How Can We Discourage People From Stealing Inside The Church Building?

Malachi 3:8-10

Introduction:

A. We have had a problem with things being stolen inside this building.

 1. Cake.

 2. Clothes, jewelry, make-up, money.

 3. Bible school supplies.

B. Other congregations have a similar problem – Ridgetop.

 1. Interview with Marsha Whitman, March 4, 1975 at FHC. Her mother was

 at Ridgetop the night of the hold up.

 The Ridgetop church of Christ was robbed. Ralph Kidd, the regular song leader was doing the preaching. Two men in ski masks walked in-one with a gun and one with a knife. The one with the gun shouted for the preacher to “shut up” then walked to the front and held the gun on everybody. Ralph’s wife and Roy McConnell, the regular preacher, passed brown paper bags. Everyone put in their billfolds. The robbers told everyone to get down on the floor and left.

 2. Only a few weeks ago a criminal mind donned a ski mask, armed itself

with a gun and robbed the Ridgetop church of over $2,000. Holding the saints at gun point, they callously went about the business of extracting all the cash they could from Christians. It’s a sad commentary on the times: it made the news; the church was robbed.

B. There is another kind of robbery - unrecognized.

 1. A man in Yorkville, Tennessee put in $5.00 and took out a five-dollar bill

 and a one-dollar bill.

 2. This man didn’t know what he did.

 3. Many today don’t know they are robbing God.

 4. I would hope to be able to be helpful to one person in this situation today.

C. God’s plan. I Corinthians 16:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 9:7

 1. Personal -

 a. The congregation can meet the budget and I can be robbing God if

 I do not meet my personal responsibility.

 b. Not only does there need to be a contribution, I need to contribute.

 2. Proportionate.

 3. Periodic.

 4. Purposeful.

D. Malachi presents a problem and ideas that could suggest a solution.

 1. The problem – robbing God. Malachi 3:8-10

 2. Solutions.

 a. A thought to bring a change in attitude – try the same thing with

 your governor. Malachi 1:7, 8

 b. Prove God to see Him bless as He has promised. Malachi 3:10

E. Notice some ways we could rob God today.

I. ROBBING GOD OF MONEY.

 A. Just not giving enough.

 1. Liberally. Romans 12:8

 2. Bountifully. 2 Corinthians 9:6

 3. Try not giving enough to the government.

 4. Give and see God’s blessings.

 B. Habit giving.

 1. Some are in the habit of giving $1.00, $5.00, or $10.00 regardless

 of increase in income.

 2. Try that on the government.

 3. Prove God by giving a liberal proportion.

 C. Using the contribution to meet “emergencies”.

 1. Letting the Lord’s gift wait until bills are paid.

 2. As the youngster was setting out for Sunday school one morning,

he was given two nickels – one for the collection plate and one for himself. As he was rambling down the street he played with the coins. One of them slipped out of his hand, rolled away from him and disappeared irretrievably into a sewer. Gazing ruefully down through the grate he observed rather sadly, “Well, there goes the Lord’s nickel.”

 3. Try that on the government.

 4. Prove God and see if He will help you in difficult situations.

 D. Missing services and never leaving the contribution or making it up when

 you return.

 1. Not giving when you are not in town.

 2. Try that on the government when you are out of state or out of the

 country.

 3. Try God by obeying His commands and expecting His blessings.

 E. Having two or more incomes in the family, but giving for only one.

 1. Not give a portion of wife’s income.

 2. Not teaching children to give.

 3. Survey in teen class, May 3, 1981. Class made $593.00. 49.42 per

person; 1.52%. Class gave $9.00. 75¢ per person. 12 students, juniors and seniors. Lucien Claiborne, teacher.

 4. Train up a child to give little or nothing, and when he is old, he

 will not depart from it.

 5. Try that on the government.

 6. Prove God and watch Him bless the whole family.

 F. Withholding my contribution to vote against certain programs or decisions

 of the elders.

 1. Man in Kentucky: “I’ll take my contribution and go somewhere

 else.”

 2. I don’t always agree with the elders on matters of judgment, but I

 respect their authority to make those decisions.

 3, I don’t always get my way, but I always get my say.

 4. If I can’t trust you with the money I give, I won’t trust you with the

 leadership of my spiritual growth and that of my family.

 5. If you think that God is impressed with this action, try influencing

 the government by withholding taxes and letting them know why.

 6. Prove God and watch Him bless you even when the elders don’t

 make all the decisions you would have made.

II. ROBBING GOD IN OTHER WAYS.

 A. Not giving self. 2 Corinthians 8:5

 B. Not being a good steward of time. Colossians 4:5

 C. Not using my ability. Matthew 25:29

 D. Not using opportunity. Galatians 6:10

 E. Not giving thanks. I Thessalonians 5:18

 F. Not giving encouragement. Hebrews 10:24

 G. Not giving God glory. Acts 12:22,23; Psalm 115:1

 H. Not giving God my burdens. Matthew 11:28-30; 1 Peter 5:6-8

Conclusion:

A. I hope someone has been helped and no one has been hurt by this lesson.

 1. If someone has hurt today, there is a problem that I hope will be corrected.

 2. When you go to a doctor for your annual check-up, he or she will often

begin to poke, prod, and press various places, all the while asking, “Does this hurt? How about this?”

 If you cry out in pain, one of two things has happened. Either the doctor has pushed too hard, without the right sensitivity. Or, more likely, there’s something wrong, and the doctor will say, “We’d better do some more tests. It’s not supposed to hurt there:” So it is when preachers preach on financial responsibility, and certain members cry out in discomfort, criticizing the message and the messenger. Either the preacher has pushed too hard. Or perhaps there’s something wrong. In that case, I say, “My friend, we’re in need of the Great Physician because it’s not supposed to hurt there”(Ben Rogers, Leadership , Summer 1983, Volume IV, Number 3).

B Don’t rob God of your life and service.

 1. Obey Him. Acts 2:38; Acts 8:22

 2. Serve Him.