Malachi 3:

**Breaking Covenant by Withholding Tithes**

6“I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. 7Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty.

“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’

8“Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

“But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’

“In tithes and offerings. 9You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10Bring 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. 11I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the Lord Almighty. 12“Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty.

This may sound a bit rough. Being accused of robbing God. Not something you would really want to be accused of. In fact we may ask, just as they did in the scripture, “How could I rob God?” God says, “In tithes and offerings.” Tithes which belong to God but we keep for ourselves.

God tells us that we are to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Storehouse? What’s that? It is His church. We are to bring the tithe to our church. For us, it is here at Bayside. Why should we do this? That there will be food in my house. That there will be what is needed.

And then we come to the only time in the Bible where we are told to test God. “Test me, 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.” Blessings so huge that we can’t contain them. Blessings which flow out from us to others.

As we bring our first and our best to God, He will shower us with blessings. Those blessings will be varied for each of us. When we put God first in our lives He brings about radical change for us and those around us. To know Jesus and to have Him in our lives, what more blessing could we want or need. When we put God first we draw closer and closer to Him. We become His blessing to others. We become the light that people need in those dark times. We become the joy they need in times of sadness. We can share God’s strength when they are feeling weak.

May we witnesses to so so many blessings flowing out that they cannot be contained.

Thank you Lord that you have blessed me abundantly. Thank you Lord that we each have the opportunity to be blessings to others as we now, in worship and thankfulness, bring our Tithes and Offerings to you.

Amen.