

## The Justice of God – Malachi 4:1-6

*Several years ago – my neighbor and I had begun to read the bible together and specifically the book of John that tells of the life and words of Jesus. He would read a little and each week and we would simply talk. No sermons, lectures – just reading the words of God and conversation. He met me one morning on my porch and said – let’s talk about this. On this day – he had a unique intensity I had not seen before. He, we were reading in John ch. 3 where Jesus encounters a man named Nicodemus. In the verse, Jesus said this, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only son, that whoever believed in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” What does this mean? It sounds like I am, we are under punishment? But it sounds like that is not the end of the story. I went on to explain what often is called the gospel – that we are under punishment, but God in His great love – did not leave us to judgment, but came to rescue us. As we talked – my neighbor said, No one has every told me this – like this. I grew up in a church & I’ve never heard that I’m under punishment that I can’t escape.*

Today we are going to talk about the gospel – because it is the direct message of this passage. And my prayer is that if like my neighbor – you have never heard what God is about to share with us through His word, that you would not hear this just as something that was said long ago to people who lived long ago but as a word – a loving and urgent word – for today, *for you and I*. Regardless of how many times you have heard – I pray this falls on your head and heart with a freshness and power today.

Malachi 4:1 (ESV) “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.” There is one main thought for you to hear today and this is the first part of it ...

### 01. We cannot escape the punishment (wrath) of God –

- *There is a judgment day coming.*

- **evil doers** – all who openly rebel against God’s holy ways. *Dahmer, Hernandez, Dylan Roof*  
Ps 14:1 (ESV) The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds,  
Matthew 15:18-19(ESV) 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.  
19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.  
Jesus said – all our evil actions come from in us – *and this is what make us evil. And evil is not just gross actions – it is all actions and thoughts against God’s holy ways. To think otherwise we are fools or arrogant.*
- **arrogant** – all who secretly rebel against God’s holy ways.  
Matthew 23:27-28 (ESV) 27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs *(crypt)*, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.  
*Religious people: who use God to get their way, who act good on the outside but live in evil thoughts on the inside, who want to make themselves right before God with all their good actions.*

**This is all of us. Jesus said we are all sinners. We get that. That’s why we say – we are human. We all mess up. But God is saying it is more than a mess up. It is evil against holy God.**

*99.9% of the citizens of France want justice for the abominable acts committed in Paris. Our wrath button gets pushed in moments like this. Good anger, justice, and punishment all come together =wrath. And our wrath is only satisfied if someone is justly punished for these deeds. This same wrath button goes off in us when a church planter’s pregnant wife gets murder as happened in Indianapolis, or when a room of a people at a bible study are executed as happened in Charleston. We all have a line when wrath is stirred for a just reason. Please, hear this as a loving warning from a loving God – because God is perfectly holy in all his ways – he cannot live with any form of evil. Rebellion against him or his ways – open rebellion or closed hidden rebellion requires he justly judge or he ceases being holy. He would have to deny who he is. Judgment is coming for all evil doers and arrogant - for us all.*

What will this judgment day be like?

Malachi 4:1 (ESV) "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."

- **What is the judgment or the punishment** for all evil doers and all arrogant before God?  
*They will be fully and completely punished by his judgment.*

Jesus said...

Matthew 25:31-32, 41, 46 (ESV) 31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, ... 41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, ... 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Punishment will be JUST, ETERNAL, SPIRITUAL (separated from God's presence) PHYSICAL  
*This is not an empty threat, like our weather forecasts. Don't ignore - this is a real & loving warning.*  
*But look at the end of the verse and the powerful 3 letter word – but ..., but, = There is hope.*

**This is not the end of this word from God in Malachi. - This is not the end of the story!**  
*There is good news. And, it is really good news in light of our inescapable punishment. Part II of I ...*

We cannot escape the punishment (wrath) of God –  
02. - unless we rest in the justice of God – *His rescue for us.*

- God poured out all His justice on Jesus – *which allows God to rescue us from His punishment (wrath).*  
Isaiah 53:5 (ESV) But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.

- **What did God do to Jesus? What did Jesus take for you?**

***Pic of Jesus on the cross (Passion of Christ) – he bore all God's wrath in his body and soul.***

All of God's just punishment – *his righteous anger, his justice, His punishment – Spiritual and Physical was taken out on Jesus.*

*God took all of Jeffery Dahmer's murder and cannibalism and put them on Jesus.*

*God took the evil in Aron Hernandez's heart that caused him to execute his friend & put it on Jesus.*

*God took all the prejudice, hate, and evil of Dylan Roof that led him to murder nine people so he could start a race war – and place it on Jesus. AND ...*

*God took all your evil actions & thoughts against God and put them on Jesus. And ...*

*God took all the arrogant acts of religious and arrogant people like you and me who act good in public but secretly lust, hate, and gossip and put them on Jesus. God did all this to Jesus for you and I.*

Question is – how does this remove God's punishment from you and I?

**Because Jesus fully satisfied God's justice** – *it was just (sinless one took all our sin), it was physical (brutal), and it was spiritual (the greatest pain was becoming guilty of our sin).*

Because Jesus fully satisfied God's justice – ***you and I can be rescued from God's punishment if we believe, if we rest our soul on the justice of God in Jesus.***

- **Is your soul in desperate need of rest?**

*If you have never come to a place of rest in your soul with God – and God is showing you now that you desperately need this - you can rest your soul in God's justice taken out on Jesus.*

**HOW?**

***Chair illustration – Rest is sitting – trusting yourself to something or in this case someone. When you sit on a chair you are placing your trust in the chair to hold you up that most of us never test out – we just sit. When we drive a car – we trust the brakes. When we get in a plane – we trust the pilot. To rest is to trust, to place oneself fully in the hands of another. The only way we escape the punishment, the wrath of God is to sit by faith in the justice of God that was taken out on Jesus.***

- **God came to his people here in Malachi, to rescue them.**  
**God has come to us, to rescue you in the person and work of Jesus.**

- This rescue is so much more than an escape.

*The words of God here to his people literally says it is a “happily ever after – forever.”*

*Think of every great rescue story of a lady who was rescued from the evil character by the good character. The story does not end with a rescue and the lady being told – see ya, be free, bye, run along. No, every story ends with the lady living happily every after with the one who rescued her. All of those stories appeal to us in some way because they echo the story of rescue told here and all through God’s word. God does not just rescue you from punishment, wrath. No there is so much more.*

**Malachi 4:2 (ESV) 2** But 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.

**Clarity – the fear (the awe) is the result of the rescue – not what gains you and I rescue.**

- **righteousness** – we will get Christ’s perfect right standing before God in exchange for our evil and arrogant ways. (vs 2)
- **healing** – we have our body, soul, and mind restored to how it was intended to be. (vs 2)
- **freedom** – we will know freedom from the evil acts and arrogant ways that have kept us bound to a life of fear, pride, posing, hiding, guilt, shame, and more. (vs 2)
- **joy** – we know the joy of God’s presence (vs 2)

**Malachi 4:3-6 (ESV) 3** And 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. 6 And 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.”

- **reigning with Him** – we will work with God’s in His new kingdom. (vs 3)
- **love from our Heavenly Father** – Jesus quoted this in reference to J Baptist’s preaching mostly referring to how this would turn the hearts of the children of Israel toward God the Father. This would be so much more than a get of jail or hell free card. This was about a relationship and one where our hearts would become his forever and his heart – the father’s – would be turned toward us forever. (vs 6)

**Pic- “dad and returning soldier” – Do you believe you could be loved this way by God? You can.**

**Judgment is coming. God tells us this as a warning to plead with us to hear His good news!**

*We need to hear the truth about the vile and gross weight of our sin toward holy God. For the good news of the gospel is just a small bit of information otherwise. But - God also wants you to hear the beauty and love of what He is calling you to in Christ. So much more than an escape – is the life, the life eternal we get of with Him as His heart is turned toward us – toward you!*

**Will you rest your soul in God’s justice now? My neighbor did – without me the next day.**

*Will you trust your right standing before God to the work of Jesus on your behalf? Will you sit on Jesus’ work? How? Simply – ask him. (PRAY)*

**John 3:16 (ESV)** “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only son, that whoever believed in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” God you judged Jesus for me – for my arrogant and evil acts. I believe, I trust my soul to Jesus and his work on my behalf. Rescue me because of Jesus’ work.

**COMMUNION:** 1) Come talk with a pastor today. Ask questions – pray – be clear.

2) Take communion as a living act that reminds us of our rescue. Believer – may word today open our eyes to the love of our God. May it move us toward Him and other in love.

3) Baptism – is like communion. We do in obedience as a sign of our faith in Christ. If you have rested in Christ today or earlier – we would love for you to declare this tonight in baptism.