

Sermon Series: Money: Friend or Foe?

5/4/25 “First Fruits,” Malachi 3:1-16, MEV

INTRODUCTION

Post-exile, troubles all across society, great spiritual decline; people had become unbelieving, distrustful of God; worship routine, not true

MAIN IDEA: Live for God fully now. How? Here are three things to do.

I. First, I'll let Jesus will deal with me now (1-5)

Messenger of the covenant = Jesus

A. to purify me (1st coming, currently, 2-4)...for the saved

Fuller's soap: a concocted soap used by a fuller, who cleansed and bleached cloth to cleanse the fibres of their natural oil or gums before dyeing. In some places the fuller was also the dyer. —New Bible Dictionary

Refiner's fire: for melting, testing, and refining of metals, especially precious metals such as gold and silver—removes dross & impurities

B. not be judged (2nd coming, 5)... for unbelieving and for unrepentant backslider (*list is representative, not exhaustive*)

1. sorcerer: whisper a spell, enchant, practice magic
2. adulterer... in marriage, toward God
3. liars
4. oppressors of workers, widows, orphans/fatherless
5. deprive foreigners of justice
6. those who do not fear God

ILLUSTRATION:

II. Second, I'll give to God what is His (6-12)

A. God does not change

1. His character & His holiness are always the same
2. His expectations...based on His character, holiness

B. He expects us to tithe (give 1st 10% of any increase to Him)

A. predates the Law (of Moses)

1. Abram tithed to Melchizedek (Gen. 14) & Jacob promised God tithe (Gen. 28)
2. reinforced by giving of first fruits of harvest

B. God calls us to test Him on this (10)

1. give first fruits to Him
2. watch for His blessing...not \$ we get
3. if choosing not to, no protection (remember Haggai...work harder but gain less & less)
4. He considers not tithing robbing Him
5. it is for our sakes: protects us from mammon

ILLUSTRATION:

III. Third, I'll guard my tongue and my heart (13-15)

A. of speaking hard things against God

1. it shows weakening faith—or no faith
2. it is what the world says about God...we're being affected by the world

B. thinking it is vain (a waste of time) to serve God

1. “what good does it do to obey Him?”
2. “why do I go around sad because of Him?”
3. “the proud are blessed”
4. “those who are evil do great; they test God but suffer no consequences”

ILLUSTRATION:

CONCLUSION: God's promise: if we return to Him, He will return to us

ALTAR: Surrender to God; resist God's purifying? Not tithing? hard words/heart toward God? will you live for Him?