

Day 1

Scripture: Malachi 1:1-5

The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. ²“I have loved you,” says the Lord. But you say, “How have you loved us?” “Is not Esau Jacob's brother?” declares the Lord. “Yet I have loved Jacob ³but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert.” ⁴If Edom says, “We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins,” the Lord of hosts says, “They may build, but I will tear down, and they will be called ‘the wicked country,’ and ‘the people with whom the Lord is angry forever.’” ⁵Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say, “Great is the Lord beyond the border of Israel!”

Devotional

The people of Israel have had a rough history. After multiple stints of disobedience that resulted in the nation splitting in half and an eventual exile, you would think that they would be a nation eager to faithfully return to their God. By the time of Malachi, (approximately 400 years before the time of Christ), many Jews had returned to their homeland but were questioning the love of God. The people are not convinced that the Lord really loves them. To address that doubt, the Lord reminds Israel that Jacob (Israel) is chosen by God while Esau was rejected. It may be surprising that the people would ask the Lord, “how have you loved us” considering all that He had done for them. They had seen His provision for them firsthand but they still started to doubt. Aren't we guilty of that as well? How often do we wonder if God really loves us, knowing full well that He died to save us? Billy Graham famously said, “God proved His love on the cross. When Christ hung and bled and died, it was God saying to the world, I love you.” If God was willing to give us His Son, why would we ever feel the need to question if He loves us? He loves you more than you could possibly imagine.

Questions

1. Why do you think the people of Israel were questioning God's love for them?
2. Why is it easy for people to forget that God loves them?
3. Can you think of any verses that will help you remember God's love for you?

Day 2

Scripture: Malachi 1:6-9

⁶“A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’ ⁷ By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the Lord's table may be despised. ⁸ When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. ⁹ And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the Lord of hosts.”

Devotional

By verse 6, we see that there is yet another problem arising in Israel. The problem comes down to the people's heart towards worship. The priests have neglected their duties as priests and have halfheartedly served the Lord. God goes as far to say that they have despised His name. He even says that the worship that they offer to Him is evil because their hearts are not truly committed to worship. The Lord says that if they were to treat their leader the way that they treat God, their leader would not be pleased. If you treated people the way that you treat God, what would they say about you? Would they feel honored? Loved? Would they think that they were the center of your life? Or would they wonder if they mattered in your life at all? The way that we treat God will tell us a lot about how we treat people. If we have a low view of God, we will likely have a low view of those created in His image. If we have a high view of God, we will likely respect those made in His image and long to see them come into a relationship with Christ.

Questions

1. If you treated people the way that you treated God, what do you think they would say?
2. Why is it easy for us to treat worship like it is not important?
3. In your opinion, what does true God-honoring worship look like?

Day 3

Scripture: Malachi 1:10-14

¹⁰“Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. ¹¹For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. ¹²But you profane it when you say that the Lord's table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised. ¹³But you say, ‘What a weariness this is,’ and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the Lord. ¹⁴Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.”

Devotional

This is a moment for the Lord to flex not just over Israel but over the entire world. In this moment, it is like He is saying to Israel, “if you aren’t going to worship me, that is fine. I have no pleasure in halfhearted worship. Regardless of if you will worship me, my name will continue to be great among the nations because I am King over all!” Have you ever thought about how the Lord does not need your worship in order to be God? Jesus is Lord and Savior regardless of if we like it or not. God does not need one person on this planet, past, present, or future in order to be worshipped. Christ says that if all the world ceased worshipping God, the rocks would cry out in praise to Him! God is self-sufficient; therefore, He does not need anything, that includes our worship. Many think that God is just desperate for our praise but that is not true! He is not desperate for worship, but He is deserving of worship. Malachi 1:10-14 is a reminder for the world that God will be praised because He is King over all.

Questions

1. No questions today! But take a few minutes and reflect on the greatness of God. Think about all that He has done and how He is worthy to receive your praise.

Day 4

Scripture: Malachi 2:1-9

“And now, O priests, this command is for you. ²If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the Lord of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart. ³Behold, I will rebuke your offspring, and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and you shall be taken away with it. ⁴So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with Levi may stand, says the Lord of hosts. ⁵My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him. It was a covenant of fear, and he feared me. He stood in awe of my name. ⁶True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. ⁷For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. ⁸But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts, ⁹and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction.”

Devotional

The Lord has rebuked the priests for their disobedience. The priests were to be the spiritual leaders of the people. When the spiritual lives of the priests were neglected, the people would suffer. The impact of their spiritual lives was much greater than they may have realized. By neglecting their command to serve the Lord, they were neglecting the needs of the people. The Lord compares the priest of this generation with their forefather Levi. He reminds them that their forefathers served faithfully but they have turned away from them. 1 Peter 2:9 tells us that we as Christians are a royal priesthood. We are all called to serve the Lord faithfully and we represent Him to the world. People are always looking at you. What do you think they see? Do they see a priest that stands in awe of God, walks with the Lord, and points many back to Him? Or do they see a priest like one mentioned here in Malachi 2? Be the faithful servant of the Lord that the Lord has called you to be.

Questions

1. Do you ever think of how the state of your spiritual life may impact someone else?
2. Why is God-centered worship so important for believers?

Day 5

Scripture: Malachi 2:10-12

¹⁰“Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers? ¹¹Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. ¹²May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob any descendant of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts!”

Devotional

What is amazing about Malachi is just how much it reads like a New Testament letter. There are so many themes that are prominent in the New Testament that Malachi touches on in 4 short chapters. One of the primary themes is God as Father. In Galatians 4:4-7, Paul says, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.” Some of you may not have great earthly fathers, but we all have a perfect Heavenly Father. Even though He is our perfect Father, we tend to treat Him as if He wasn’t. We ignore Him, despise Him, reject Him. That’s no way to treat a Father that so greatly loves us. It is clear that Israel has rejected the blessing that comes with having God as their Father. Their faithlessness has led to sin which has pushed the children of God away from their loving Father.

Questions

1. Why do you think Malachi reads so much like a letter from the New Testament?
2. Is it easy to take for granted that we are children of God?
3. Earthly fathers are meant to reflect their Heavenly Father, not the other way around. Looking back on it, do you think your earthly fathers did a good job at reflecting your Heavenly Father?

Day 6

Scripture: Malachi 2:13-16

¹³ “And this second thing you do. You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. ¹⁴ But you say, “Why does he not?” Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. ¹⁵ Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. ¹⁶ “For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the Lord, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.”

Devotional

Divorce is a horrible thing. It was certainly not something that the Lord approved of when He created marriage. One of the difficulties of divorce is that it doesn't just impact a husband and a wife, it impacts the children. Here in Malachi, God uses the unfaithfulness between spouses and uses it to highlight how the people have been unfaithful to Him. Marriage was meant to be a lifelong covenant between a man and his wife that foreshadowed the covenant between man and God. James Montgomery Boice puts it like this, “the fundamental reason why God hates divorce is that God created marriage to illustrate the most blessed of all spiritual relationships- the union of a believing man or woman with Christ, the divine bridegroom of the church.” The marriage between a man and a woman is a beautiful thing. It is a lifelong commitment between two people where they promise to love, provide, and protect the other. To toss that away is a horrible thing. To toss away the loving relationship with Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church, is even worse.

Questions

1. What is the most important thing that a marriage should be based on?
2. Do you think most marriages would be better if they were to model Christ's sacrificial love for the Church?

Day 7

Scripture: Malachi 2:17-3:5

¹⁷You have wearied the Lord with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "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?" Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. ⁵"Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts."

Devotional

By Malachi 3, it is clear that the Lord is preparing something big. He tells the people of one more messenger that is to come and this time, the message will be unlike anything the people had ever heard of. Usually a prophet would come with a message from the Lord but this time, the prophet will be coming with more than just that: this time God Himself will be coming. Now that we have the completed Bible, we know the messenger to be John the Baptist and the Lord that the people were looking for was Jesus of Nazareth. For many, the coming of the Lord will be a glorious occasion but for others, it will be a day of judgment. The coming of Jesus shows us that the world is closer to the end than it is to the beginning. One day, Christ is going to come again. Like the people of Israel, we have been told this ahead of time so we need to be prepared. Will we faithfully wait for the day of our Lord's coming?

Questions

1. What do you think we should be doing as we wait for Christ to return?
2. If you are a Christian, do you think that the second coming of Christ should be something to worry about?

Day 8

Scripture: Malachi 3:6-15

⁶“For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. ⁷From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ ⁸Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. ⁹You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ¹¹I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. ¹²Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts. ¹³“Your words have been hard against me, says the Lord. But you say, ‘How have we spoken against you?’ ¹⁴You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the Lord of hosts?’ ¹⁵And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evil-doers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.’

Devotional

I am so grateful to serve a God that is never changing. Because He is never changing, His love for me is never changing. Despite all of the reasons that I give Him to not love me, He has not changed His mind. In verse 6, God says that it is because He does not change that the people of Israel have not been utterly destroyed. God still loved the Israelites despite their sins but sin still needs to be punished. God’s perfect love does not cancel out His perfect justice. God is faithful to forgive us of all our wrongs if we faithfully return to Him. In verse 7, God reminds His people that if they return to Him, He will return to them. That is the beauty of reconciliation with the Lord. Not only do we get to go to God, God Himself comes to us.

Questions

1. Why is it so important for us to be reconciled or brought back to God?
2. Why is it important that God is never changing?

Day 9

Scripture: Malachi 3:16-18

¹⁶Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. ¹⁷“They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. ¹⁸Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.”

Devotional

Sometimes it may feel like you are the only Christian in the world. You know this isn't true but isn't it easy to look at the state of the world today and wonder where you fit in all of it? We look at what is happening in the world and we think that Christianity is failing. But Christianity will not fail and the gates of Hell will not overcome us. These verses are a reminder that God will always have people on this planet that will serve Him. Even when things seem bleak, the Church will continue to stand. Almost 2,000 years of persecution has not been enough to tear down the Church of God. Verse 17 is an incredibly comforting verse for us as believers. It reminds us that we belong to the Lord, that we are His treasured possession, and we will be spared by Him. Take heart believer, you will never be alone ever again.

Questions

1. Do you think that persecution helps to build the Church or does it slow down the church?
2. Why is it encouraging to know that the Lord will always have people that will serve Him?
3. What do you think the “distinction between the righteous and the wicked” is?

Day 10

Scripture: Malachi 4

“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ²But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. ³And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts. ⁴“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. ⁵“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. ⁶And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

Devotional

The last chapter before 400 years of silence. The book of Malachi ends a lot like the book of Revelation.

For some, it seems like an ending, but for many it is only the beginning. Like Revelation, the end of Malachi points to something far greater ahead. It points to a day of righteousness, of healing, and joy. It points to a day where the righteous will overcome the wicked and it points to a day where the Lord will decisively act. Even though the whole book of Malachi might look like it is just a warning against disobedience, it is primarily a letter of love. It starts with God declaring His love for His people and the warnings that He gives are given because He is a God that loves His people. The book ends with one final warning in verse 6 but the book also ends with a beacon of hope. The sun will rise soon with healing in its wings. There may be darkness now but a marvelous light is coming. Like the people at the time of Malachi, we know that we have something to look ahead to. It is our knowledge that Jesus Christ is returning that will help us to remain faithful as we wait for the day of His return.

Questions

1. No questions today! Instead take the time to reflect on the 4 chapters that you have gone through!

