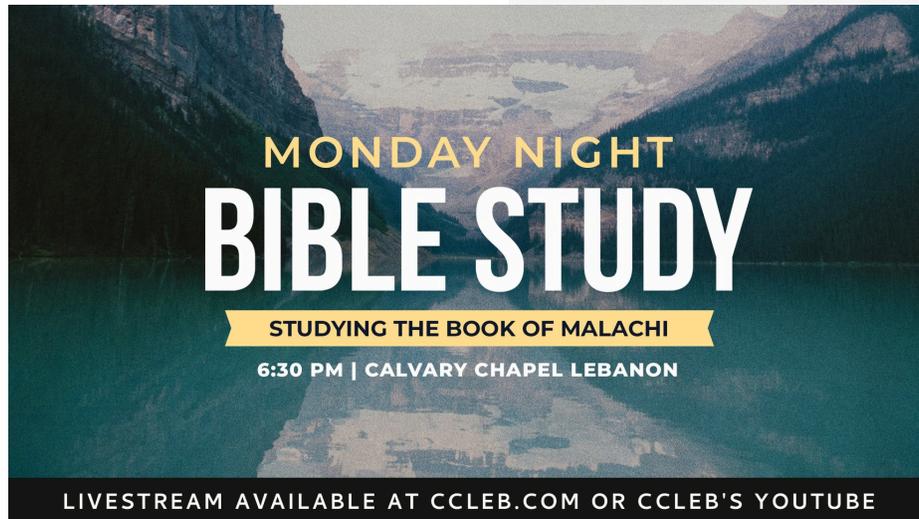


CCLEB BIBLE STUDY

NOTES

MONDAY FEBRUARY 16
MALACHI 2:10-17

MATT KORFF



Tonight's passage brings up three different issues that God brings against the Jews. Remember, the Jews are called Jews after the return from Babylonian captivity.

The three issues are intermarriage, divorce, and distrust in God's justice. Let's jump into the first one.

Verse 10: Malachi sets up what he is about to say by pointing out the fact that we all have one Creator, and that means that no one is better than anyone else. Sometimes, when we are reminded that by others it can feel like disrespect, "You're telling me that I am not better than some person living in a shanty on a garbage heap in the middle of nowhere?" Or, "you're telling me I am no better than someone like Hitler," or whatever. I mean, we know deep down inside that we are no better, but sometimes it can feel like we are being belittled when someone reminds us of that truth. But, what I want to point out, as does Malachi here, the basis for equality is not grounded in ability, status, virtue, or anything like that, but it is grounded in God the Creator.

This is how we can move past the feelings of superiority, or inferiority, and see the people around us, whether near or far, as being on equal footing with us. Remember Who made them, and you. Pastor Duane just a couple weeks ago, mentioned in his Sunday teaching that a sin against an image-bearer is a sin against God.

I have children at home. Well, actually they are here tonight, but when I am at home I have children there. Anyway, the thing that grieves me the most, is when they hurt one another. This hasn't happened yet, but if one of my daughters came home with a black eye, I would be upset. If I found out the black eye was caused by her sister, I would be doubly upset, but of course, I would probably understand. But if I found out my daughter had a black eye, and her sister watched it happen and laughed about it, I would be even more upset, because there would be a total disconnect from relationship. They are sisters, they are supposed to get upset with each other, though they will be disciplined, but you know the phrase, "Only I can beat up my little brother," when you are willing to watch someone else take advantage of your brother or sister, there is some deeper disconnect. They are betraying their family bonds.

Well, Malachi is not talking about the Jews getting in little fights and then sitting down at the dinner table together, he is talking about them betraying one another. The Hebrew word for betray here, is bagad, and it means to betray or to deal treacherously, or unfaithfully. I dare say it grieves God considerably when we take advantage of and cheat one another. It is taking advantage of and cheating God Himself.

God is not our Father in the sense that George Washington is the father of this country, or Abraham is our father (mostly speaking to those of us who are Gentiles and not actually related to Abraham), but is our Father in the sense of, well, in my case Jerry Korff. In my wife's case Chuck Fields. In my childrens' case Matt Korff. God is our actual Father. He created us. There is that saying, "I brought you into this world, I can take you out of it," that is not true. God, our Father, brought us into the world, and only He has the right to take us out of it.

So if God is our actual Father, that guy you cut off in traffic (or cut you off), that delivery driver you stiffed, that _____, is your brother or sister. An offense against them is an offense against God.

Verse 11-12: Here in **verse 11** that pesky word bagad comes up again. This time it is translated as unfaithful. This seems to connect these two issues together, being unfaithful to one another, and being unfaithful to God through intermarriage. Or, it is simply showing various ways that the Jews had been bagad-unfaithful.

The theme of unfaithfulness is very troubling. The Bible tells us that there is only one way to be saved, and that is through faith. So, unfaithfulness in several areas shows that there is no faith in the first place. It is not that their works save them, but it is that faith is manifested by works. **James 2:14-26**

Confusing as the idea that faith is what saves us, not works, but faith without works is dead, is not contradictory, but a paradox. The Bible is full of paradox. A paradox is two seemingly contradicting things that when reflected on further make sense.

Let's pretend for a moment that as I am speaking, Mr. John, the security guy came in and told us we all need to leave because there is an armed man coming into the church. You can tell whether we actually believe what he is telling us by the way we react to that. If said, "Thank you for the information," and continued this study, it would show that we didn't really believe what he was telling us. If we all rushed to leave, you would know that we had faith in his message.

Now, just to tease out a few different ways that people respond in faith.

1. Upon receiving the message, the first type hollers back, "Yeah yeah, when we see the guy with the gun, we'll leave.
2. "John thank you so much for telling us!" Then looks to their neighbor and says, "Man, did you hear that? A guy with a gun is coming. How scary is that? I wonder what that would be like. Do you think he is tall? I bet he has a ski-mask on! Do you think he is a big guy or a little guy?" And while they are pondering about these things, its too late.
3. "I wonder if it is a gun or a bazooka. Did he really mean to say an armed man? Could it be an armed woman? Why does it have to be an armed man? If the armed person was coming, he or she wouldn't come here. I wonder what it is that has caused him or her to be so angry. If we could just educate the family..." And then its too late.
4. "When the armed man comes, I will be ready for him. I have always been a good citizen, volunteered for years in the church, I come from a long line of well respected members of this society. Certainly, when this gunman sees me, he will respect who I am. Though all around me be shot, he will let me go." Once again, too late.
5. Then those who are wise, those with faith, get up and leave the church.

So it is with those who claim faith in Christ:

1. Outright reject the message.
2. Those who put their mind to study it in an intellectual way, but never follow Jesus.
3. Those who mold Christ into their own image.
4. Those who trust in their ability, in their own works.
5. Finally, those who actually believe the message, and live as though it is true.

It was the same way in Malachi's day. There were surely some who believed, take Malachi for example. There were some who outright rejected faith, that would be those who intermarried. Then there are those who tried to make God look like them **Verse 17**.

Verse 11-12: If you have read Deuteronomy before, you have seen this passage:

When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and He would destroy you quickly. But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.

Malachi is chiding the people for not following the law, and intermarrying with people of the culture. The NLT simply says that they are marrying women who worship idols, but this loses a potential connections being made. Hebrew says, as the ESV states, that the people of Israel have married the "daughter of a foreign god." Why is this significant? What is the connection? **Verse 10**

The Jews all have one Father, but apparently, these foreign women have another father, idols. So the point being made in the Bible is not that you can't intermarry because of race, but you can't intermarry with someone who worships another god, because they will drag you into that worship. As **2 Corinthians 6:14** says, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

To further the point that they would lead God's children astray **Verse 12**

Notice that it doesn't say that they will completely turn away from the Lord, because apparently they are still coming to Him. This says two things. One, that God will not tolerate worship of Him and an idol. Now, in this context an idol is not a vice or something like that, but an actual false god. So think of going to church on Sunday, and a mosque on Friday.

Secondly, moving away from God often starts with compromise. In my experience, thinking of drug addiction, it usually goes like this: "Man, you have done so good. You have been drug free for what, 2 months now? You just finished a rehab, or program, you deserve a cold one—one hit—or whatever. It will be just one, just a reward." Then, after you took that hit comes the next compromise: "You know, that was such a good time. Lets do that again. It shouldn't be all the time, otherwise I would be a hypocrite. Let's just do it on the weekends." Then, before you know it, you are twice as in to it as you were before.

God does not want us to play with the things of the world. If you dip and dabble you will be in the rabble before you know it. Now, a person can never, never, did I say never, lose their salvation. But that doesn't mean that your relish for spiritual things will not fade. Your sense of God will diminish, and over time, the way that seems right to man is death.

As to the seriousness that can be taken about this issue, intermarriage in the Old Testament, being yoked with those who worship other gods, look at **Ezra 9**

This issue is so central to who the Jews were that Ezra is tearing his hair out! He connects this with transgression of the whole law, because that is what it leads to. Compromise, then, total unfaithfulness.

Verse 13-16: So here is another case of Bagad—unfaithfulness. The Jews have been unfaithful to their wives.

Verse 13-14: This recalls **1 Peter 3:1-7**

Interestingly in Peter's writing, he has more to say to the woman than the man. But maybe what he says to the man is more severe, that the man must give honor to her, understand her, and that she is an equal partner in God's gift of life. And if the husband does not do this, his prayers will be hindered.

Malachi says that God is simply disregarding their sacrifices because they are being unfaithful to their wives. Why is that? Why is the woman not chastised for that, well, one reason seems to be that she has remained faithful. Another reason is

Verse 15-16: In our society, it is not that hard for a woman to get a job and support herself, but in Malachi's day divorce was detrimental to the woman. If her father was alive she would go back home. She was no longer a virgin, so more of a last pick on the basketball team. If she had adult children, they could take care of her, but if her father was dead, had no brothers, and no adult children, this was a sentence to poverty.

But God is also angry with the men for divorcing their wives because **Verse 15**

This recalls the very first commandment God gave to people in **Genesis 1:** Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. I can remember when my brother first got married. My mom was sending him hints and even outright saying it, "Grandma wants some babies!" Like a new grandmother, God wants babies. Not just any babies, but Godly babies.

You have probably heard a time or two in your life the saying, "You are a product of your culture." And you know, that is for the most part true. It isn't always true, as Nigeria, where there is intense persecution of Christians going on right now, is the fastest growing population of Christians. Number 2: China, 3: India, 4. Indonesia, which is very Muslim. But, if you were born in Tennessee you are most likely Southern Baptist, if you are born in Saudi Arabia, probably Muslim, so on so forth.

God knows that too. **Deuteronomy 6**

Teach these things to your children. Repeat them. When you are at home. When you are on the road. When you go to bed, and when you get up. Tie them on your hands, wear them on your foreheads as reminders. So on, so forth. Don't mix with other gods, don't forget your God. Why is that, because you are to create a culture in which your children, the people around you, have no choice but to be permeated, inundated with the Christian message.

This is why what is taught and how in schools is so important. Children are so moldable, and it is those years that it is so important to teach them about the LORD. That is one thing I love about Calvary Chapel. They are invested in our kids. You never have to worry about whether the Gospel is preached to your kids if you bring them here. Sunday mornings, Wednesday evening, and just about any other time they are in childcare. Because Calvary Chapel understands the importance of building a strong foundation for the days that our children will be inundated by the world.

I know pastor Thom has pointed this out before, some call it the "4-14 window." That a person is up to 85% of people make the decision to follow Christ between the ages of 4 and 14. After that, you have 15% of people making the decision. **Verse 15**

Verse 16: Anyone have something different than “I hate divorce here?” The reason for the difference is that this is a tricky Hebrew phrase, and it includes an “infinite construct” which constructs the word to the main subject, which is hard to tell whether that subject is God or the one divorcing his wife. Nevertheless, even if it is the man divorcing his wife that is the hater here, I think it is fine to say that God hates divorce. Why is that, **Genesis 2:5-25**

God hates divorce because He loves people. God made man, God made woman.