

REFINER'S FIRE



A SERIES IN MALACHI



REFINER'S FIRE: MALACHI 2

Community Group Study Guide - Week of November 8, 2020

Some of us have a hard time being honest about our sin. We don't like the word sin. We have struggles, failures, foibles, baggage, issues, challenges, character flaws, hang ups, not sins, per se. Our culture likes to use nice words to describe sin. It's not fornication, it's hooking up. It's not adultery, it's an affair. It's not perverted, it's natural. Perhaps that's why we're a little uncomfortable when God uses graphic language and images to describe the darkness of our sin.

Because God loves us, He despises our sin. We must learn to despise it as well. In Malachi 2:1-16 this week, we see one of the most graphic rebukes from God in all of Scripture. He says, "If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name... I will rebuke your offspring, and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and you shall be taken away with it." Spread dung on faces? Dung? God directs His divine rage at His people, for going through the motions of asking for forgiveness, while still loving their sin.

Jesus didn't just call out sin, He also called out sinners. With really strong language. He calls people "hypocrites," "blind guides," "blind fools," "whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness," "you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside are full of greed and self-indulgence," "you serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?" In the Christian life, the first step of cleansing our hearts of sinful desires is exposure of who we really are and who we really worship.

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To constantly check our mind and heart as we approach worship and apply God's word in daily life.

Heart

To trust that God will be near to those who, in the name of Christ, approach Him, confess sin and pursue repentance with humility.

Hands

To pursue faithfulness in the way that we worship and live life, especially within the context of marriage.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In-Person Worship Services

THIS Sunday, November 15 at 9:30AM and 11:30AM.

Please go to <https://brookline.mosaicboston.com/serve> to sign up to serve on the Mini Mo or Usher Team.

A **Membership Meeting** will be held at the Temple **THIS COMING SUNDAY, November 15 AT 3PM.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Malachi 2:1-16

1. What does the label of “dung” for the offerings of the priests and people suggest about the place of God in their worship and lifestyles? Have you ever caught yourself placing your relationship with God as a low priority in your life? What did it take for you to reprioritize Him as the most important relationship in your life? Did other brothers and/or sisters in Christ do or say anything to help you reprioritize your relationship with him?
2. What does it mean to compartmentalize your relationship with God? How do Christians tend to commit this sin today? What measures can you take to prevent yourself from falling into this?
3. How did Jesus respond to those who worshipped God with the wrong heart and/or lived in a way that was contradictory to the way they presented themselves at worship? Do you need to repent of the way that you are approaching worship on Sunday?...In the way that you show honor to God throughout the week?
4. How does a true inner love of God lead to a transformed life? What does a life fully devoted to God look like (suggested reading Matthew 5:1-11, Galatians 5:22-23)?
5. Malachi 2:1-9 was written primarily to members of the priesthood, the spiritual leaders of the day in which Malachi was written. How does 1 Peter 2:9 make these verses relevant to all Christians today?
6. How do Malachi’s warnings against marrying pagans (v.10-12) and being unfaithful in marriage (v13-16) connect to the first nine verses of the chapter? How has spiritual intermarriage affected the people of God throughout history? How does a faithful marriage “share the Gospel” with the world?
7. **Read verse 16.** What does it mean to “guard yourselves in spirit”? For married and single people, what relationship should be most important in life? How would you respond to a brother or sister vocalizing a desire to commit adultery? How would you respond to a single Christian friend entertaining a relationship with a non-believer?