



Grace Fellowship of Morehead, KY

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Getting **BACK** to the **BLESSINGS!**

Sunday Morning, July 23, 2023

It has amazed me watching the church world.

I mean, I grew up in three services a week...and you went to all. There were times where you may HAVE to miss...but even high school sports had ONLY early practices on Wednesday nights (never a late one) so that people could go to church.

They didn't even THINK about the possibility of scheduling Little League or kids sports on Wednesday days...never!

Church was the place...especially if you were a Christian.

Morals were MUCH tighter...especially if you were a Christian.

Drinking was NOT accepted in the church...sleeping around was not accepted in the church...the music you listened to mattered...the movies you went to mattered.

Not to mention sexual preference or deviance!

Obviously I am not saying that everyone was perfect...but there was a CLEAR line between right and wrong.

Sure, many included the length of your dresses, length of your hair, etc. Which can be something about the respect for the house of God...but isn't necessary.

I look at so many churches...Christians...and I am confused at HOW they could have gotten SO FAR OFF!

The Book of Malachi

HOWEVER: If you look back at the Old Testament...you find out that this was the way of the Israelites. They would get tight with God...then their actions became habits...then they got annoyed...and started doing wrong things.

The book of Malachi is ONE OF THOSE BOOKS that reveals such a time.

ONE HUNDRED years after they returned from their exile in Babylon...they were back in Israel. The temple is rebuilt and INITIALLY things were good.

- * They were excited about the things of God.
- * They were enjoying His benefits.
- * Their fervor was HIGH for pleasing God.

HOWEVER: As the years went by...apathy (lack of passion) moved in.

The things they once did with passion were NOT being done AT MOST with just a habit of doing it...going through the motions.

EVEN FURTHER, they were in full out sin...corrupting the things of God.

(perhaps deal with the way things are now...much of what is done right is only lip service)

YET: God has a purpose for them...He has not given up on them...He is calling them back!
(the same as today)

IN ORDER TO GET THEM BACK: He had to correct them.

- * There were things they had to let go.
- * Their hearts had shifted...and God needed to get them realigned.
- * Things that they had allowed that derailed their lives.
- * Those actions or things were moving them away from the promises of God (and they couldn't figure out what was happening...they still went to church).
- * They were not living in His goodness the way they should be living.

NOTE: This affects God...you may think it doesn't but it does.

HERE IS THE KICKER: They didn't seem to know that they were doing anything wrong. They were surprised when God started asking them questions and bringing up the issues. (isn't that like Christians today...they are convinced that they are cool with God)

God wants them back!

NOW: There seems to be about six things that God says they need to get back in alignment with... things they have allowed to go haywire. Left undone.

Things they were no longer doing.

If they wanted to GET BACK to God's blessings they need to CLEAN IT UP.

BELOVED: I believe that this applies to us today.

Are there things that we have allowed to go lose its significance. That at MOST we do them by JUST going through the motions.

At least, we have allowed sin to move it.

(they are written in a certain form...God tells them what's what and they are shocked and dismayed by the charges...God clarifies.)

1.) They didn't recognize His love (1:2-5)

Malachi 1:2 – ***"I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob."***

(AMP) – "I have loved you, says the Lord. Yet you say, How and in what way have You loved us?...."

God says...I love you!

Their answer is how and in what way have you loved us?

That is a crazy concept to accuse the Lord of not loving them.

HOWEVER: They were looking at their battles...the rough things in their lives and couldn't figure out how this equated to love.

Here is the thing time and time again when God's children move from what they should be doing and how they should be living...they will find themselves in battles that God is limited in helping them.

They can't figure out why they are stuck.

God likens all of this to Jacob and Esau. Where Jacob God loved and Esau God hated (didn't love as much). Esau worked hard and toiled apart from the BLESSING of God. Jacob operated God's way and enjoyed the BLESSING of God...God was working for HIM.

When you are not doing things God's ways and you are expecting the BLESSING...you will be shocked at what thing will look like.

Seed time and harvest becomes giving your money away.
Going to church becomes having a two hour meeting in the middle of your life.

BELOVED: God loves His children in a different way than the world. We live in a BLESSING that the world doesn't...but we have to do things His ways.

Here are a few of those ways to be more complete...

2.) They offered polluted offerings (1:6-12)!

Malachi 1:6,7

- 6 A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, ***O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?***
- 7 ***Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee?*** In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.

Many people separate these two questions...but Malachi (God) places them together... because the answer to these things are the same.

The things they are offering God is NOT their best any longer. They have effectively become "bucket chunkers".

(read verses 8-12)

Vs. 10 – "Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand."

NOTICE: They think they are giving sacrifices...but God says NOPE! They mean nothing! When the people would talk to their neighbors about their plight...they would bring up how much they have given to the church...how they show up for worship services...and God doesn't care.

2 Samuel 24:24 – "And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: ***neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing.*** So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver."

BELOVED: What do your offerings mean to you.

NOTE: I am not talking about your tithes...those are NOT yours...they are the Lords. I am talking about your offerings.

Financial offerings! A bit here and there...maybe not hear nor there?

Praise offerings! Sing only when it is a song you like?

Time offerings! Doing things for God...for His house...for His people?

NOTE : These things fail to bring Him honor. Despise (vile, scorn, His name). Are you bringing polluted offerings or are you bringing your best?

3.) They mistreated their wives (spouses) (2:13-16).

Malachi 2:13,14

13 And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.

14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

NOTICE: They covered the altar with tears...God is not respecting your offerings! Why?

ANSWER: They were mistreating their wives.

“Treacherously” – unfaithfully, deceitfully

SPECIFICALLY: They were apparently keeping their wives until they had passed their youth and then put them away (divorce), and go get a young one in their place.

Simply put...they were wanting the covenant with God, but were breaking the covenant with their spouse. They didn't take that covenant seriously.

BELOVED: Every covenant you make (marriage) is serious business to the Lord. It isn't a mistake we call them vows. It is a covenant ceremony.

We have serious responsibilities inside that covenant, that we need to take seriously. You are not JUST buddies...JUST roommates! You are covenant partners.

1 Peter 3:7 – “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; **that your prayers be not hindered.**”

Job 31:1 – “I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?”

NOW UNDERSTAND: The men are not the only ones with marital responsibilities...in Malachi it was the men who were wrong.

HOWEVER: We all need to work towards a good marriage.

- * Not let our eyes wander.
- * Not let our affections wander (more than just another person).
- * Not let our responsibilities wander.

BELOVED: It will mess up more than your marriage!

4.) They accused God of being unjust (2:17).

Malachi 2:17 – “**Ye have wearied the LORD with your words.** Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? **When ye say,** Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?”

NOTE: The words of their mouth got them in trouble.

“Wearied” – gasp, exhausted, make faint

I almost get the idea of exasperated God.

(AMP) – “...you say, Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord and He delights in them. Or [by asking], Where is the God of justice?”

Why am I suffering and the wicked is prospering? Why not punish them!

BELOVED: God is good...He is the righteous judge. Psalm tells us they will be cut down... but we must watch our mouth.

NOTE: Being offended at God will keep you from harvesting (Mark 4).

(MSG) – “You make GOD tired with all your talk. "How do we tire him out?" you ask. By saying, "**GOD loves sinners and sin alike. GOD loves all.**" And also by saying, "**Judgment? GOD's too nice to judge.**"

This translation got me!

This presents the church world! Accepting sin! God won't judge...He is love!

NOW: Which absolute way is it? Not sure.

HOWEVER: When you talk like this...it is ignorant, unbelieving talk...and it wears on God.

5.) They were robbing God (3:6-12).

Well, we knew this one was coming!

Malachi 3:7,8

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.

AGAIN: Many point out two questions...but there is only ONE answer.

This area is an area of return...if you want to return to Him...YOU MUST start here! If you don't start here...you are not returning!

BUT THE ANSWER is to bring your tithes AND offerings!

Malachi 3 is more than just about your TITHE, though he does go into more details of the blessing of the tithe...it is about your OFFERINGS too!

Your tithe is NOT discretionary! Absolutely NOT! It is 10% of what you bring in!

Your offering starts with the 11th percent!

NOTICE: This book started out with them focused on what they didn't have and how they were struggling!

NOW God says RETURN to me and I WILL RETURN to you! Bring your tithes and offerings!

What will happen to you when you return?

Vs. 10 – open windows of heaven and pour out blessing

Vs. 11 – devourer will be rebuked; fruits will not be destroyed; mature fruits will come forth

Vs. 12 – everyone, all over will call you blessed...it will be obvious; delightful (pleasurable, valuable) land!

6.) Their words were stout against the Lord (3:13-18).

I kinda said all of that to say this...the words you speak are important to the Lord. You will live by the words of your mouth.

YOU THINK everything is cool with God, but your mouth is spewing wrong things? Wrong!

Malachi 3:13 – “Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?”

This point shocked them too. How have our words been stout against you?

“**Stout**” – courageous, obstinate, valiantly withstand.

BELOVED: It takes courage to speak contrary to what God says...the Creator of all things...knows all things...and you have the audacity to speak contrary to what He says?

OBSTINATE: To just keep doing something even when you know it is wrong.

VALIANTLY WITHSTAND: You just say what you want to say contrary to God in a big way!

Malachi 3:14,15

14 Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?

15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

BASICALLY: *It doesn't work!* People who are heathen are healthy and I am sick! People who are heathen are prospering and I am broke! People who are heathen are happy and I am depressed.

NOTICE: How this section finishes...

Malachi 3:16-18 (AMP)

16 Then those who ***feared the Lord talked often one to another***; and ***the Lord listened and heard it***, and a ***book of remembrance was written before Him*** of those who revered and worshipfully feared the Lord and who thought on His name.

17 ***And they shall be Mine***, says ***the Lord of hosts***, in ***that day when I publicly recognize and openly declare them to be My jewels*** (My special possession, My peculiar treasure). And I will spare them, as a man spares his own son who serves him.

18 Then shall you return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him who serves God and him who does not serve Him.

The point being GOD DOESN'T FORGET...you may not notice RIGHT NOW a difference... but when the day of CRISIS (Matthew 12) hits...the world will wither and YOU WILL STAND!