

Malachi 2:1-16

Drifted

Image Church // Exposing the Heart: wk. 2

Introduction

If you have your bibles, grab them and turn to the book of Malachi... We're going to be in **chapter 2**...

Malachi is a prophet that was sent by God, to speak the Word of God to the people of Israel...

Remember: **God chose the people of Israel as a means by which to reveal Himself to the world**... God would set them apart by giving them a specific way of living in light of who He is... A way of living that puts on display the Holiness of God and man's desperate need for God's promised deliverer....

- *And then ultimately, the way that God would reveal Himself is through Jesus that would come through the line of Israel...*

As you journey through the **OT** what you see is how Israel **struggles** to worship God rightly, and they struggle to trust God's faithfulness and His promises...

- This led to Israel being in and out of troubling situations in light of their disobedience...

And yet the incredible thing about the **OT** is that it's a story of **God's faithful love toward wicked and rebellious people**...

And in that what we see is that through Israel **our hearts are exposed**, but at the same time we come face to face with a **faithful and loving God**...

That's exactly what you see in the book of **Malachi**...

The book is set up as a series of **disputes** that God brings before the people of Israel... And like a kid, Israel talks back to God pushing against His disputes...

Last week we saw that God confronts them and He says, you've missed my love, you're not loving me in light of the love that I've shown to you... And it shows by the way that you're defiling my temple by coming in here and offering me the leftovers...

*This week we're going to continue to see the impact of Israel missing the love of God... **We're going to see how they've drifted**...

Illustration: Adalyn when we go to the beach... Current takes her down just a little bit, and she runs to the wrong umbrella... *Not our family*...

For many of you, this is where you are, or if you're not, you need to see that it can happen that easily... You take your eyes off of the love of God even for a little bit and like the current, you will find yourself out of sync with the things of God...

Very specifically today, what we're going to see that **our hearts are prone to drift away from God when we're not sitting in the love of God**...

Malachi 2:1-16

1 "Therefore, this decree is for you priests:

Alright, let me stop here to talk about this and make some connections...

In the **OT** the **priests** were the ones **who represented the people before God**... They were the ones who would go in and offer a sacrifice on behalf of the nation of Israel...

- *Talk about how this would happen...*

But here's the thing, and I've told you this before, but as Christ-followers, ***the way that we read the OT is through the lens of Christ...***

Let me show you how this plays out here... here's what you need to understand...

- The book of **Hebrews** shows us that Jesus is the great High Priest!... *The veil was torn...*
- **Gospel...**

And because Jesus is our High Priest... **1 Peter 2:9** tells us that Christ has ordained the priesthood of all believers...

- **1 Peter 2:9** *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

Peter tells us that you've been called out of darkness into marvelous light...

- *This is why we say that you've been saved from something to something...*
- **If you're a Christian you are a priest!** Powerful!

This **Priesthood** that you've been called to is a holy calling... It's a high calling...

- You have been saved into the family of God, you represent God to the world... *I think we forget this!*

Listen, because we've been given direct access to God... ***How much more then should we be mindful that what happens to the priests in Israel doesn't happen to us...*** There's a lot to be learned here in light of who God has called us to be...

Real quick, this is what I love about the bible and how its whole counsel serves to disciple us...

Even though Malachi wasn't written to us, it was written for us...
Always good to remember that framework BTW... This will keep you from claiming **Jer. 29:11** as your verse...

But the beauty of the whole counsel of scripture is that in light of what the **NT** teaches us about our **priesthood through the finished work of Jesus**, we need to look back at the previous priests and make sure that we're not making the same mistakes they were!

Let's keep looking at what's happening... God says:

2 If you don't listen, and if you don't take it to **heart** to honor my name," says the Lord of Armies, "I will send a curse among you, and I will curse your blessings. In fact, I have already begun to curse them because you are not taking it to **heart**."

Here's what I want you to see this: **2 times** in here God uses the word **heart**... Bookends in this section...

Listen, this is what God is after the heart... God is after your heart

Here's my concern: For some of you, God doesn't have your heart...

- Other things do... God's more of an afterthought...
- It's one thing to **know about God**, it's another thing to actually take His words to heart...
- What would it look like if we were a people that really took God's Word to heart?!? What could God do?

When you don't take God's word to heart you will drift, from His truths, from His promises, and from the ways He's called you to live as a **royal priesthood**...

God continues to confront them in verse 3...

3 "Look, I am going to rebuke your descendants, and I will spread animal waste over your faces, the waste from your festival sacrifices, and you will be taken away with it. **4** Then you will know that I sent you this decree, so that my covenant with Levi may continue," says

the Lord of Armies. **5** “My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave these to him; it called for reverence, and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. **6** True instruction was in his mouth, and nothing wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and integrity and turned many from iniquity. **7** For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should desire instruction from his mouth, because he is the messenger of the Lord of Armies.

8 “You, on the other hand, have turned from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have violated the covenant of Levi,” says the Lord of Armies. **9** “So I in turn have made you despised and humiliated before all the people because you are not keeping my ways but are showing partiality in your instruction.”

What’s happening here...

Jacob had **12 sons**... They would become the **12 tribes of Israel**...**Levi** was one of them...

Early on in **Exodus 32** here’s what happens... People had come out of Israel and crossed the Red Sea... They are at the base of Mount Sinai... Moses goes up to meet with the Lord...

- The people decide to make a Golden Calf... *really?!?*
- Moses comes down, He is fired up
- Moses says to the people who is with me?!?
- The sons of **Levi** come and stand with Moses...

They are commissioned into the service of the Lord (Ex. 32:29)... Then in **Numbers**, God would establish the tribe of **Levi** as the *priestly line* that would represent the people before God...

*Here’s what kind of people **Levi** and the **Levites** were:*

- They revered God...
- Stood in awe of God...
- Gave true instruction, about God...
- Walked with God in peace...
- Were people of integrity....
- Turned people away from iniquity...

God says this is what you should be about... You should guard knowledge and people should desire your instruction... **But the priests were doing the opposite of this...**

- They caused people to stumble...
- Distorted God’s instructions...

There’s been a drift that’s happened- it didn’t start this way ...

God takes this very seriously...

- He rebukes them...
- Says he will spread do-do of the offerings you bring on your face...
- Made them despised and humiliated...

Why does God take this so seriously? Because they knew God, they knew what they were called to, but they chose to do their own thing, they chose complacency... *This is scary...*

Man, this is such a picture of our own hearts...

- Start out good, but then turn around and we’re in a totally different place...
- Know what we should do, and know how we should respond, but choose to do our own thing...
- I think COVID was a catalyst for this...

Here’s the thing, if God is God, if He’s the ruler of the universe and that has saved you when you didn’t deserve salvation, then a response is demanded of us...

- This is serious...
- You have a different calling on your life...
- You live with a different purpose...
- You have a different framework...

We can’t just treat this like we do anything else... There is a reverence, there’s a **submission to God has to take place in our lives**...

I think the problem is for many of us we treat the things of God as just another thing...

And God's like *it's not just any other thing*... You approach Me and the things I ordain differently than you approach everything else...

Example: If you were to get an invitation to visit the president...

- There's an honor and reverence that surrounds the president...
- Things operate differently when you step in the Whitehouse...
- You can't just do what you want or bring in whatever you want...
- There's a submission that you give when you step in there...
- It's demanded of you...

How much more should this be true of us as Christians?!?

- You have received so much more than an invitation into the Whitehouse to meet the president...

*You have received a blood-bought invitation into God's family... With that comes a recognition, an awareness that when you receive that invitation it changes everything!!

A drift happens when we forget what we have been given... When our hearts are not centered on the love of God when our hearts are longing for the things of the world...

Watch how this continues to play out for Israel, watch the continued implications of the drift...

10 Don't all of us have one Father? Didn't one God create us? Why then do we act treacherously against one another, profaning the covenant of our ancestors? **11** Judah has acted treacherously, and a detestable act has been done in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the Lord's sanctuary, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. **12** May the Lord cut off from the tents of

Jacob the man who does this, whoever he may be, even if he presents an offering to the Lord of Armies.

Israel had followed after the desires of their heart leading them to marry women who worshiped pagan Gods... And the men were adopting the gods of their wives... See **Nehemiah 13**...

Here's what you need to see:

You actions reveal the reality of your heart

Israel's actions showed the gaps in their heart, it showed that they were believing things counter to what God told them, it showed that they were not centered on who God really is and the love that He had extended to them!

Which is crazy right!?!? After all that God had done for them and in their midst, this is how they respond... Do you see how pervasive this drift is in their lives?!?

*Then look at this, **verse 13**, God says...*

13 This is another thing you do. You are covering the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning, because he no longer respects your offerings or receives them gladly from your hands. **14** And you ask, "Why?" Because even though the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, you have acted treacherously against her.

Don't miss what this shows us... Israel was doing their own thing, and yet, in the midst of it, they were still going through the motions of offering a sacrifice... *And God's like rejected, I don't respect that...*

*Here it is: **Religious activity can't mask a bad heart before God***

They were going through the motions, but living how they wanted to live...

- Can't earn God's approval or favor by your religiosity... God's after a heart of trust and surrender...

- Wonder why we don't have motivation or see changes... *Flesh out*

Verse 14: She was your marriage partner and your wife by covenant.

15 Didn't God make them one and give them a portion of spirit? What is the one seeking? Godly offspring. So watch yourselves carefully, so that no one acts treacherously against the wife of his youth.

16 "If he hates and divorces his wife," says the Lord God of Israel, "he covers his garment with injustice," says the Lord of Armies. Therefore, watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously.

Here's what you need to understand, throughout the bible ***marriage is a picture of the covenant that God has with His people...***

It's important that we understand that marriage is a ***covenant***, not a ***contract...***

- ***Contracts*** are limited by the terms of the exchange of property ("this is yours, that is mine"), contracts are based on profit and self-interest...
- ***Covenants*** involve an exchange of life ("I am yours, you are mine"), which covers a virtually unlimited range of human relations and duties. Covenants call for self-giving loyalty and sacrificial love. Contracts are temporary while covenant bonds are permanent, even intergenerational.¹

God's made a covenant with His people ...

Which means that God's ***covenantal love*** should be reflected in the covenant of marriage... This should be the framework and foundation...

The problem is that this isn't the case for Israel: What we see here is a ***direct contrast*** between God's covenantal ***faithfulness*** to Israel and the marital ***unfaithfulness*** of the Israelites.²

What this points us to is a heart problem... See, their intermarriage and their divorce was a symptom of a heart issue...

¹ Scott Hahn, "Covenant," ed. John D. Barry et al., The Lexham Bible Dictionary.

² Craig A. Blaising, "Malachi," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1581.

- They are not faithful in their covenant because they have forgotten God's faithfulness in His covenant...

The same is true in everyday life today- when you sin- that is the outcome of what's going on in your heart... ***Sinning is a symptom of an inward reality...***

- It shows that there's a miss on the heart level...

For some of you, there are things in your life, ways that you are living that go against who God is and who He's called you to be...

- And little by little as you lean in and continue on in those areas it begins to pull you further and further away spiritually...

This is what happened to Israel, they had drifted, but what I want you to see is that ***it didn't start this way...*** They didn't wake up one morning and go here's what I'm going to do... It was a slow and subtle drift...

So here's the question: Where have you drifted?

Where have you drifted in your desires?

- They allowed their desires to control them...
 - What's controlling you?
- They were selfish and self-centered going after the things they wanted, living the way that they wanted...

Where is this true in your life?

Where have you drifted in your devotion...

- They had drifted from the Word of God...
- Devotion to the mission of God...
- Devotion to the family of God...
- They had drifted from desiring the presence of God...
- They drifted from being desperate for God...

Where is this true in your life?

One other Note: What happened here is a shift and slide away from God in each generation...

- Challenge here: will the generation after you, your kids our kids here- be spurred toward God or will they be slowly led away from God?!

Conclusion [VAMP]

Love of God...

Jesus is the great High priest...

Malachi 3:10 Offering plug...

- Financial
- Physical
 - Time
 - Talent/serve
- Personal in your devotion...

Repent call...

- Non-Christian
- Christian