

My Favorite Passage on Tithing



Scripture

Bring the full tithe into the storehouse...and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. Malachi 3.10

A Word of Hope

Through the course of my ministry I have attended many spiritual retreats, participated in many Bibles studies, and have been a part of countless church meetings. One of the questions often asked, as a “get to know you” activity, is an invitation to share one's favorite passages of scripture. That is a very hard thing for me because there are so many Bible verses that I love. However, if I were to share the one passage of scripture that has changed my life the most it may well be this passage from the book of the prophet Malachi.

I remember the first time I consciously heard this passage. It was shortly after I arrived at the Cathedral of Hope. I was participating in a New Member Class and Bill Eure was teaching the class about stewardship. He quoted the scripture from Malachi and then explained how he had begun practicing tithing and what an impact it had made

in his life. The lesson was so genuine, so heart-felt, that I decided to do what Bill had done, to practice tithing.

It is now six years later and I have never regretted that decision. This one passage of scripture, and the practice of it in my daily life, has changed how I feel about money. Now, if I am honest, I often wish I had more money. I frequently have to limit the things I buy. Sometimes I have to postpone the plans to do something for my home or yard. I have to carefully plan for major purchases. Those are the realities of our living, but since beginning the discipline of tithing, I have consciously given away more of my resources than ever before in my life, much more than just ten percent. What I have discovered is that God is true to God's promises.

I am happier now than I have ever been and while there are many reasons for my happiness, I believe that one of the most important reasons is that I now spend my days in gratitude. I have shifted from being fearful of what I do not have to being grateful for what I do have. I am learning, day by day, week by week to be a generous person. I am learning the deep and profound joy of giving. In short, I have been set free. Money no longer owns me and I am grateful to God for that.

So, why not try it? What do you have to lose? After all, it is God who says, "Test me in this!" Why not try bringing God the full tithe, a full ten percent of your resources, and see what God does. I am convinced that God will do exactly as God promised and will open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings upon you.

Prayer

Holy One, you are so very generous to me. Let me be wholly yours so that I might be a blessing just as you have blessed me. Amen.

A reflection on tithing by the Rev. Dr. Jo Hudson, Rector and Senior Pastor of Cathedral of Hope United Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas: