

Faith and Deeds Part 6

“20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” (James 2:20-24 KJV)

We will continue in this message to speak about the faith that God wants us to have and the deeds that God wants us to do as we are speaking about Abraham, and how his deeds went along his faith in God. Abraham was the first one mentioned in the Bible who gave his tithes to God as we read here, ***“17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: 20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.” (Genesis 14:17-20 KJV)*** We will continue to speak about tithing in link to what Abraham did to bring his tithes to God.

When we tithe, it should be as an act of repentance and turning back to God, an expression of our faith and faithfulness, and by doing that, we will receive His reward. ***“6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. 7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? 8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. 10 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. 11 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. 12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 3:6-12 KJV)***

God is the same and His Word never changes. In the Scripture God assured us, we who are His people that He would never change, so the people and we among them would not be consumed or perished. He had mercy on His people. God is still giving them and giving us chances to return to Him. He is calling us to repent, turn away from our sins and turn towards Him. Now since we know that God was calling His people to go back to Him and follow His decrees and commands, then the question is, ‘What had they done wrong?’ Adultery, fornication, idolatry, or witchcraft; sure they had done grievous things against God that is why He was asking them to return to Him. They had turned away from His decrees and had not kept them. But they may ask, ***“Wherein shall we return?” (Malachi 3:7 KJV)*** This question will be asked by people who worship God and even serve Him but God is telling them to return to Him.

What had they done wrong that God was not happy with them? The charge against them was that they were robbing Him in terms of tithes and offerings. Lack of tithing is robbing God and God will not bless thieves unless they repent and restore what they had stolen. Withholding our tithes and offerings from God’s Church is considered a robbery. The tithes are the first ten percent of whatever we have received as income or other material blessings. After we bring our tithes to God, then we give our offerings according to what we have decided to give to the Lord. God’s children should not behave like thieves with God. Thieves or robbers will not enter the Kingdom of God, or in other words, there is no salvation for them unless they repent.

When people or believers rob God in this way, they will be under a curse; themselves, their families, the church that does not teach or admonish about this matter, and the whole society will be under a curse because the people of God are robbing the Lord. ***“9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.” (Malachi 3:9 KJV)*** God had sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to save us and to deliver us from sin and death. People who believe in Christ must repent of their sins and commit their lives fully to do His will. But then how can they say they have offered their lives fully to Jesus when they are not yet bringing their tithes and offerings to God’s storehouse on earth? How can they say that they love God with all their hearts when they haven’t offered their money to Him?

“10 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.” (Malachi 3:10 KJV) Tithes and offerings are used to support God’s work through His church. The tithes and the offerings will also support the workers especially those who do full-time ministry and don’t hold a secular job. Through the church support, they can do God’s work thoroughly. Every one of us should bring his tithes and offerings to the church that God had placed us in. Some attend the church, but give their tithes and offering to other churches or ministries for various reasons. Some do this because they feel a particular church is poor or in need and need financial support but these reasons or others are not acceptable. According to God’s Word, the tithes and offerings should be given to the church from where we receive our spiritual food. Someone might ask how those churches that are in need and have less income coming in or are located in poor areas manage? God is over them as He is over us. They need to teach their members and discipline their workers to tithe their income correctly and to bring their offerings to God with a glad heart. Then, the Lord will bless them and provide them as they continue to obey Him and apply His Word in their lives. God’s work needs financial support that comes from the tithes and offerings so that the spiritual food that is needed to supply and support the flocks is there. By giving our tithes and offerings, we receive greater blessings in the following ways:

1. The windows of Heaven shall be opened: “10 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.” (Malachi 3:10 KJV) Those who practice tithing regularly and who live a holy life, face no financial problem and they receive blessings in such abundance that they have no room to hold. God sure will pour out so many blessings in our lives as we diligently practice tithing. The windows of Heaven will be opened after we give our tithes. In fact, the incomes we have will not be enough for us, but after we bring our tithes, the windows of Heaven will be opened and pour out God’s blessings on us which will satisfy us

completely. Everything we receive needs to be tithed to the Lord by bringing it to the church that God has placed us in. Those who do not tithe their income or tithe regularly or incorrectly are robbing God. If we rob God, then how can we expect God to bless us and grant us wealth? The windows of Heaven will be opened only when we bring our full tithes to the Lord. When we bring our whole tithes to the Lord, then we are renewing our covenant with God as well as proclaiming our trust that God will sustain us with the remaining income of ours. Who can give us wealth? Only God can give us that through the windows of Heaven and that only when we bring our whole tithes to the Lord, to the treasury of God's church. It is not our salary, our smartness, or the business that will aid us in life, but it is the Lord who will bless us when we obey Him.

2. The devourer will be rebuked: *“11 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.” (Malachi 3:11 KJV)* As we bring our tithes to God, He will be the one to rebuke the devourer and save us from pests like taxes, accidents, sicknesses, penalties, fines, unnecessary bills, and so on. Therefore, once we get our salary or whatever income, we need to take the tithes out, so God will open the windows of Heaven to cover the bills and He will block the unnecessary expenses. Why do we need to bring the whole tithes? *“11 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.” (Malachi 3:11 KJV)* Those who fail to bring their tithes are exposed to mishaps like fines, accidents, and sicknesses. Not only do people fall a prey to material loss and physical illnesses, but also become victims of spiritual hindrances like fear, doubt, anxiety, devilish attacks, and even exposure to death. This happens because God is not rebuking the devourer and not preventing the devil's work in the life of those who cheat God by not bringing to God's church their whole tithes.

People who rob God in this manner they are breaking their covenant with God and they lose their partnership with God, live in lack, and never be in plenty. Many people complain and lament that they had worked so much, and labored hard, but at the end lost everything, and they wonder why things have gone wrong. What God has said is the following: ***“Neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 3:11 KJV)*** The fruit of the vine is the grapes and as they grow, they become green, then gradually acquire sweetness and as they mature, change color. If the grapes fall to the ground before they are ripe, then it will be of no use and all the labor of the farmer will be in vain. And that will be the outcome of the hard work and labor of those who do not bring their tithes to the house of their Lord, His church, that they have been placed in. All that they had collected will disappear without a trace.

Therefore, because of this, I do not give ministry to those who fail to give their tithes because I know that God will not allow it to prosper for they had broken their partnership with God in robbing Him.

3. The vines in the fields shall not cast their fruit before the time: *“11 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.” (Malachi 3:11 KJV)* The vine is the fruit of our hard work and labor in the fields. Suppose we work hard to plant a vineyard, when the fruit appears, God will not allow it to fall when it is still green. God

will see that your hard work over the years is not wasted but it will be established and stabilized on your behalf.

4. We will be called blessed: *“12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 3:12 KJV)* One way our faithfulness to God is revealed is when we bring our tithes and offerings, and He will reward us in such a way that everyone will notice and say that we are blessed by the Lord.

Christ also spoke about tithing and He recommended not to leave it undone. ***“23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” (Matthew 23:23 KJV)***

I usually keep track of people in our congregations who tithe and those who don't and those who are irregular. I follow them up and find out the reason for not tithing at all or not tithing regularly. In fact, I am concerned for them for the following reasons:

- They might have no job or income and I feel the need to help them to overcome this problem.
- They might be in financial trouble, having to pay debts and loans. In that case, they need special help and intervention from the church and counseling to get them back on their feet financially.
- They might not be aware that the windows of Heaven are shut down on them. In that case, I need to teach them that financially they can be restored even as they commit to bring their tithes.
- They might not be aware that they will be afflicted by the devourer if they will not bring their tithes in full. So I need to teach them and educate them about that.

My dear and beloved: Let us come back now to God and return to Him so He will return to us. Let us commit ourselves to God, to obey Him and bring our tithes and our offerings in full. Let us trust Him and His promises to us and be assured that He will fulfill what His Word says. Let us walk in the light of His Word so that we may have the life to the full and receive great blessings from God without the devourer knocking at our finances.

Let us apply what we had learned today in the life of our families, and our children, and in the life of our church, congregations and disciples. Let us be honest with God and bring to Him what is due for Him from tithes, offerings and firstfruits so He will open the windows of Heaven on us and rebuke the devourer from our lives.

Let us pray

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your Word that teaches me the importance of tithing and to give all what is due to you.*

Confess and renounce all your sins. Confess your unfaithfulness and your rubbing God by not bringing all your tithes to the storehouse in the church that God had placed you. Repent of your worldliness, being yoked with non believers and wasting your time and resources in doing

bad things. Repent of your lack in reading God's Word, and lack of prayers. Renounce being bad example to others, your lack of commitment and non willingness to serve God. Lord I repent, forgive me the following sins _____.

Lord I commit myself to the principle of tithing that I learned in this message. Lord I commit myself to tithe all my incomes and to give my firstfruits and offerings, and bring to the storehouse in your church. Lord I ask you to rebuke the following devourer from my life _____.

Lord I commit myself to teach my children to tithe and to give their firstfruit and to be faithful to God's church and to the ministry.

Lord, thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who repented and had committed their lives to apply your Word and the instructions that we received in this message. Lord continue to bless them and provide all their needs to continue to serve you, and living their lives for you.

Lord help us as a church to continue apply the teaching that we had learned from you in this message and especially about tithing and giving the firstfruits. Lord we commit ourselves to continue to teach about that to our children, disciples and congregations. Lord protect us and continue to provide for us so we can continue to serve you and do the good works of you. Lord lead us by your Holy Spirit; speak to us and guide us so we will be aware to do your will. Lord refill us with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need to go and serve you. Lord lead us to go on and evangelize, and make new disciples and train new workers to go and plant more Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, 'Multiplication in peace with implementing the Whole will of God.' Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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