**Are You Robbing God?**

 **-Malachi 3:6-12**

**Context:** God continues to confront his people and they continue to respond with incredulity….”How have we xxxxxxx?” In this section God stresses His immutability and the fact that he does not change.

*Why is God’s immutability so important to his character?*

*Why should it be an attribute that we prize more?*

1. **Neither of us change (3:6-7)**
2. God begins with a statement about his immutability.
3. *How is God’s immutability tied to his statement that they are not consumed?*
4. He is reiterating his faithfulness to his covenant.
5. He is also reminding them that they have not changed either and that they have disobeyed from the beginning (vs. 7)…”from the days of your fathers you have not kept my statutes.”
6. This is highlighted by the fact that God calls them “children of Jacob”
7. Normally they would be children of Israel, but here he is invoking the name of their patriarch before the name change…this highlights their rebellion and the fact that though they have had the blessing of God bestowed upon them, they still are acting the same.
8. **The roadmap for restoration (3:7-10)**
9. In verse 7 God calls the people to return, but they don’t think they need to.
10. Their question “How shall we return?” is not really a question on clarification but disputation…”How can we return when we’ve never left?” They don’t even know that they are lost.
11. God pinpoints their ‘heart-problem’ by focusing on their generosity…”You’re robbing me.”
12. The people are not fulfilling their tithes.
13. In the first part of Malachi God questioned the quality of their gifts (1:8; 1:13) and now he questions the quantity of their gifts.
14. *Is it about the money?* Yes! We may not like to talk about money, but our money talks about us. *How?*
15. *Why do you think God goes to their giving as indicative of repentance?*
16. Vs. 10…*What does God mean by ‘put me to the test?’*
17. He will outdo our giving every time.
18. The people were commanded to tithe…and if they obeyed, the blessings of the covenant would fall on them.
19. The people were saying, “We can’t afford to give” and God was saying, “You can’t afford not to give…test me.”
20. It is not a good thing to put God to the test, but I think the context here is that the people are to ‘test’ the faithfulness of God in his immutable character to keeping promises.
21. The blessings of obedience are:
22. Provision (vs. 10)
23. Protection (vs. 11)
24. Prominence (vs. 12)

**So What?**

1. God does not change. He keeps all of his promises.
2. God demands obedience.
3. Be generous with your giving.

**Should Christians tithe?** Some points to consider.

1. Grace always demands more than the law. (see the Sermon on the Mount)
2. Should we be less generous than those who only saw the shadow of the cross rather than its actuality?
3. God has given generously and since we are to model his actions we should be generous givers.
4. God has given sacrificially and we should give sacrificially too.
5. All we have is a gift from God anyway.
6. God does not want your money; he wants your heart. However, money, more than anything else indicates the state of our heart. What are you holding on to? What is preventing you from taking greater hold of Christ?