're right, we don't have to tithe, we get to tithe. And really, we're called to be even more generous because we are meant to show the generosity of God in understanding our giving. 2 Corinthians 9, verse 6 says this.

The point is this. Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion. For God loves a cheerful giver, and God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

Did you notice how many times the word all was used there in that last verse? See, if we understand that God owns all, then all of those alls have to be there. It's not just sometimes. It's not God owns part of the things, or God only owns what we give back to him. He already owns everything, so he's the one that's going to be able to provide everything that we need.

As we see in this, then, God generously provides everything that we need. God generously provides everything that we need. We get so caught up. In our own everyday life, thinking about, alright, I got a plan for dinner next week, I've got company coming in, I've got to pay off my car, I've got to, whatever it might be we think that we are our own sole providers, our protectors, we have to plan.

And it's not bad to do those things. I'm not saying don't feed your children, I'm saying, don't save money up, don't pay off your car. No, we need to do those things. But, if those things are all we're focused on, we have missed the point, right? Jesus tells us in Matthew 6, the attitude that we should have towards everything that we tend to worry about in life.



Matthew 6, 25 Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on it. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, they neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his life span? Have you ever worried time into existence? No, if it's anything, it's the opposite, right? Worry eats our time and all of a sudden we realize, oh my gosh, I've been awake for three hours tonight worrying about this thing, right?

It does the opposite. Continuing in verse 28, Why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so closed the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, Will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. God is always faithful. to do what he says. If we pursue his kingdom, rather than building our own earthly kingdom, then he's good to provide everything that we need. And so if this is true, as we consider what's being said about the people of God in Malachi robbing him, what they needed to hear, and what we need to hear, is that we must accept God's ownership of all things, and happily contribute back to his house.

We must accept God's ownership of all things, and happily contribute back to his house. There is joy in knowing that I can't make it on my own anyway. And as we look into the next few verses, this section of text is so often misquoted, and so often used when any preacher talks about money. So my hope is, as we consider this text, you don't walk away with a false hope of financial gain.

If I put my one dollar into the church machine, I'm gonna get two dollars back. And that's not what this text says. We don't want a wrong view of what's being presented. So picking up in verse 9, we see this. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.



And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, that I will not open the windows of heaven for you, and pour down for you a blessing, until there is no more need. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts.

Then all the nations will call you blessed. For you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts. All this stuff in the second half of this portion of text here sounds great. I will rebuke the devourer. You'll have blessing until there's no more need. Everyone will call you blessed. Those are great things to desire.

As we've seen throughout the message of Malachi, God is fed up with the people who, that he is speaking to and the way that they're acting. So his charge in verse 10 where he says, Thereby put me to the test as a powerful statement. It's also terrifying, right? We know that in again, the law Deuteronomy 6 16 says not to test the Lord your God, right?

And then Jesus also quotes that in Matthew 4 when he's being tempted by Satan. So what's happening here? Why is God saying test me in this in the same way that? Hyperbole has been used to attempt to get the human to understand the divine like throughout this text, they've wearied God they aren't feeling loved by God, they've robbed God, right?

There's these human elements that we know don't really describe God accurately, right? This charge of test me in this is to this people in this moment because they have gotten so far off track. This is not an eternal command from God saying all people should test me with their money, but the truth of what's being told still shines through.

What this passage is teaching us is that God generously preserves his people through his commandments. God generously preserves his people through his commandments.

To understand this more fully, let's look at the law. Again, we know that we don't follow the law. A, we can't perfectly keep the law, but also we don't want to be legalistic in the sense of I'm gonna try to uphold the law in order to gain something, gain stature with God or whatever. But, we know that the law was established and was a good thing and is a good thing.

First, the law reveals our sin and it shows God's holiness. Romans 7, 7 says, What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means. Yet if I had not, yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is



to covet if the law had said, You shall not covet. But, sin seizing an opportunity through the commandment produced into me all kinds of covetousness.

For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death for me, to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment deceived me, and through it killed me. The law is holy, and the commandment is holy.

and righteous and good. The law not only establishes God's righteousness and our sin, but we also know that it was partially intended as a protection for us. Galatians 3 19 says, why then the law? It was added because of transgressions until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made.

And it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. It's the law of in contrary to the promises of God. Certainly not, for if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then the law was our guardian until Christ came in order that we might be justified by faith. So again, the law was established as a protection of God's people. Because we also know What Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount about the law, Matthew 5, says, Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.

I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

But, whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. So we are not bound to the law in the sense of it being the thing that provides salvation for us.

But the heart attitude that the law points us towards is a picture of Jesus. He fulfills the law. So if we are becoming more like him, then in some sense we are being aligned to God's law. We can't just replace the law. But instead, we see that there is a free gift of grace provided through Jesus sacrifice and a pathway for us as the



Spirit works in us to conform us more to this law that points out our sin and protects us.

In this case study of the people that Malachi is talking to, as we consider what it's teaching us about our heart posture towards our money and our possessions, the answer that, What comes out of this text is that we have to go all in on God's command to give because his will is accomplished in our obedience.

We must go all in on God's command to give because his will is accomplished in our obedience. And we could take out the giving part and enter in any other part of the law. Again, this text is talking about tithes and contributions. And the idea of going all in doesn't mean, okay, sell everything, right? As we saw earlier in Second Corinthians it's a cheerful giving.

It's not under compulsion. It's not reluctantly. It's not because I have to fulfill that dot of the law. But understanding that God owns everything, and He is our provider, frees us to give. As we close out this passage, some practical steps to think about. If you are a believer, and you are not currently giving, start giving.

Whatever amount that looks like. Again, not under compulsion, but willingly. And looking for the joy in knowing that giving back to God in this way honors Him, it begins a work inside you that starts to free you from being stuck in self reliance. Again, you'll hear preachers say, I'll give you a 30 day guarantee that if you start giving to the church, God's gonna give back to you, and if not, we'll give you back your money.

That is under compulsion. It's literally against what the Bible says. But the flip side of that is, you can probably talk to anyone here that has And does regularly give and they will have story after story of times where it was like I had three cents in the bank account And then there was a check that I didn't know was coming You know the ways that God provides and it's not even always necessarily money, right all of a sudden There's a vehicle that's available or if someone brings food by that, you know They didn't necessarily know that you were struggling but God provides in so many ways and so our giving opens our hearts to be able to Accept God's providence and his, and it opens up our dependence on him for all things.

If you are a believer, and you do already give regularly, consider your current attitude towards giving. Has it become perfunctory? Do you regularly give it any attention? Do you use it as an act of worship? Is there thankfulness that accompanies each contribution? It's a scary thing to stand up here and say this, but if you give online and it's just a regular thing that comes out, maybe for a month, turn that off.



Force yourself to write a check or have to put it in manually so that you can remember man God has provided this for me and I get to give it back Again, there's nothing wrong with keeping that regular thing But it can any habit that becomes rote doesn't become an act of worship There's an opportunity then for us to get the wrong heart attitude and even again as we consider Yes, this case studies about money, but what areas of your life do you need to go all in on following God's command?

This principle applies not just to giving, but maybe you struggle with pride, or anger, or lust, or whatever it is, fill in the blank. The same approach to recognizing God's provision and finding your peace in everything, in God, goes beyond just our finances. But, as we look at the finances here, as we look at what the people are hearing in Malachi in this passage of scripture, it helps us to realize God's great provision in all things, right?

Malachi calls out the heart of the people by pointing to their desire for safety and prosperity over trusting in God. And it's easy for us to depend on those things rather than our creator. Our love of money and possessions is easily a great distraction. So we have to remember that God's generosity is first seen in his invitation to be a part of his family.

His provision in creating us the way that we are, creating the opportunities in our lives. And that also is a part of the provision. We are each wired differently and so the ways in which we earn money. Like I shouldn't be a mechanic. It's not in me. Okay, but God has made us in those different ways And he's made those opportunities to get to those places where we are doing work Which work is a good thing work happened before the fall So don't think that work is a bad thing unless you don't like your job and we can talk about that later But God has provided those things for us, right?

If we can get that bigger perspective, then we don't get so stuck in trying to hold on to everything. And he also preserves us through our obedience in this way and not just in that ultimate idea of the punishment of sin, but also just in, in the daily ways of following God, of being obedient people of God.

And as we go from here. Again, I don't want you to hear you should give to the church because the Bible says so. Yes, I think there's truth in there, but you should give because God has given you so much, right? That's really what giving is. Our, God has gifted us giving in order that we would learn to depend on him more and see exactly what he provides for us.



So that is what I hope that we can walk away and not be like the people of Malachi where God says, You've gotten so wrong. I'm telling you to test me. All right, we don't want to be on that End of this calling but instead we want to be cheerful obedient givers and just be able to praise god in all the different ways that he's provided for us.

