

THE TITHE AND THE FIELD

by Gary Carpenter

Mal 3:8-12 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

Most people have been taught that this passage means, to the individual tither:

1. I will have more blessings that I can possibly use.
2. There will be no diminishing of my increase.
3. I will be so rich that others will call me blessed.

These blessings are usually taught as being "automatic" [like a formula] to the faithful tither. Yet in most neighborhoods, you can drive down the street and you can't tell any difference between the prosperity of the tithing believer on one side of the street and the non-tithing sinner who lives on the other side of the street. Why? Again, the words of the Prophet Hosea :

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

It was revelation knowledge that he was speaking of. That is, lack of the knowledge of God's ways. Let us look very closely at what this passage actually says. In *Mal 3:9* it says the "whole nation" was under a curse. Then in *Mal 3:12* it says "all nations" shall call you blessed, for you shall be a delightsome "land." God was talking about a "National" blessing and a "National Curse."

The key to understanding the tithe is to understand what kind of blessing God was talking about when He spoke through the prophet Malachi. The specific blessing that He was promising to send through the "open windows of heaven" to the nation of Israel was rain. When rain falls on a nation, it falls on all the people in it, both the just and the unjust.

Mat 5:44-45 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

In prayer, the Holy Spirit said to me, "*The literal blessing that God wanted to pour out through the open windows of heaven was RAIN. This was primarily an agricultural society, and rain was a fundamental necessity for their prosperity. Had they repented and brought*

in all of the tithes and offerings with a true and willing heart, and God had poured down rain upon their fields, it still would have done them no good had they not already had seeds planted IN THE EARTH. The tithes and offerings were not enough to produce prosperity, only to cause the conditions needed for prosperity to come to them. They still had to have seeds planted IN THE EARTH or else all they would have reaped from their rain soaked fields would have been MUD."

When the abundance of rain began to fall, the man who had sown a hundred acres IN THE EARTH would have received an abundant harvest. The man who had sown only one acre IN THE EARTH would have received a much smaller harvest, BUT THEY BOTH RECEIVED THE SAME RAIN. Should the man who only sowed one acre blame God because the other man sowed 100 acres? No, God sent the rain.

The man's prosperity was limited because he had chosen to sow only one acre. It was not God's fault. What about the man who had sown nothing into the earth? Does he have a right to rail on God as being unfaithful to send prosperity? No, it wasn't God's fault that he chose to be slothful and sow nothing into the earth. God did His part. GOD SENT WHAT WAS NEEDED FOR ABUNDANCE! Each man determined his own prosperity by the size of the field IN THE EARTH that he chose to sow.

Then the Holy Spirit got very personal with me and said, *"I have blessed the only field that you have sown in the earth as much as is possible. I am speaking of your job. That is a very small field, and it is wall to wall corn. If I am going to increase your material harvest financially, you are going to have to sow into some larger fields IN THE EARTH."*

This is the reason we don't see more of a difference, financially, between the saint and the sinner. Normally, most people have sown only a very small field, usually a simple job. God can bless that field to the maximum until every square inch has a stalk of corn growing up in it, but if that field is small (small growth potential), then you are not going to see much difference in his prosperity compared to his sinner neighbor.

In my case, I was still working as a driver for Crane Carrier when the Holy Spirit taught me this lesson. The first year I worked at Crane Carrier I made about \$26,000.00. Five years later, when the Holy Spirit spoke this to me, I was making about \$40,000.00, but that was the maximum harvest potential from that field. There was no more room for growth. It was maxed out.

To get a larger material harvest I was going to have to fence in larger fields either by acquiring more marketable skills to obtain a better job, sowing into stocks, bonds, or other investments, etc. I had to somehow sow more ground in order for God to be able pour down His blessing on it and give me a larger harvest.

The United States of America has been greatly blessed with economic conditions that foster prosperity for anybody who is willing to work. God has poured out upon us WHAT WE NEED TO HAVE ABUNDANCE. Only here can a person get a meager job flipping hamburgers at McDonald's and still be able to own a car and have an apartment. That is

extreme opulence compared to most of the world. **GOD HAS RAINED HIS FAVOR UPON THIS WHOLE NATION! AS A NATION, WE HAVE WHAT WE NEED FOR ABUNDANCE! GOD HAS DONE HIS PART!** So what is it that is limiting your individual harvest? **THE SIZE OF THE FIELD YOU HAVE DECIDED TO SOW IN THE EARTH.**

Example: A high school dropout who has no skills other than manual labor has limited the field that he can sow into. Perhaps the largest field he can work in is capped by a wage of, say, \$6.00 per hour. Here is the promise of Malachi to that man. God will rain favor upon that man to the point that his "field" is wall to wall corn. In this case, that means the man would rise from the minimum wage to earning the maximum potential of \$6.00 per hour. Once the man is making the top dollar for that job, **GOD HAS DONE HIS PART!** If the man wants a larger harvest than that, he is going to have to **SOW INTO A LARGER FIELD!**

That normally means acquiring additional skills. I am speaking of such things as technical school, reading, writing, arithmetic, computer skills, marketing, **SOMETHING! GOD DOES NOT BLESS INCOMPETENCE! GOD DOES NOT BLESS IGNORANCE!** He is not going to exalt you beyond your level of competence. Put very plainly, God is not going to promote you to be the head of General Motors Corporation if you are not qualified for the job. Also, Jesus said,

Luke 10:7b The labourer is worthy of his hire.

What does that mean? God will see to it that you are paid in proportion to your labor, but it also means that God is not going to have an employer pay you \$100 per hour to flip hamburgers at McDonald's.

God is pouring the rain of His favor upon you every day. The main thing limiting your prosperity is the size of the field you are sowing into. If you want to harvest from larger fields, then you are most likely going to have to acquire some additional skills that God can bless. This part is not fun. It requires effort. It means burning the midnight oil after you have already put in a full day's work.

For example, one of the first things that the Lord began dealing with me on after we began praying was for me to begin learning how to operate a computer. I had a full time job driving trucks, I attended every service at the Prayer Center when I was in town, but I burnt the midnight oil reading the most boring books on earth to learn how to operate computers. **THE FIRST STEP IS ALWAYS TO SEEK THE LORD VIA PRAYER. THE SECOND STEP IS TO BE OBEDIENT TO WHAT THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD TELLS YOU WHILE IN PRAYER!**

If I had simply refused to obey His instructions to learn the computer, **WE WOULD NOT HAVE A WORLD WIDE MINISTRY TODAY!** Learning the computer was a necessary step in order for me to sow into the size field we are sowing into today. **GOD DOES NOT BLESS DISOBEDIENCE! NEITHER DOES HE BLESS LAZINESS!**

AVOIDING MATERIALISM

This message has to be balanced with avoiding materialism. Step one for the Christian is always:

Mat 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The “things” Jesus was referring to was all of the things that the Gentiles spend their whole lives seeking after...such as longer cars and VCR’s. If you listen to this message and pursue sowing into larger fields only for the purpose of “heaping up treasure unto yourself” then you will fall into the same trap as most people in the United States. Most of the people in this nation are pursuing Mammon. Material wealth is the goal of most people. No, for the Christian, it is always,

Col 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

First of all, seek the mind of the Lord for your individual life by meditation of the Word, prayer and fasting. He will begin to reveal His instructions to you as an individual in order for you to be able to fulfill your call in the earth.

In my case, part of His instructions was to learn to use a computer. For some of you, He may instruct you to get your GED. For some of you, He may instruct you to learn to type. For some of you, He may instruct you to become a doctor or a nurse. For some of you, He may instruct you to start your own business. **ONLY HE KNOWS HIS PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE! YOU WILL ONLY FIND OUT WHAT THAT PLAN IS BY SPENDING TIME WITH HIM!** But as you learn to flow with His plan for your life, you will prosper and you will be in health even as your soul prospers. Again,

Mat 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

That means, above all else, to seek the mind of Christ, the plan of God for your individual life. He will show you what fields He wants you to sow into. Even when I was learning the computer my attitude was that these new skills were to be used “AS TO THE LORD.” He also has me learning the stock market, for the same reason. The skills acquired there are also to be used “AS TO THE LORD.” Our first and foremost responsibility is always to find the mind of Christ for our life **IN HIS KINGDOM!**

WHAT IS ROBBING GOD?

God is robbed when He is robbed of the opportunity of being “GOD” to His people. He cannot bless disobedience. **GOD IS A BLESSER!** In Malachi, when the Lord says,

Mal 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house.

You have to take it in context. Back up a few verses to see who He had on His mind:

Mal 3:5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the HIRELING in his wages, the WIDOW, and the FATHERLESS, and that turn aside the STRANGER from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

The “storehouse” was a depository in the temple where all of the EXCESS was stored. The widow, the fatherless, the orphan and the stranger were to be fed from this storehouse. Without this storehouse, they would be left unfed and the Lord was being “robbed” of being able to provide for them by the method He had designed under the law. God cares for widows, orphans and strangers. He does not like empty bellies. He had made provision for them through the tithes and offerings. But the people were “robbing” Him from being able to bless the poor. They only had themselves on their mind, not the things that mattered to God our Father.

TO THOSE LIVING IN OTHER COUNTRIES:

You may be saying, “That’s all well and good, Gary, but I don’t live in the United States of America. The economic conditions are not as favorable in my nation. What about me?” Remember this verse;

2 Chr 16:9a For the eyes of the Lord search back and forth across the whole earth, looking for people whose hearts are perfect toward him, so that he can show his great power in helping them. (Living Bible)

The Lord desires that we look to Him and Him alone as our help. Never forget all of the men and women in the bible who prospered greatly even when they had been taken captive by a hostile nation. Daniel, Joseph and many others prospered supernaturally even though they were actually prisoners held against their will. **GOD IS YOUR HELP!** No matter what the economic conditions are in the nation where you live, God will bless you if your heart looks to Him and Him alone as your **SOURCE!**

Isa 43:19-21 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.

SUMMARY

God loves to prosper His people. His prosperity has much more to do with your **RELATIONSHIP** with Him than it does **LEGALISTIC FORMULAS**. I suggest you ask yourself the following questions if you truly desire to walk in more of His abundance:

1. **ARE YOU SEEKING FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD?**

Do you spend daily time in the Word, prayer and periodic fasting to seek the will of the Lord for your life’s call in His kingdom? He has a plan for every member of His body. What is His plan for your life? What are you doing to find out what that plan is?

2. ARE YOU GIVING A PORTION OF YOUR INCOME INTO GOD'S WORK?
It will be hard to convince even yourself that you are very interested in what God is doing in the earth if you are not sowing a portion of your finances into the work of the gospel. Why do you want to prosper? To heap up treasure for yourself? To see souls rescued from Hell? Whose kingdom are you most interested in? His ... or yours?
3. WHAT IS THE SIZE OF YOUR FIELD?
Take inventory of your life. Is your field already producing maximum harvest? Is it already "wall to wall corn?" Is there any room for financial increase in the job you presently have? Has He already blessed your current field to maximum harvest?
4. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SOW LARGER FIELDS IN THE EARTH?
Spend time in prayer and ask the Lord to show you if there are additional skills He would like for you to acquire. You will find Him to be very practical. He is a Living Lord and He is very capable of giving you precise instructions regarding what you should do.

Of course, to obtain answers like these requires more of us than simply "plunking" our legalistic ten percent in the offering plate each Sunday. Answers to questions like these require TIME in fellowship with the Lord Himself through the avenues of the Word, prayer and fasting. NOW you are discovering the true path to prosperity. He prospers His people through RELATIONSHIP, not FORMULA! He desires your fellowship infinitely more than He desires your legalistic offering. For those who will spend time with Him and obey His leadership, there are no limits to the level of prosperity He can bring them to.

Isa 48:17 Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.

GOD BLESS YOU!