

WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE DRIFT

When God's People Drift from Honoring His Name

Malachi 1:6–2:9 (ESV)

HOMILETICAL BRIDGE

CIT: Malachi rebuked the priesthood for not engaging in true worship.

Thesis: We should engage in true worship.

Proposition: I want Fusion Church to engage in true worship.

Probing Question: How do we engage in true worship?

INTRODUCTION: DRIFT DOESN'T START WITH REBELLION

Drift rarely begins with defiance.

No one wakes up and says,
“I think I'll dishonor God today.”

Drift begins subtly.

Reverence cools.

Obedience loosens.

Worship becomes routine.

Last week In Malachi 1:1–5, the people questioned God's love.

Today in 1:6–2:9, they dishonor His name.

**When confidence in God's love weakens,
reverence in worship follows.**

Drift in theology leads to drift at the altar.

**You see, They doubted His heart.
Now they despise His name.**

And God asks a piercing question:

“If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear?” (Mal. 1:6)

That is the issue.

Not attendance.

Not activity.

It's Honor.

Remember the CONTEXT

Israel had returned from exile.

The temple stood.

Sacrifices were happening.

Religion looked alive.

But spiritually, it was hollow.

The priests were offering blind, lame, and sick animals — sacrifices God had explicitly forbidden (Leviticus 22:20).

They were going through motions without reverence.

They were maintaining ritual without awe.

Remember from last week- They had lost the “Wonder of it All”.

They had not stopped worshipping.

They had stopped honoring.

That is drift.

Malachi 1:6–2:9 (ESV)

6 “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’ **7** By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the Lord's table may be despised. **8** When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. **9** And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the Lord of hosts. **10** Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. **11** For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be ^[b] great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. **12** But you profane it when you say that the Lord's table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food, may be despised. **13** But you say, ‘What a weariness this is,’ and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the Lord. **14** Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

Chapter 2

“And now, O priests, this command is for you. **2** If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the Lord of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart. **3** Behold, I will rebuke your offspring,[a] and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and you shall be taken away with it.[b] **4** So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with Levi may stand, says the Lord of hosts. **5** My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him. It was a covenant of fear, and he feared me. He stood in awe of my name. **6** True instruction[c] was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. **7** For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people[d] should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. **8** But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts, **9** and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction.”

Israel had drifted in their worship!

Probing Question: How do we engage in true worship?

1. WE ENGAGE IN TRUE WORSHIP BY REVERING HIS CHARACTER (1:6–7)

6 “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But

you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’ 7 By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the Lord’s table may be despised. God appeals to relationship.

Father.

Master.

Worship begins with who God is.

The priests had grown familiar.

Familiarity had bred casualness.

They respond:

“How have we despised your name?”

Drift always blinds us to itself.

Psalm 29:2 says:

“Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.”

To “ascribe glory” means to recognize weight.

Worship is assigning proper weight to God.

Hebrews 12:28 says:

“Let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.”

Reverence is not stiffness.

It is seriousness about who God is.

Remember the Quote from last week?

A.W. Tozer wrote:

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

When God becomes small in our minds,
He becomes small in our worship.

Illustration

If a world leader came to your home,
you would not give leftovers scraped from yesterday's plates.

Yet Israel gave God animals they would not give their governor.

Verse 8:

“When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil?”

Drift begins when God receives what no one else would.

- 1. WE ENGAGE IN TRUE WORSHIP BY REVERING HIS CHARACTER (1:6-7)**
- 2. WE ENGAGE IN TRUE WORSHIP BY RESPECTING HIS COMMANDS (1:8-14)**

God had clearly commanded unblemished sacrifices.

They knew the law.

They ignored the law.

Verse 13 exposes the heart:

“13 But you say, ‘What a weariness this is,’ and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the Lord.

They were tired of worship.

Not because it was long.
Because their hearts were cold.

And God says something astonishing in **1:10:**

“Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors...”

God would rather shut down worship than accept polluted worship.

That should shake us.

Charles Spurgeon once said:

“To love sin and yet try to worship God is a contradiction.”

Partial obedience is disobedience.

Jesus said:

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)

True worship is not emotional enthusiasm detached from obedience.

It is joyful obedience flowing from love.

And Scripture gives us a sobering warning about what happens when obedience loses its warmth.

In **Revelation 3:15–16**, Jesus says to the church in Laodicea:

“I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.”

That is not language directed at pagans.

It is spoken to a church.

Lukewarm worship is not open rebellion.

It is half-hearted devotion.

It is religious activity without reverent affection.

It is outward obedience without inward fire.

And Jesus says that kind of worship makes Him sick.

And then in vs 19- We have the warning!!!

Revelation 3:19:

“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.”

Even the warning is love.

Listen-

When God’s people drift, He rebukes — not to destroy, but to restore.

Illustration

That is polluted worship.

Verbal devotion.

Practical disregard.

Drift happens when obedience becomes optional.

- 1. WE ENGAGE IN TRUE WORSHIP BY REVERING HIS CHARACTER (1:6-7)**
- 2. WE ENGAGE IN TRUE WORSHIP BY RESPECTING HIS COMMANDS (1:8-14)**
- 3. WE ENGAGE IN TRUE WORSHIP BY REFLECTING HIS COVENANT FAITHFULNESS (2:1-9)**

God now addresses the priests directly.

“My covenant with him was one of life and peace... and he feared me.” (2:5)

The model priest:

- Feared God
- Taught truth
- Walked uprightly
- Turned many from iniquity

But these priests:

“You have turned aside from the way.” (2:8)

They corrupted worship.
They distorted truth.
They caused others to stumble.

And here is where we must not miss something vital.

Under the Old Covenant, this rebuke fell on a tribe.

Under the New Covenant, it falls on every believer.

1 Peter 2:9:

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood...”

Revelation 1:6:

“Made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father...”

Every Christian is a priest.

You do not need a collar.
You do not need a title.

You don't need an office and set of commentaries!

If you belong to Christ, you are part of the royal priesthood.

What Do New Covenant Priests Do?

We no longer offer lambs.

But we still offer sacrifices.

Hebrews 13:15:

“Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise...”

Romans 12:1:

“Present your bodies as a living sacrifice...”

Your life is now the offering.

Your obedience is the sacrifice.

Your holiness is the altar.

**When Malachi rebukes priests for polluted worship,
we cannot say,
“That was for them.”**

It is for us.

When priests drift, people drift.

And when believers drift, the church weakens.

Point to Christ—

But here is the glory.

We are priests because we have a perfect High Priest.

Hebrews 7:26:

“For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest,
holy, innocent, unstained...”

Where Israel brought blemished sacrifices,
Christ brought Himself — spotless.

Where priests dishonored God,
Jesus perfectly honored Him.

Where worship failed,
Christ fulfilled it.

We do not earn priesthood.

We inherit it through Him.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Are you giving God leftovers?

Leftover time.

Leftover obedience.

Leftover passion.

Has worship become weariness?

Are you reverent in public but careless in private?

Remember:

You are a priest.

Your home is a sanctuary.

Your life is an altar.

Your obedience is an offering.

Closing....

Drift begins quietly.

It begins when awe fades.
When obedience loosens.
When reverence cools.

It begins when priests become casual.

And you — if you are in Christ — are a priest.

**The question is not:
“Is the church honoring God?”**

**The question is:
Am I?**

God asked Israel:
“Where is My honor?”

Today He asks us the same.

But hear this:

The God who deserves honor
is the God who gave His Son.

The altar is not empty.

The sacrifice has been made.

The veil has been torn.

And the High Priest stands with nail-scarred hands and says:

“Come.”

Malachi says,

“Return to me.”

Jesus says,

“Come to me.”

If you have drifted — return.

If you have grown cold — repent.

If worship has become routine — revive it.

Not because you fear rejection.

But because you are a priest
of the Most High God.

Do not give Him leftovers.

Give Him your life.

Revere His character.

Respect His commands.

Reflect His covenant faithfulness.

**And let your worship — in this room and outside it —
declare:**

“Great is the LORD.”

Do not drift another inch.

Return.

Come.

Honor Him.