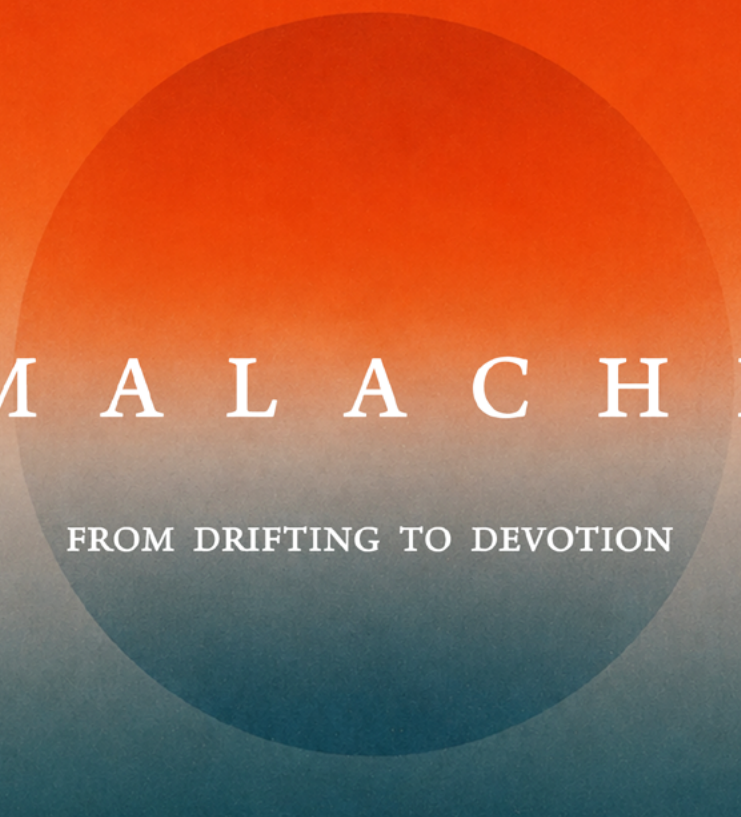
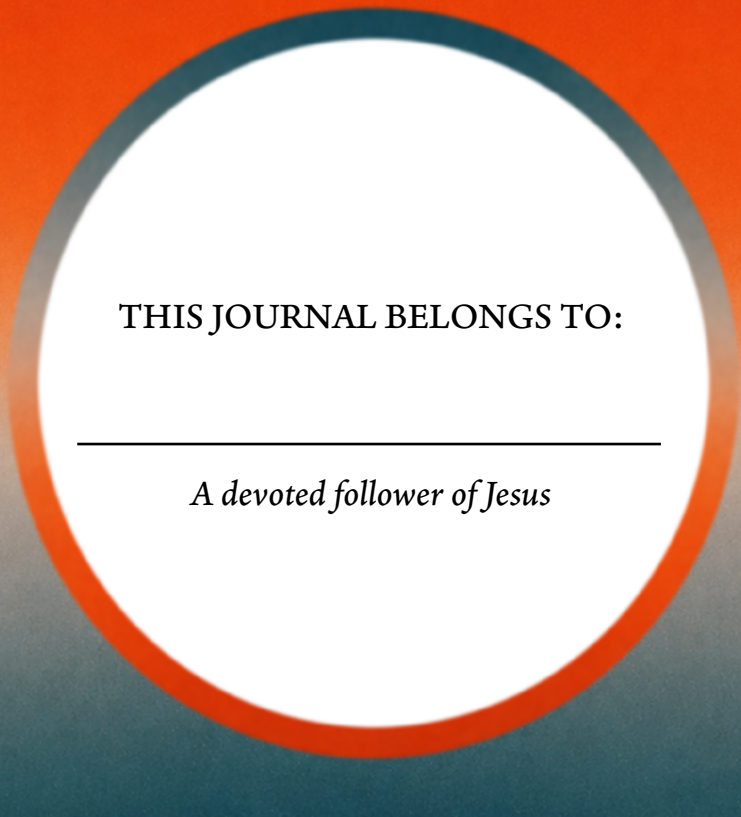




M A L A C H I

FROM DRIFTING TO DEVOTION

JOSHUA DIGGS



THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO:

A devoted follower of Jesus

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Welcome to the book of MALACHI

Malachi is a wake-up call for people who have slowly drifted from God.

His message speaks directly to us because spiritual drift rarely begins with outright rebellion. It happens slowly, especially when life doesn't turn out the way we expected. If we're not careful, our disappointment with God can gradually become distance from God.

Inside this 5-week journal, you'll find sermon notes, group discussion guides, and a daily gratitude journal to help you recognize God's goodness throughout the week.

I believe our time in Malachi will challenge us to return to wholehearted faithfulness, trust God's unchanging love, and look with hope to the return of King Jesus.

I'm excited to walk through this with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joshua Diggs". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Joshua Diggs
Teaching Minister

FACTS SHEET

BIG IDEA

Malachi confronts a generation that had drifted from God, calls them back to wholehearted faithfulness, and points ahead to the coming Messenger and Messiah who will make everything right.

AUTHOR: Malachi

Almost nothing is known about Malachi. His name means “my messenger.” So it may be his name or title.

AUDIENCE: Jews in Jerusalem

Malachi was written or maybe preached in Jerusalem to the returned Israelites during one of their annual festivals.

DATE WRITTEN: ~430 BC

TIME PERIOD: Post-Exilic Period

The Israelites had returned from Babylonian exile nearly a century earlier. Jerusalem and the Temple had been rebuilt, and the Jewish people were once again living in their homeland under Persian rule. But a new generation had grown disappointed with God and increasingly cynical about whether following Him really mattered.

FUN FACTS

- Malachi is the final book of the Old Testament.
- In 47 of Malachi’s 55 verses, God speaks directly. That’s about 85% of the book.
- Malachi is structured as a series of disputes: God speaks, Israel questions, and God answers. There are 6 major disputes in Malachi.
- Prophecy often refers to telling God’s Word and not just predicting the future. Malachi does both.
- Malachi prophesies John the Baptist and Jesus as the Messiah (Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6).



TIMELINE

B.C.

586

Babylon destroys Jerusalem, burns the temple, tears down the walls, and carries Judah into exile.

(2 Kings 25:8-12; 2 Chronicles 36:17-21; Jeremiah 52:12-16)

538

King Cyrus allows the exiles to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.

(2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4)

520

The Prophet Haggai calls the returned Jews to complete rebuilding the temple.

(Haggai 1:1-15; Ezra 5:1-2)

515

Under Zerubbabel, the returned exiles finish and dedicate the rebuilt temple.

(Ezra 6:14-18)

458

Ezra goes to Jerusalem. He teaches God's law and leads a spiritual revival.

(Ezra 7:1-10, 25-28)

444

Nehemiah returns with Persian authorization and leads the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls

(Nehemiah 2:1-8, 17-20; 6:15-16)

430

Malachi confronts a new generation's apathy, corrupt worship, unfaithfulness, and cynicism.

(Malachi 1:1-14; 2:10-17; 3:6-15)



How to get the most out of the BOOK OF MALACHI

SUNDAY TEACHING

Commit to attend worship every Sunday at 9AM or 11:15AM during the series. Bring this journal with you to fill in your blanks.

SMALL GROUP

Join your small group each week (or start a new one) to discuss what God is showing you and how to put it into practice.

GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Take 10-minutes every Monday-Friday to reflect on the verse-of-the-day and to write down at least three things you are grateful for.

7 GRATITUDE JOURNALING TIPS

1. **Schedule your gratitude time.** Pick a time and distraction-free place to be with God every day.
2. **Pray first.** Ask God to remind you of His kindness.
3. **Look back before looking forward.** Take 1 minute to mentally replay the previous day and notice blessings you may have rushed past.
4. **Be specific.** Instead of writing “my family,” write about the conversation, laugh, meal, or moment you are thankful for and why.
5. **Use your five senses.** Describe how the moment or thing that you are thankful for made you feel in the moment. What did you see, hear, taste, etc.?
6. **Include the hard days.** When life is difficult, ask, “Where did I see God’s grace, provision, or presence today?”
7. **Turn gratitude into prayer.** After writing, thank God specifically for what you listed. Let the journal become a conversation with Him.

THE 8 QUESTIONS

Malachi unfolds through a series of questions that reveal how far God's people had drifted from Him.

1
In what way have You loved us?
(*Malachi 1:2*)

2
In what way have we despised
your name? (*Malachi 1:6*)

3
In what way have we defiled You?
(*Malachi 1:7*)

4
For what reason do You not
receive our offering?
(*Malachi 2:14*)

5
In what way have we wearied You?
(*Malachi 2:17*)

6
In what way shall we return
(to You)? (*Malachi 3:7*)

7
In what way have we robbed You?
(*Malachi 3:8*)

8
In what way have we spoken
against You? (*Malachi 3:13*)



WEEK 1

Love Goes First

PT. 1: LOVE GOES FIRST

TODAY'S TEXT: Malachi 1:1-5

TIMELINE: See page 7

MEET MALACHI (v.1)

- *A prophecy: The word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi. (1:1)*
- All that we know about Malachi is in verse 1. His name (Mal'akhi) means "my messenger." It could be his proper name or his title.
- Forty-seven of the book's fifty-five verses are direct quotations from God.
- Malachi follows a question-and-answer pattern (see page 9):
 1. God makes a declaration
 2. The people question Him
 3. God responds with evidence
- Malachi prepares God's people for Jesus' coming. (see 3:1 & 4:1-6)

GOD GOES FIRST (v.2a)

- *"I have loved you," says the Lord. (Malachi 1:2a)*
- The Hebrew phrase "have loved" means _____.
- God's love comes before our _____.
- *We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)*
- *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)*
- Observations: _____

ISRAEL'S 1ST QUESTION (v.2b)

- 'How have you loved us?' (1:2b)
- They are really asking, "What have you done for us lately?"
- Observations: _____

GOD'S RESPONSE (v.2c-5)

- "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated..." (1:2c-3)
- God chose the second born son, Jacob. God did not choose Jacob because he was better than Esau. Jacob was a liar and schemer.
- "Esau I have hated" means to love _____ or not choose.
- We are not here because we are great.
We are here because God is gracious.
- Observations: _____

OUR 1ST RESPONSE

- Our Response: Remember God's _____.
- Whatever you rehearse in your _____,
you will perform in your _____.
- Israel forgot what God had done, so nothing God did ever felt like enough.
- _____ remembers what pain makes us forget.

PT. 1: GROUP GUIDE

THEME:

God loved us before He asked anything from us.

SCRIPTURE:

Malachi 1:1-5



ICE-BREAKER

1. What is something you tend to forget: names, appointments, passwords, or keys?
2. If you had to make a “greatest hits” list of ways God has been good to you, what is one thing that would definitely make the list?



REFLECT (*Read Malachi 1:1-5 together*)

3. Imagine if someone you had loved, provided for, and sacrificed for looked at you and asked, “*How have you loved me?*” How would you naturally want to respond? God begins with, “*I have loved you.*” What does the difference between our natural response and God’s response reveal about His character? (Malachi 1:2)
4. How does beginning with “*I have loved you,*” reframe everything that follows in Malachi?
5. What does Israel’s response, “*How have you loved us?*” reveal about their hearts? (Malachi 1:2) What circumstances or disappointments cause people today to ask that same question, even if they would never say it out loud?

6. Read Romans 5:8 and 1 John 4:19. What do they teach us about who the security we can have in our relationship with God?



TAKE ACTION

7. Where are you most tempted right now to interpret God's love through your circumstances rather than interpreting your circumstances through what you know about God's love? (Romans 8:35-39)
8. Repeatedly rehearsing disappointment can shape the way we think about God. What negative thought about God, yourself, or your circumstances do you tend to replay? What truth from Scripture could you begin rehearsing instead? (Psalm 77:7-12)
9. The ancient Passover song Dayeinu means, "It would have been enough." Take 3-minutes to jot down two or three specific things God has already done for you that deserve gratitude, regardless of what happens next. Share them as a group.
10. Josh said that we are always one generation away from forgetting God's love. What can you do in your home, with friends, or your small group to help the next generation remember the faithfulness of God?



PRAYER

Thank God that His love begins with His character rather than our performance. Ask Him to expose places where disappointment has made you question His goodness. Pray for eyes to recognize His past and present faithfulness and ask Him to make gratitude a regular practice in your life. Pray that your family and your church would become people who remember, rehearse, and tell the story of God's grace.

DAY 01

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever.

PSALM 136:1-3

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 02

*To him who alone does great wonders, His love endures forever.
Who by his understanding made the heavens, His love endures forever.
Who spread out the earth upon the waters, His love endures forever.*

PSALM 136:4-6

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 03

*Who made the great lights—His love endures forever.
The sun to govern the day, His love endures forever.
The moon and stars to govern the night; His love endures forever.*

PSALM 136:7-9

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 04

*To him who divided the Red Sea asunder His love endures forever.
And brought Israel through the midst of it, His love endures forever.
To him who led his people through the wilderness; His love endures forever.*

PSALM 136:13-14, 16

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 05

*He remembered us in our low estate His love endures forever.
And freed us from our enemies. His love endures forever.
He gives food to every creature. His love endures forever.
Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever.*

PSALM 136:23-26

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

WEEK 2

*The Weight of
Worship*

PT. 2: THE WEIGHT OF WORSHIP

TODAY'S TEXT: *Malachi 1:6-2:9*

ISRAEL GIVES GOD THE LEFTOVERS (v.6-14)

- “When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? ...And you say, ‘What a burden!’” (1:8, 13)
- Israel gave God their leftovers.
- “If I am a father, where is the honor due me?” (1:6)
- “Honor” is the Hebrew word *kavod*, meaning _____, significance, or value.
- When God lost weight in their hearts, He got their lives' leftovers.

THE REAL ISSUE IS WORSHIP

- Worship: The response of our whole life to what we believe has the greatest worth.
- Truth #1: Everyone _____ a worshiper.
- *[They]...exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being...and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator... (Romans 1:23, 25)*
- Truth #2: Everyone is _____ at worshiping.
- The question is not, “Do you worship?”
The question is, “What do you worship?”
- Truth #3: You give your _____ to what you worship most.
- “[A man has] an acceptable male in his flock... but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord.” (Malachi 1:14)
- Observations: _____

TWO REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What can I not imagine living without?
2. What am I willing to sacrifice for?
- Observations: _____

OUR WORSHIP AFFECTS OTHERS (v.2:5-8)

- “[Levi] revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth... He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.” (2:5, 6)
- “[Priests] have turned from my way... you have caused many to stumble.” (2:8)
- [Christians] are a chosen people, a royal priesthood... (1 Peter 2:9)
- Our worship to God affects others because it is not private.
- Observations: _____

THE CURE TO WEAK WORSHIP

- “For I am a great king.” (1:14)
- “[Levi] revered me and stood in awe of my name.” (2:5)
- The Cure: Don't try harder. Look _____.
- ...in view of God's mercy, offer your bodies as a living sacrifice...this is your true and proper worship. (Romans 12:1)
- Observations: _____

PT. 2: GROUP GUIDE

THEME:

We give our best to what we worship most.

SCRIPTURE:

Malachi 1:6-2:9



ICE-BREAKER

1. What is the strangest or most useless thing you have ever received as a gift?
2. What is something you gladly spend extra time, money, or energy on because you think it is worth it?



REFLECT (Read Malachi 1:6-2:9 together)

3. Which do you think dishonors God more: giving Him nothing, or giving Him something that costs us nothing while keeping the best for ourselves? Why? (Malachi 1:14)
4. Israel's problem was not open rebellion. Rather, they felt that worship was a burden. (Malachi 1:13) Why can spiritual boredom and apathy be harder to recognize than obvious sin?
5. Romans 1 says people do not stop worshipping when they reject God. They just redirect their worship toward created things. If everyone is a worshiper, what does that change about the way we think about people who say they are "not religious"? And how can you tell what someone really worships? (Romans 1:23-25)

6. Levi “stood in awe” of God and “turned many from sin,” while the later priests lost their way and “caused many to stumble.” What do you think changed first, their outward ministry or their inward worship? What does that teach us about where spiritual influence really begins? (Malachi 2:5-8)



TAKE ACTION

7. Josh gave two questions for identifying what we worship: 1) What can I not imagine living without? 2) What am I willing to sacrifice for? How would you answer those questions now?
8. Read Romans 12:1-2. It says that every part of our lives is an act of worship. Follow the trail of your calendar, spending, thoughts, attention, and emotional energy. What seems to be getting your best right now? Does that match what you say matters most?
9. The cure for leftover worship is not simply to try harder but to “look higher.” God gave us His best in Jesus, “a lamb without blemish or defect.” How does seeing what God has given us change the way we want to offer our lives back to Him? What is one area where you want God to receive more than your leftovers this week? (1 Peter 1:18-19; Romans 12:1)



PRAYER

- Thank God that He is the great King who deserves our worship. Ask Him to reveal anything that has taken too much weight in your heart and help you give Him your best, not your leftovers.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

01. _____

03. _____

[illegible]

DAY 07

*You will keep in perfect peace
those whose minds are steadfast,
because they trust in you.*

ISAIAH 26:3

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 08

*Let the name of the Lord be praised, both now and forevermore.
From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets,
the name of the Lord is to be praised.*

PSALM 113:2-3

Today, I am grateful for...

- 01. _____

- 02. _____

- 03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 09

*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed,
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

COLOSSIANS 3:17

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 10

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious
about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with
thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-6

Today, I am grateful for...

- 01. _____

- 02. _____

- 03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

WEEK 3

*For Better or
For Worse*

PT. 3: FOR BETTER OR WORSE

TODAY'S TEXT: *Malachi 2:10-16*

BIG IDEA: You cannot separate how you love _____
from how you treat your _____.

GOD AND MARRIAGE (V.10)

- Marriage is _____ from God.
- *“Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another?” (2:10)*
- Passage's Theme: “_____.”
It is used five times in this text. Faithfulness to God leads to faithfulness with one another.

THE GREAT INDICATOR OF OUR DRIFT (V.11)

- *“Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves by marrying women who worship a foreign god.” (2:11)*
- Who you choose to marry reflects your relationship with God.
- Point: Be faithful in who you _____.
- The apostle Paul says that the people Christians marry “*must belong to the Lord.*” (1 Corinthians 7:39)
- If you are already married to an unbeliever, Paul says to stay married because you may lead them to the Lord. (1 Corinthians 7:12-16)
- Observations: _____

TO THE MARRIED PERSON (v.13-14)

- “...the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.” (2:14)
- Point: Stay faithful to your _____.
- Marriage is more than a piece of paper because God stands _____ the covenant.
- Godly marriage matters because God seeks “Godly offspring.” (2:15)
- Observations: _____

WHAT SHOULD WE DO? (v.15)

- “So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth. ... So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.” (2:15b, 16)
- What to do: Be on your guard against _____.
- Observations: _____

JESUS, THE FAITHFUL BRIDEGROOM

- The Gospel: Our faithlessness is not greater than His faithfulness.
- *Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.* (Ephesians 5:25)
- “I have loved you,” says the Lord. (1:2)
- Before God tells you to be faithful to Him, He reminds you that He has been faithful to you.
- Observations: _____

PT. 3: GROUP GUIDE

THEME:

You cannot separate how you love God from how you treat your spouse.

SCRIPTURE:

Malachi 2:10-16



ICE-BREAKER

1. What is a small habit or quirk that can become surprisingly annoying when you live with someone?
2. What is a commitment you made that turned out to be harder to keep than you expected?



REFLECT (Read Malachi 2:10-16 together)

3. Which is the better test of your relationship with God: how you worship Him at church or how you treat the people closest to you at home? Why does Malachi refuse to separate the two? (Malachi 2:10, 13-14)
4. Read Malachi 2:11 and 1 Corinthians 7:39. If you had to choose, which matters more in a future spouse: strong chemistry and compatibility, or shared devotion to Jesus? Why does God treat shared worship as something deeper than ordinary compatibility?
5. God says, *“The LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth.”* If God were called to testify about how a typical marriage covenant was being lived out, what kinds of things would He see that friends, family, or the church might never notice? (Malachi 2:14)

6. Twice God says, “*Be on your guard.*” Which is usually more dangerous to a marriage: one dramatic failure or a long series of small, unresolved hurts and compromises? Why? (Malachi 2:15-16)



TAKE ACTION

7. Josh said, “Your relationship with God is upstream. Your marriage is downstream.” Think about one strained relationship in your life. Is there anything happening “upstream” in your relationship with God that may be affecting what is happening downstream?
8. Resentment, contempt, secrecy, comparison, bitterness, keeping score, and withdrawal can slowly pull people apart, regardless of relationship. Which one are you most tempted toward? What would it look like to “be on your guard” against it this week?
9. Your faithfulness affects others. Who’s learning about commitment, forgiveness, and keeping your word by watching you? What is one thing you want them to see you do this week?
10. Jesus is the faithful Bridegroom who “*loved the church and gave himself up for her.*” (Ephesians 5:25) What is one concrete step of faithfulness you need to take in one of your relationships to be more like Jesus this week?



PRAYER

- Thank Jesus for His faithfulness. Ask God to strengthen marriages, give singles wisdom, heal broken relationships, and help us love others with the faithfulness He has shown us.

PSALM 113:2-3

01. _____

02. _____

[illegible]

DAY 12

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

2 CORINTHIANS 9:15

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

PSALM 100:1-3

01. _____

02. _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

DAY 14

*“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross,
so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness;
“by his wounds you have been healed.”*

2 PETER 2:24

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 15

*...always giving thanks to God the Father for everything,
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

EPHESIANS 5:20

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

WEEK 4

*It's More
Than a Number*

PT. 4: IT'S MORE THAN A NUMBER

TODAY'S TEXT: *Malachi 3:6-12*

QUESTION: If I can trust God to _____ me,
can I trust God to _____ me?

DRIFTING FROM GOD (v.6-7)

- “I the Lord do not change. ...[But] Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees...” (3:6, 7a)
- Israel had drifted, but God remained the fixed point.
- “Return to me, and I will return to you.” (3:7b)

ISRAEL ASKS HOW THEY DRIFTED (v.7-8)

- “But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’” (3:7b)
- “Will a mere mortal rob God?...In tithes and offerings.” (3:8)
- Tithe: The Hebrew word is *ma’aser*. It means one-tenth, or 10%.
- Offering: A financial/goods gift given above the tithe.
- Point: According to God, giving is a key indicator of spiritual drift.

WHAT TITHING ISN'T AND WHAT IT IS

1. Tithing is not _____ God.
2. Tithing does not _____ your salvation. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
3. Tithing isn't to _____ your conscience.
4. Tithing does not _____ God's blessings.

➔ Tithing is giving God what is _____ His.

THREE REASONS TO TITHE

1. I tithe because _____ it.
 - In Matthew 23:23, Jesus affirms tithing when he rebukes the pharisees for giving “...a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin” but “neglecting justice, mercy and faithfulness.” He says, “You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.”
2. I tithe because it teaches me to put _____ first.
 - “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse.” (3:10)
 - “Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits...then your barns will be filled to overflowing...” (Proverbs 3:9-10)
3. I tithe because it reminds me that God is my _____.
 - “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse...and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven...” (3:10)
 - “Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.” (1 Chronicles 29:14)

THE TEST OF TRUST (v.10)

- “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.” (3:10)
- Everywhere else in Scripture, God tells His people not to test Him. This is the only place where God says, “Test me,” because He wants us to personally and experientially know that we can trust Him.
- If God would give us His Son, then why wouldn't He give us what we need?
- “Though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.” (2 Corinthians 8:9)
- “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also...graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32)

PT. 4: GROUP GUIDE

THEME:

If I can trust God to save me, I can trust God to sustain me.

SCRIPTURE:

Malachi 3:6-12



ICE-BREAKER

1. What is something you hate spending money on, even though you know it is necessary?
2. What is one thing that costs far more now than you remember it costing a few years ago?



REFLECT (*Read Malachi 2:10-16 together*)

3. God says, “*I do not change*,” and then tells His drifting people, “*Return to me*.” When you realize you have drifted, is God’s unchanging character more comforting or confronting? Why? (Malachi 3:6-7)
4. When Israel asks, “*How are we to return?*” God immediately talks about their money. Why do you think God uses finances as the test of their trust? (Malachi 3:7-8)
5. When Christians ask, “*Do I really have to give that much?*” what does it reveal about our hearts? If grace has given us more than Israel ever knew, should grace make us less generous or more generous? (2 Corinthians 8:9)

6. God says, “*Test me in this.*” Imagine two people give the same amount. One gives to God first, before paying the rest of the month’s expenses. The other waits until the end to see what is left. Which takes more faith? Why? (Malachi 3:10)



TAKE ACTION

7. God says that the tithe is the first 10%, not simply 10% that happens to be left over. Is your giving currently first, planned, and proportional, or leftover, occasional, and convenient? What needs to change? (Proverbs 3:9; Exodus 23:19, 34:26; Leviticus 27:30; Nehemiah 10:35-39; Matthew 23:23)
8. Which is easier for you: believing that what you have belongs to God, or trusting that God will provide what you need? Why? Describe the peace and freedom you may feel as you grow in believing both (1 Chronicles 29:14)
9. We all have financial fears—not having enough, losing control, an emergency, retirement, your lifestyle. Which financial fear makes trusting God hardest for you right now? How can this group pray for you?
10. Romans 8:32 says God “*did not spare his own Son.*” If the cross is the ultimate proof that God can be trusted, what is one concrete step you need to take this week to trust Him with what He has entrusted to you? (Romans 8:32)



PRAYER

- Thank God for being our unchanging Provider. Ask Him to expose fear or misplaced trust around money and give us faith to put Him first, return what belongs to Him, and trust Him to provide what we need.

DAY 16

*The Lord is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy,
and with my song I praise him.*

PSALM 28:7

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 17

“The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

EXODUS 14:14

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 18

*I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness;
I will sing the praises of the name of the Lord Most High.*

PSALM 7:17

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 19

*He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.*

DANIEL 2:21

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 20

*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you
with my righteous right hand.*

ISAIAH 41:10

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

WEEK 5

*The Messiah
is Coming*

PT. 5: THE MESSIAH IS COMING

TODAY'S TEXT: *Malachi 3:13-4:6*

TWO GROUPS OF PEOPLE (3:13-17)

- Context: Malachi prophesies about 100 years after the Israelites begin to return and rebuild Jerusalem. They believed that everything would be okay once they returned home. But it wasn't. Famine, high taxes, weak economy, fractured marriages, and failed religious leadership divided the Israelite people into two groups.
- Group one was _____ with God.
 - *"Where is the God of justice?"* (2:17)
 - *"It is futile to serve God ...the arrogant [are] blessed ...evildoers prosper."* (3:14, 15)
- Group two remained _____ in God's promises.
 - They *"feared the LORD"* and *"honored His name."* (3:16)

THE DAY OF THE LORD (3:18-4:6)

- God calls it the *"...day of the LORD comes."* (4:6)
- The day of the LORD will bring both _____ and healing.
 - God will *"distinguish between the righteous & the wicked."* (3:18)
 - God will come *"like a refiner's fire"* (3:2) and burn away the wicked like *"stubble."* (4:1)
 - God will *"rise with healing in its rays"* (4:2) and the righteous will *"frolic like well-fed calves."* (4:2)
- Same day. Same God.
Two groups. Two outcomes.

GOD WILL SEND 'ELIJAH' (4:6)

- “I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great...day...” (4:6)
- Why Elijah? He was known for confronting the people with a _____.
- “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him...” (1 Kings 18:21)
- Note: The Day of the LORD is one prophesy with two fulfillments. John the baptist fulfilled the first part when he prepared the way for Jesus (Luke 3:16). Jesus' s will fulfill the second part at His second coming by bringing final judgment and complete healing.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

- Make a _____.
- Shallow roots cannot hold when the ground shifts.
- You cannot follow Jesus halfway and develop deep roots.
- “...or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.” (4:6)
- God's warning means we that we can always church.

JESUS, THE CURSE-BREAKER

- The last word of the Old Testament is "destruction" or "curse". The New Testament begins with Jesus breaking the curse.
- “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.” (Galatians 3:13)
- We don't get to choose whether the ground shifts.
We do get to choose where we put down our roots.
Choose Jesus.
- Observations: _____

PT. 5: GROUP GUIDE

THEME:

The Messiah came to save and will return to judge and restore, so choose Him now.

SCRIPTURE:

Malachi 3:13-4:6



ICE-BREAKER

1. What is a decision you tend to overthink, even when the stakes are pretty low?
2. What is something you once thought was a passing trend but now seems like it's here to stay?



REFLECT (*Read Malachi 3:13-4:6 together*)

3. Malachi says the coming Day will be like a consuming fire for some and a healing sunrise for others. What determines which of those two experiences a person will have when the Messiah comes? (Malachi 4:1-2)
4. When Israel says, "*It is futile to serve God*," what does that reveal about what they expected God to give them in return for their obedience? What are ways that we can treat faithfulness like a transaction: "God, I did my part, so why didn't You do Yours?" (Malachi 3:13-16)
5. Before the Day of the LORD, God promises to send an Elijah-like messenger with a warning and an invitation that calls people to choose. What does that reveal about God's character? (Malachi 4:5; 1 Kings 18:21)

6. Which is more dangerous spiritually: deliberately choosing against Jesus, or continually refusing to make a clear choice at all? Why does Elijah's challenge, "*If the LORD is God, follow him,*" leave so little room for neutrality? (1 Kings 18:21)



TAKE ACTION

7. What is one area of your life where you know your roots in Christ need to go deeper right now? What specific practice or decision would help strengthen them this week?
8. Where are you most tempted to say, "Jesus is Lord, except here"? Think about your relationships, money, sexuality, career, politics, reputation, or plans. What would choosing Jesus more clearly look like in that area this week?
9. Culture often tells us, "This is just where everything is headed. Accept it." Where do you feel the strongest pressure to drift with the crowd rather than remain rooted in what God has said? What would help you stand firm?
10. If you knew that the Day of the LORD was coming next week, what would you take more seriously, hold more loosely, or finally decide on today?



PRAYER

- Ask God to deepen your roots in Christ so you can stand when the ground shifts. Pray for courage to choose Jesus clearly, faithfulness when obedience feels costly, and readiness for the day He returns.

DAY 21

Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.

ISAIAH 26:4

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 22

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

DEUTERONOMY 31:8

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 23

*You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.*

PSALM 32:7

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 24

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

DAY 25

*...but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.*

ISAIAH 40:31

Today, I am grateful for...

01. _____

02. _____

03. _____

Additional thoughts and prayers

NOTES

Personal

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

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