Mt Lebanon Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Making and Growing Followers of Jesus

November 12, 2026

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

As we celebrate Veteran's Day, I want to say a special thank you to all our veterans at MLEPC and all those who have gone before. My younger brother just retired as a Marine Lieutenant Colonel, a veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Our veterans have paid an unimaginable price for our country. If you have a chance to see it, I recommend the movie *Jimmy*, about Jimmy Stewart's experience as a bomber pilot in World War II and his struggles with PTSD afterward. *Christianity Today* says Stewart later attributed the movie *It's a Wonderful Life* with "the beginning of his spiritual healing" after the war. Bring tissues!

This Sunday is MLEPC's InGathering Sunday. We are grateful for all God has done for us, and as we celebrate His abundance, we also look to the future to which He is calling MLEPC. Malachi 3:10-12 is an often-quoted verse on stewardship Sundays around the world. The Lord says to His people, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this… 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." Can you imagine the abundance of God's warehouses in heaven? He truly can do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine.

The challenge in this passage is not in God's generosity; it is in the condition of our hearts. In each of the dialogues in Malachi, God is concerned with what is going on inside the people. A few weeks ago, we saw how God confronted them about their half-hearted offerings in the temple, giving diseased and damaged animals rather than the best. They doubted God's faithfulness, and then God pointed out their own unfaithfulness to their spouses. They complained about justice and yet were full of injustice themselves.

Now, in this dialogue, God opens with the accusation, "You are robbing me." The people deny it, but God counters with the charge that they are not bringing "the whole tithe." They are holding back from God, most likely hoarding their money for their own pleasure. God challenges them to put their money where their mouth is. If they fully surrender themselves to God and return to Him in faithfulness, that is when they will see the abundance of the Lord. The biggest blessing is in the material blessings—it is in the restored relationship with the Father.

This challenge is for us today as well. Even though we are not held to the strict 10% tithe requirement of the Old Testament, one commentator writes, "Tithing has everything to do with the coming of Christ because it exposes a heart problem for which Christ had to die. It also helps us understand how to live generously in response to God's grace to us in Jesus." How we handle our money and our offerings is directly related to our heart's condition toward the Lord. Are we holding back, or are we saying to the Lord, "All I am and all I have is yours!"?

As you prepare your hearts for worship this Sunday, and prepare your pledge cards for InGathering, ask God to examine your heart. Ask Him to show you what place money has in your life, especially in relation to God's place. As He is calling you to trust Him and return to Him, He invites you to give of your whole heart and trust that He will provide what you need and far more than that—a life and life abundant!

Blessings,
Pastor Carolyn