

Keep Faith
Malachi 2:10-2:16

**After breaking up with his fiancée, a young man realized the error of his ways when he wrote: "Dearest Marie, No words could ever express the great unhappiness I've felt since breaking our engagement. Please say you'll take me back. No one could ever take your place in my heart, so please forgive me. I love you! Yours forever, Jimmy...
P.S. And congratulations on winning the lottery."

-Total sincerity, right?

**That reminds me of a young man who was proposing to his girlfriend. He had the ring in his hand and said: "Sweetheart, I love you so much, I want you to marry me. I don't have a car like Johnny Green. I don't have a yacht like him or a house as big as his. I don't have the money of Johnny Green but I love you with all my heart." She looked into his eyes and said, "I love you too, sweetheart...but could you tell me more about Johnny Green?"

-Easy to lose focus in our relationships.

-Malachi 2:10-16, -see that our relationships with others, with God, and with our spouse, all have the potential to disintegrate if we're not careful.

-Let me encourage you again to bring your Bible to church each week and read along in the passage as I go through it.

Malachi 2:10-16...

10 Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers? 11 Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. 12 May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob any descendant of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts!

13 And this second thing you do. You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. 14 But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. 15 Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in

your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. 16 “For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the Lord, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.”

--phrase that is repeated five times in our passage: **“faithless”** It occurs in vv. 10, 11, 13, 15, 16

-King James = “deal treacherously.”

-The New Living Translation = “faithless.”

-Amplified Bible “deal faithlessly and treacherously.”

-It has the idea of pillaging something that was supposed to be protected

-What was pillaged? - **“covenant”** in verse 10 and verse 14.

-A covenant is a solemn and binding mutual agreement between two parties. An oath was made and it was formally ratified by an external act.

-There are three ways that God’s people had broken faith:

1. Keep faith with others: Don’t allow your relationships to fracture (10)

2. Keep faith with God: Don’t unite with an unbeliever (11-12)

3. Keep faith with your spouse: Don’t get divorced (13-16)

I. Keep faith w/ others: Don’t allow relationships to fracture (10)

-We must keep faith with one another.

-The word “profane” means “to wound” or “dissolve.”

-I wonder if another believer has wounded you?

-My guess is that you’ve been hurt at least once.

-Have you wounded someone else?

Maybe you’d rather just dissolve some relationships.

It’s easier to just avoid people you don’t like.

-MOTIVATION: we have one Father, one God, and we are in covenant with Him through Jesus Christ, let’s redouble our efforts to live in peace.

Ephesians 4:3: “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace”

Romans 12:18: "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

2.Keep faith with God: Don't unite with an unbeliever (11-12)

-God's people had not only broken their promise to one another, they had disengaged from God Himself.

-Verse 11 Judah has been faithless, an **abomination has been committed**

-This term was reserved for the worst of evils

*What is it that is so revolting to God?

verse 11: "...by marrying the daughter of a foreign god."

-They were marrying unbelievers.

-It has never been God's plan for believers to marry unbelievers.

-2 Corinthians 6:14: "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers"

-The concept of being "unequally yoked" is taken from **Deuteronomy 22:10**, where the Israelites were told not to plow with an ox (a clean animal) and a donkey (an unclean animal) yoked together. An ox and donkey are incompatible and uncooperative because their natures and temperaments are so different

**Paul reinforced this principle by asking five rhetorical questions

2 Corinthians 6. NLT:

"How can goodness be a partner with wickedness?

How can light live with darkness?

What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil?

How can a believer partner with an unbeliever?

And what union can there be between God's temple and idols?"

-The answer to all these questions is, "No way!

-They're incompatible! There is no harmony! He can't! None!"

-Don't let your drive for human intimacy lead your heart to grow cold toward your heavenly Father.

-notice the word "loves" in v. 11. —God loves the sanctuary—fellowship

Let me be quick to add two points:

- It is possible for unbelieving spouses to come to Christ.
- If you're married to an unbelieving spouse...love and pray

**John Piper sums it up well when he says this:

"If the choice of a marriage partner still lies before you, settle it in your mind right now never to marry anyone that does not love the Lord Jesus with all his or her heart."

-Teenagers, make that decision right now.

-don't even go out with someone who does not love Jesus.

**King Solomon's tragic end

-Avoid the slippery slope of Solomon

3.Keep faith with your spouse: Don't get divorced (13-16).

-preliminary points in reference to verse 16:

"I hate divorce, says the Lord God..."

- God does hate divorce.

-We can't water this down or try to act like He doesn't.

- God does not hate divorced people.
- Divorce is not the only thing God hates.

-Proverbs 6:16-19: "There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers."

- God does not forbid all divorce.

-1 Corinthians 7:15 teaches that if the unbelieving spouse wants to break it off, the believer can let him or her go.

-5 groups of people who can benefit from passage:

- The "not married"

-I want you to know that God celebrates singleness.

-Shame on the church for putting pressure on you

-or for treating you like you're a second-class citizen.

- The "nearly married"

-Maybe you're engaged or thinking seriously about getting married.

- The "newly married"

-Can be off to a rough start or great start

*PBS did a special on marriage a while ago where they pointed to a new phenomenon of "starter marriages."

- The "numbly married"

-Maybe you're just going through the motions.

-Some of you are an "affair waiting to happen."

- The “narrowly married”
 - Maybe you’re in the process of divorce right now or thinking seriously about it.

Give Heed to Hedges

- v. 15 & 16 “So guard yourself in your spirit”
- “guard” means “to hedge with thorns”
- Establish boundaries that will promote your marriage

Here are six practical ways to keep your marriage covenant:

1. Take responsibility to grow spiritually
2. Stay committed no matter what
 - *An older couple was discussing their upcoming 50th anniversary in the grocery checkout line, when the young cashier interjected, “I can’t imagine being married to the same man for 50 years!” To which the wife wisely replied, “Well, honey, don’t get married until you can!”
3. Set up some practical hedges
 - Do you love your marriage enough to protect it?
 - “Hedges” by Jerry Jenkins.
4. Commit to communicate
 - Make time to talk. -don’t go to bed angry.
5. Think the best of your spouse
6. Go in for a tune-up
7. Be a servant

* Comedian Jack Benny was very shy when he was young. One day a young lady caught his eye but was too timid to talk to her. He went to the florist and ordered one red rose to be sent to her without any card enclosed. He did this for a week until finally she went to the florist to find out who was sending her roses. They eventually met and started dating, and the roses continued to come every day. Then they got married and Mary thought the roses would stop but they kept coming. When they were on their honeymoon, the roses still arrived. She figured they’d stop when they got home but they didn’t. Every day of their married life she received a red rose. But then Jack died. The very next day, another rose arrived. Thinking the florist didn’t know that her husband was now gone, she called to let him know about Jack’s death and that the roses could stop now. To which the florist replied, “You don’t understand. Before he died, Jack made all the arrangements. You’ll receive one red rose every day for the rest of your life.”

Conclusion:

I can sum up this whole passage in this: Relationships matter to God. You can tell almost everything you need to know about a person by the company that they keep.

God thinks you are good company! He loves you!

- He has set boundaries to guard His relationship with you!

- That means...he cares how you treat others

- He cares who you bind yourself to

- He cares how you treat your spouse

He cares so much that when we step outside the boundaries...its an abomination!

Lord help us! What can we begin to do today to make things right?