



## Bits of Hope from 06/11/2006

Pastor Cynthia L. Hale

### Mal 3:10

I never again want to live from paycheck to paycheck. I am living in the abundance that God has given me the ability to produce. When you are a slave to debt, you cannot help yourself or anyone else. The problem with most of us is not a lack of income; it's a lack of management. You may no longer be financially strapped, but you can remember when...

I have looked at quite a few financial investment plans, but there is a plan that is foolproof: Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse... You may have money to burn, and are not thinking about tithing. You may be looking for an investment that will bring you the best return. None other will work until you put things in place: Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you Mat 6:33. The success of any other plan will depend on whether you are tithing. You can't afford to pass up this opportunity.

The people of Israel were experiencing financial difficulties. They had come from exile and the temple had been burned to the ground. It doesn't seem real that we can come through some of the things we have come through, but God specializes in the impossible. The nation of Israel had come to know this time after time. They had returned to Jerusalem, the walls had been rebuilt and they had gotten comfortable. They began to disregard the command of God. They were spiritually out of line, and their lives were falling apart. Is your relationship with God close and intimate, or is it cold and distant? When disaster comes in your life, it is usually one of three things: God is calling you back to himself, God is testing you, or He is allowing you to experience the consequences for bad or unwise choices

The wonderful thing about God is that even when it appears that God is finished with us, he always leaves the door open for reconciliation, Mal 3:6. Israel's point of departure was in the area of their tithes. They were holding on to their resources as if they belonged to them. When we are doing fairly well, we tend to forget God. Deut 8:6-18 God knows how we operate. Some people think the laws of God are meant to restrict us, but they are there to help us. They are meant to be kept. It's like a marriage. Marriage is a covenant relationship. God has offered a covenant to us. It is an uneven covenant, when we don't keep our side of the deal; He continues to keep His side.

Keeping the covenant is our way of keeping the relationship intact. That's why our lives are in disarray. Israel felt as if God had turned his back on them. If they would return to Him, He would return to them. If God feels distant, guess who moved? You can't overcompensate in one area for disobedience in another. Wherever you have disregarded God's law, that's where you need to repent. Israel knew that a tithe of everything belonged to the Lord, Lev 27:30. Robbing is taking as well as withholding. You're not stealing

from the church; you're stealing from God. He's the one who gave it to you in the first place. You're not only robbing God, you're robbing yourself Mal 3:11.

In this age of materialism, we have to be careful to not hoard. When we rob God, we rob ourselves. They were robbing God of the much-needed help to provide for the poor, the widows, and the fatherless. We live in a society where the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Forty million people in the U.S. are without health insurance. Countless others are food insecure: unable to provide basic nutrition for their households. Many of us grew up eating rice and beans and peanut butter, but these people don't even have peanut butter. Tithing takes faith. It is a spiritual investment. It takes faith to give when you are not sure how you are going to make it. We need the faith of Abraham. But, we want God to show up before we tithe. Faith, is knowing it's already done before it happens. It's a faith commitment that requires consistency. Investing requires consistency 1 Cor 16:1-2.

Tithing is the best investment; not just financially, but also emotionally and spiritually. There is satisfaction in knowing that you are in the will of God. It's a deep decision to make. Commit everything to Him. God wants to heal your relationship with him and with others. Tithe.

Peace.

Volunteers are always welcome 770-696-5100