

Sharecroppers

Lending the Lord a Slice of Life

September 6, 2026



Today we're focusing on honoring God by growing in giving His share to others!

And we're answering this: **How do we rob God or lend to God or buy Bread from God?** Now, When a pastor starts talking about giving, there's a good chance that either 1) It'll be a veiled effort to fund some program or project (which this isn't); or 2) He'll haul out *Malachi*, chapter three, and beat you over the head! So, with that said ... let's turn to *Malachi*, chapter three, in the OT.



"Will a man rob God? [Asks the Lord] Yet you rob Me. But you ask, 'How do we rob You?' In tithes [lit. tenths; a 10% slice of our life, that we set aside to honor God and help others] and offerings. [Special gifts for specific needs, or a grateful response to a blessing] ... [So] Bring the whole tithe [10% slice] into the storehouse" – Malachi 3:8-10 NIV



The NT stresses **joy, consistency, and growth in giving over a perfunctory, religious percentage.** (2 Cor 9:7) But, **tithe means tenth**; and it's a great starting point. So let's say you're in a pizza parlor, and Jesus comes over and says, "Mind if I borrow a slice? I know a hungry kid." You gonna say, no? Or, **"Wait till we're done and I'll give You all the leftovers."** Or would you likely offer everything, saying: **"Have whatever You want."** Or, let's say you already ate the pizza and you have ten \$10 bills left. And here comes Jesus. And He's like, "I know a mom who could use a ten-spot." You'd likely say, **"You sure that's enough?"** rather than, **"Don't be a mooch."** So, why would His presence so impact our actions? Isn't He always with us? We saw that Joseph gathered so much grain to share, it was like the sand of the sea. (Gen 41:49) Talk about *amber waves*! And timelines told us *Senusret III* was the Pharaoh of the famine. And *"Drain the Oceans"* showed us one of his fifteen massive, "mysterious" (not so mysterious), grain forts along the Nile.



And [now] Joseph gathered up all the money ... [in] Egypt and in the land of Canaan [where he'd been sold into Egypt. Think of the absurdity of imagining he'd one day be taking all the money of every Canaanite and Egyptian!] ... [and he] brought the money into Pharaoh's house. So when the money failed ... [and they] said, **"Give us bread"** ... Joseph said, **"Give your livestock"** ... and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the cattle of the herds, and for the donkeys. [See what he's doing? Saving the animals. They'll still keep 'em, but Pharaoh will feed 'em, and they won't eat 'em! Noah saved two of each; Joseph saved 'em all!] ... The next year [they] [realized what an incredible offer that was, and] said ... **"Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants"** – Genesis 47:13-19 NKJ



This has gotta go down as the *single* most incredible *justice* ever served, this *side* of the *cross*! Cuz **little Joe enslaved the entire nation where he was unjustly enslaved!** Including the *Potiphar plantation*. Now, with Joseph being a *foreshadow* of *all* things *Jesus* – revealed as the *Living Bread*: **How do we buy the Bread of Life from God?** Same way. **By surrendering all.** You see, we have *pizza analogy backwards*. If you *belong* to *Christ*, then it's *Jesus* who's *sitting* at the *table*, *handing* you the *nine slices*, and asking if He can *borrow* one to *give away*. Same goes for the *\$10 bill*. You see:



Those who [don't feel sorry for their sheep] *sell* them [and] say, "Praise the Lord, I am rich." – Zechariah 11:5 NCV



"You say, 'I am *rich* ... [Jesus warns] [But] you are *wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked*. [So] I counsel you to *buy from Me [the Bread of Life]* ... so you can *become rich* ... If anyone *hears* My voice and *opens the door*, I *will come in [with the food] and eat with him*'" – Revelation 3:17-20 NIV

Has *not* God *chosen* those who are *poor* in the *eyes* of the *world* to be *rich in faith* and to *inherit the kingdom* He *promised* those who love Him? – James 2:5 NIV

[As He said] "*Blessed* are you *poor*, for *yours* is the *kingdom of God*." – Luke 6:20 NKJ

As *poor* ... as having *nothing*, yet [actually] *possessing everything*. – 2 Corinthians 6:10 ESV

"You who have *no money*, come, [says the Lord] *buy and eat!* [With what? Yourself and all you have] ... Why spend *money* on what is *not bread* [As Jesus said, "*I am the True Bread*" (Jn 6:58)] ... [So] *listen to Me*, and *eat* what is *good*, and your *soul* will *delight* in the *richest of fare*. [And who doesn't love *fair food*! But there's *one more* thing we gotta *give* God if we're gonna *buy His Bread*] Give *ear* and ... *hear* Me, that your *soul* may *live*. ... [Because] [As the earth] yields *seed* for the *sower* and *bread* for the *eater*, so is My *Word*" – Isaiah 55:1-11 NIV



[So] "*Take My yoke upon you [share My labor of love] and learn from Me ... and you will find rest [not for your body, but] for your souls*. For My *yoke* is *easy* and My *burden* is *light*." – Matthew 11:29-30 NIV



Not because it isn't hard or heavy, but because it's *inspired and empowered and energized by love*. And taking on *His yoke* means, **to become a servant OF Christ we become a servant WITH Christ**. So, however many *slices* you *happen* to be *sharing*, just don't be *offering* the *last leftovers*. Choose to:



Bring the best of the firstfruits ... to the *house* of the *Lord* – Exodus 23:19 NIV

Because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved – 2 Thessalonians 2:13 ESV

And *now* for Joseph's most *Christlike* move yet. When he *enslaves* the *nation*, he not only *saves* the *nation*, but **he creates a new type of kingdom, where everyone's possessions become royal property**. No need to fear *droughts* or *famines* or *infestations*, cuz they now *serve* the *king*! Funny thing, *secular historians* know that *Senusret III* became *one* of *Egypt's* most *powerful* *Pharaohs*, **by establishing unprecedented direct royal control with no record of resistance**. But, *how* he managed to *accomplish* it is *another big ol' mystery*. But *Joseph* knows. Because:

Joseph bought all the land of Egypt [in exchange for bread] ... So the land became Pharaoh's. ... [Then [came the big Christlike reveal, when] Joseph said] "I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. [But, instead of looking for vengeance, he said] Look, here is seed for you, [royal servants] and you shall sow the [royal] land [you're now living on]. And [even though sharecropping was typically a 50/50 split between sower and landowner] ... you shall [only have to] give one-fifth to Pharaoh. [That's a 20/80 split] Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the [royal] field and for your [royal] food, for those of your [royal] households" ... So they said, "You have saved our lives [thanks to your One True God!] ... we will [gladly] be Pharaoh's [royal] servants." – Genesis 47:20-25 NKJ

And the Lord cut that in half to a 10/90 split with His royal sharecropping servants! But, if we're gonna buy the Bread of Life from God, by surrendering all to God, **we really gotta stop robbing God.** "How do we rob You?" They ask. In tenths and gifts, they're told. Little slices here and there. That's how we rob God – like how a gun is how a mugger robs a person; and how a crowbar is how a burglar robs a house. **Slices of life is how a believer robs God.** But the next question is: **What do we rob from God?** Cuz He makes it crystal clear that He doesn't need anything from us. Saying in the Psalms what Joseph could easily have said on behalf of Pharaoh:



"I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens [so keep 'em, but treat 'em as though they're Mine] ... [And] If I were hungry I would not tell you, for [have you seen My surfing silos?] the world is Mine, and all that is in it. [Cuz I created it, and love to share it]" – Psalm 50:9-12 NIV



And that's what we rob from God. **Sharing and caring and giving.** Not to mention one of His greatest loves: **blessing those sharing and caring and giving on His behalf!** Which means, **when we rob our Father, we cheat ourselves.** But it isn't like Malachi's robbers weren't giving anything; it's just that they were giving their leftovers. In our Route 66 video on Malachi, a sacrificial animal salesman is trying to pawn off a dead lamb, claiming it has a detachable ear. But when Malachi explains that it's for a party he's throwing, the embarrassed supplier says, **"My apologies ... I thought it was just for the Lord."**



"If I am a Father, [says the Lord] where is the honor due Me? ... When you bring blind animals for sacrifice ... [or] crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! [Know who their governor was? Nehemiah, who wrote the OT book, titled: Nehemiah] Would he be pleased with you? – Malachi 1:6-14 NIV



No! Know how we know? He literally wrote the book on firstfruits! Saying:

"We obligate ourselves to bring the firstfruits ... to the house of the Lord; also ... the first of our dough, [pizza or otherwise] and our contributions" – Nehemiah 10:35-37 ESV

[So] Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all – Proverbs 3:9 NIV

And whatever you do, just don't give Jesus Christ your crusts. **He only asks for a slice, and even that's for your benefit.** Cuz our Father knows that **our sharing conquers our greed and increases our Christlikeness** by offering us a visible share in His invisible work.

But, if we *only* ever offer our *leftover* time or money or energy, **we'll be withholders rather than shareholders.** The Lord practically *begs* us to *test* Him, by *setting aside* a slice of life to honor Him, and even keep 90% (of what's already His) for ourselves. Saying to just:

"Bring the *whole* ~~tithe~~ [one-tenth] [slice] into the storehouse ... [and] *Test Me in this* ... and see if I will not throw open the *floodgates* of heaven and pour out so much *blessing* [in you, on you, and from you] that you will not have room enough for it." – Malachi 3:10 NIV



Thanks to my folks, I've practiced this since Sunday school, when we had colorful envelopes in which to collect our coins during the week. And when I was older, I deposited my paycheck (remember paychecks?) and immediately wrote a *tithe* check (remember checks?), and tucked it in my wallet. Cuz I knew, **if I gave from what was left over, it'd be pretty lame.** Now I use automatic giving for Shar and my *tithe* and our *missions offerings*. Because, **it's great for offering stability.** Get it? And **it secures our consistency.** And **it fortifies our faithfulness.** Especially when I'm tempted to give my leftover "dough". And now that we live in the future, **we can just scan a QR code to share our offering, during our worship.** Because *that's* what it is. Worship.

And once we stop robbing Him, **we gotta start lending to Him.** Remember when the Lord spoke to Job out of the whirlwind, and posed this riddle:

"Who has given to Me that I should *repay*?" – Job 41:11 NAS

What's the answer? And don't say: *Nobody!* Cuz He's like, **"Look it up! Who lends to Me that I should repay? Come on, kids."** Job was a bit befuddled by it. But wise ol' Solomon knew that:

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay – Proverbs 19:17 ESV

Which is *why* I said, in the *pizza analogy*, that Jesus asks to "borrow" a slice. So now you know how to *lend* to the Lord. So the next time someone's reading *Romans*, and you hear Paul say:

Oh, the *depth* of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! ... Who has ever given to God, that God should *repay* him? – Romans 11:33-35 NIV

You should raise your hand and say, **"Oh! I know! I know! Whoever is generous to the poor!"**

[Therefore, Jesus said] "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth ... store up for yourselves treasures in heaven" [How?] – Matthew 6:19-20 NIV

[Simple] "Give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven." – Luke 18:22 NIV

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." – Matthew 6:21 NIV

[And] The generous soul will be made rich – Proverbs 11:25 NKJ

[Because] Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord – Proverbs 19:17 ESV

So, let's leave the leftovers, and lend to the Lord, and test Him (the right way), by sharing the wealth and caring for others in His honor, by offering a little slice of our Bread of Life!