

“How To Prevent Spiritual Drift”

Malachi

~INTRO~

A FEW YEARS AGO...

- My family took a trip to Florida...
 - I had the chance to surf for the first time.
- I paddled straight out from where Stephani & the kids were sitting on the beach...
 - They were my reference point.
- I had a great time & everything felt fine...
 - I wasn't doing a great job but I was having a ton of fun...
 - Adamant about catching better waves so I could stand up!
- As time passed something felt off...
 - I was no longer where I started...
 - Steph & the kids were now far away.
- Nothing dramatic had happened...
 - No storm or wipeout or intentional decision to move farther away...
 - Just time / focus / & a slow drift.

I HAD DRIFTED SO FAR...

- That I couldn't just swim back...
 - I had to get out of the water & walk back to the place I originally stood.
 - This experience stood out to me...
 - Because it's a **vivid picture of how drift works**

TAKE THIS IN...

- Drift doesn't happen because someone intentionally moves away...
 - It happens because they stop paying attention to where they are.

THAT'S WHY I'VE TITLED TODAY'S MESSAGE...

- *“How To Prevent Spiritual Drift”*
 - (Malachi)

~CONTEXT~

BEFORE WE DIVE IN...

- It's important to understand when Malachi was speaking...
 - And why his message matters.

MALACHI WAS WRITTEN...

- After the exile during the same general period as Nehemiah.
 - The walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt...
 - Worship had resumed...
 - The temple was functioning again...

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- From the outside everything looked spiritually healthy.

BUT WHEN WE READ NEHEMIAH 13...

- We see what was really happening beneath the surface...
 - The people had slowly relaxed their commitments...
 - The people were compromising
 - The priests were allowing it

IN OTHER WORDS...

- This was a people who still believed in God...
 - But had drifted over time without realizing it.

THAT'S WHY MALACHI WAS WRITTEN...

- To the people of God (not a pagan nation)...
 - Who had kept showing up...
 - But had grown complacent in their faith...
 - And casual in the things of God.

~STUDY~

LISTEN TO WHAT GOD...

- Has to say to them...
 - (Read 1:6-9)

#1 – Guard Spiritual Depth

(1:6-14; 2:1-9)

GOD USES VERY STRONG LANGUAGE HERE...

- Because spiritual drift by definition is self-blinding...
 - And we typically think this warning is for someone else...
 - Or we become *defensive* instead of *reflective*.

(vv. 6-9) Drift exposed

WHAT WENT WRONG:

Convenience over conviction

THEY OFFERED GOD...

- Blind animals = easier
- Lame animals = cheaper
- Leftovers = convenient

➤ What we're seeing here is people who had become complacent!

(vv. 10-14) Drift confronted

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THIS IS HOW GOD RESPONDS...

- To their half-hearted worship...
 - And partial obedience

COMPLACENT MEANS...

- Marked by satisfaction with the status-quo...
 - Especially when accompanied by unawareness of dangers or deficiencies.

“So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.” (Heb. 2:1) NLT

SPIRITUAL DRIFT HAPPENED BECAUSE...

- The people chose convenience over conviction...
 - Instead of saying “God deserves the best”
 - They opted for “This is good enough”

LET'S CONTRAST THIS...

- With the heart of king David...
 - *(2 Samuel 24:18-24) NLT*
- David portrays the opposite of what was happening in Malachi's time.

THE WARNING FOR US:

WHAT DOES SPIRITUAL DRIFT LOOK LIKE?

- It starts with compromising in worship & the word.
 - Casual attendance & casual reading
- Would you show up late and unprepared to a job interview?
 - Why do we treat worship this way?
- Would you give your employer distracted, half-hearted work?
 - Why do we give God distracted attention?
 - Why do we serve God like it doesn't matter?
- Would you speak to a boss/spouse the way you speak to God?
 - Why do we pray in rushed, half-hearted moments?

(2:1-9) Drift explained & warned

HERE'S THE TAKEAWAY...

Spiritual drift happens...

- When we've grown casual with holy things.

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- When convenience replaces conviction...
 - Priorities turn upside down.

WHAT DOES GOD DESIRE?

HE DESIRES THEIR HEART...

- With a call of His grace.

(Mal. 3:7) “... Return to Me, and I will return to you”

~CALL WORSHIP TEAM (RESPONSE)~

I REALIZE I'M TALKING TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE TODAY...

- Some of you are here pressing in...
 - And this is nothing more than a warning for the future.
 - Set the guard now so you don't drift from where you're at.
- Some of you have already drifted...
 - This should be a sobering moment to respond to Jesus...
 - Make the necessary adjustments...
 - Get back to basics of walking with the Lord.
 - (Mal. 3:7) “... Return to Me, and I will return to you”
 - Some of you are here searching...
 - What you're searching for isn't found in a religious process...
 - Like the people of Malachi's day had...
 - But is found in Jesus Christ...
 - Today He's inviting you to a life-giving relationship.