

## **A Tithe to the Lord**

If you have gone to church much at all you have probably heard the word tithe used. You might not know what that term means or where it came from. We use a lot of words and language in the church that we do a poor job of explaining. So this morning as we prepare for our offering I thought it would be good to talk about the tithe. Literally the word tithe means ten percent.

The tithe originated in the Old Testament. In Genesis 14 Abram, who would later become Abraham fought a battle with some wicked kings and defeated them. In those days the winner got the spoils of the victory. Abram meets Melchizedek the king of Salem who was also a priest of God. Melchizedek blesses Abram and Abram gives him a tenth of all the spoils.

From that time forward we see God's people being encouraged to give at least a tenth of what they made back to God. Perhaps the most famous of all Bible passages about tithing is found in Malachi 3:10 which says, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."

This verse is both a command and a promise. In fact God tells us to test Him. He is asking us to tithe but he is also promising to bless us in return. He says that He will throw open the windows of heaven for us if we will be faithful in the tithe.

Sadly most ignore this command and promise. Studies show that only 9% of all Christians in America tithe. That means that 91% are missing out on seeing the windows of heaven open up for them. Among those that regularly attend church the number is a bit better as 23% tithe. Still that leaves 77% of those that regularly attend missing out on God's blessing for their lives.

In these days of economic uncertainty when you need everything going your way, can you really afford not to have God's blessing? One way to assure that you do have His blessing is by being faithful to tithe back a portion of all He has blessed you with. This morning would be a good time to start as we take this offering up.