

INTRODUCTION:

–Explain how the things we didn't value in our younger years, we now value in our older years: *Watching the news. *Being asked questions. *Sitting and enjoying a meal. *Solitude and silence. *Sunday Church service.

–Sunday morning service was seen as a burden. Prayer was boring. Bible reading was a chore. Church serving opportunities were an interference to my fun.

–Why is it that these things that I once held as a negative have now become such a worthy call to offer myself to? —The prophet Malachi will give us a pathway to answering this question, specifically when it comes to offering ourselves to God.

–**Mal. 1:11:** *For from the rising of the sun to its setting my NAME will be 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.* —From the New Testament, we know that name is ultimately personified in

Jesus Christ, the unique son of God who inherits and rules the nations (Ps. 2:7-8; cf. Deut. 32:9; Ps. 82:8; Mt.

28:18-20). —**Phil. 2:9-11:** *Therefore God has HIGHLY EXALTED [Christ] and bestowed on him the NAME that is above every NAME, 10 so that at the NAME of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* —As

Matthew 28 reveals to us, Christ has been given all authority in heaven and on earth, and we as a new priesthood of believers get to join in this mission of sharing His great name with anyone who will listen—the only name that bears salvation (Acts 4:12). At this very moment Christ's name is the greatest, past, present, and future, as He is totally and completely in control, AND YET as time goes on this truth will become more evident as His priestly Kingdom completely overshadows all other kingdoms of this earth. For all authority is His in heaven and on earth (Mt 28).

–We are on the winning team, and although there will be times of testing, trial, and tribulation we are more than conquerors, and we live to proclaim the name of the Lord. —**May your life be about proclaiming Christ's great name wherever you are!** ...With your word, with your actions, with your worship.

–HOWEVER, understand that revealing His name as Great means offering yourself to the gracious acts of faithful living according to HIS ways and not your own. **Prov. 14:12** *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.* We walk intentionally in the way of Christ—loving others according to His life-giving example in which He loves us!!! We go the way of offering ourselves everyday as a living sacrifice to God, motivated by His pure and selfless love for us.

–BUT as we'll see, although His Name is great, the Priests in Malachi's day certainly didn't live like it.

MOVEMENT 1:

–**Mal. 1:12:** *But you [priests] profane [my name] when you say that the Lord's table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food, may be despised.* —Those who are worshipping Yahweh flippantly—going through the religious motions without their heart being behind it, they're taking the Name of the Lord in vain—with emptiness,

idleness, frivolous, insincerity (Ex. 20:7). How were they doing this??? —**Mal. 1:6-8:** *"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.* —They dishonored God by redefining worship and offerings. They did what was right in their eyes (**Worship our way: personal preference vs posture of the heart**).

–**Mal. 1:8:** *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.* —The message to the Priest is to recognize if what they're doing is right and orderly according to God's way. You'd never flippantly bring a dismal gift to a high status earthly leader—you'd be punished! So why would you flippantly bring your offerings to the God who created the Cosmos!?

—How we worship God matters; He defines what is worthy and acceptable. ILLUSTRATION: Playing an instrument/orchestra or playing sport/team—there is preparation so that what you bring is your best offering.

–**If we posture our hearts/minds for trivial matters (sports/music) and earthly leaders, how much more should we prepare our hearts for worship when it comes to faithful parenting, faithful marriages,**

faithful worship on Sunday??!! How many of you prepare your hearts before Sunday morning worship, or prepare yourself before stepping into the day where you'll influence others relationally (work, school, parenting, marriage)? Do you just hope that by chance your life will be a faithful and pure offering to God? –Where is the honor and reverence for God when we just come with leftovers, half-hearted worship, double-minded praise!? –Sadly, **as New Testament Christians we can easily hyperfocus on the grace afforded to us in Christ, so much so that we make God out to be this Father who really doesn't care what we bring as an offering:** how we live, how we dress, how we talk, how we love, what we prioritize. Truth is that God does care, and He gave us grace not to offer the leftovers or take short cuts in faithfulness, but so that we could give Him our best without fear of death when we mess up. **Christ is the standard of what a daily offering looks like! 1 Jn. 2:6** Whoever says he abides in [Christ] ought to walk in the same way in which he walked—to sacrificially love others as He loves you. –How are you sacrificing yourself for your brothers, sisters, and your God? –**May you see that the offering which is acceptable to God is one motivated by pure love.**

MOVEMENT 2:

Mal. 1:13-14: 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. —ILLUSTRATION: Asking your kids to load the dishwasher (they complain like they have to load a warehouse of heavy boxes); or ordering a coffee from a teenage barista (annoyed that you are asking her to work) LOL. –Malachi is highlighting two problems here: 1) those who see God's way as a burden, and 2) those who want to cheat God. He is targeting those who see worship and offerings as burdensome, and while also acknowledging who take shortcuts by offering that which has been deemed us unworthy or unclean. –As I said, in my early years I saw Sunday mornings as a burden, serving in a ministry as interference, Bible reading as boring, and I saw prayer as pointless; however, this might have been because I didn't see God as worthy of great sacrifice. –Why do some people sacrifice to God greatly and others minimally? (17 yr old who grew up in church vs 45 yr who is new to faith)...

CONCLUSION:

ILLUSTRATION: When I bought my wife her engagement ring... it costs me dearly as a 22 year old out of Bible College, and I didn't purchase it to "win her over" or impress her, but I made sacrifices to purchase that ring and offer it to her, because I valued her as the most meaningful relationship in my life! –The more we realize the greatness of Christ, the more we should want to show Him our gratitude by living a sacrificial life that reveals His greatness! –The truth is that maybe we just don't think He's that great. –If God is not that great, why would you care to bring Him something great? **When your view of God is small your offerings and sacrifice will be small too** –How can we see the greatness of God? BUILD: **1) Surround yourself with people who live as though God is great** (testimonies). **2) Read scripture to remember His greatness.** **3) Journal and reflect on His great faithfulness.** **4) Take big steps of faith that are uncomfortable and uncalculated** (serve/missions/ hard talks). **5) Forgive those who have hurt you most** (let go of bitterness). –**God's greatness should drive us towards making great offerings with our lives out of a pure heart!**