

**Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of Jan 19, 2020**  
**Promises To Keep: This Is Only A Test**  
**Pastor Temple 8am & 10:30 Festival, Pastor Hall 9:15 & 10:30 Fam Life**

**Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15 min)**

- Anything to share about personal events since you last met or about applying last week’s message on “Come On Down”?
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

- Does it surprise you to that there are more Bible verses in which Jesus talked about money than those in which He talked about prayer? Why or why not?

**Review the Sermon (15 min)**

Please read aloud the sermon scripture, Malachi 3:8-12. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

**<sup>8</sup> “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ “In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> You are under a curse— your whole nation—because you are robbing me. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> I 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. <sup>12</sup> “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.**

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?
- Tithe or “maaser,” means 10 percent. Offerings is a more general term meaning contributions for sacred use. Why do you think both terms are used here (verse 8)?
- How is the concept of ownership addressed in verses 8-9? What are the items and persons involved and why does it matter?
- What conditional promise is offered in verses 10-11?

- How does acting on that promise require faith and trust in God?
- What do you think are the best motives for giving? What do you think are the benefits of giving?
- How is viewing tithing as a strategy for personal monetary gain a misrepresentation of the nature of the relationship?
- Is there a downside to acting on the promise? If so, how or why?
- Why is how the nations view God's people significant in verse 12?

### **Other Related Readings (10 min)**

- Would a volunteer please read out loud, Numbers 18:20-21, 25-29. How is the promised land allotments and the yield of the promised land and spoken of in reference to the worship of the Lord of Israel?
- Would a volunteer please read aloud Leviticus 27:30. How does God appear to view ownership and tithing here?
- Do you believe this concept carries over into the New Covenant in the New Testament as well?
- What kind of standard of giving did Jesus approve of or offer in his teachings?

### **Personalizing and Applying The Message (10 min)**

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional readings above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- How is a guide to giving to God and God's work in the world that is based on a percentage of income a helpful one to God's people?
- Is there a downside to NOT acting on the promise? If so, how or why?
- How is giving one of the ways to live an adventurous Christian life of faith?
- Do you think there is a relationship between one's personal happiness and money? Why or why not?
- How can giving help keep someone from being too focused on money?
- Next Sunday is commitment Sunday for the series on stewardship, "Promises To Keep." On that Sunday, to assist in ministry planning, cards of anticipated giving for 2020 are requested from members and active participants at Christ Church. Are you willing to think and pray about how God is calling you to give in 2020?
- Are there other conversation points with other small group members that would be helpful to you in thinking through this question? What other questions?

### **Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)**

- How are some ways that the gospel or the witness of Christ is advanced through our giving? Any examples you would care to share?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer