

INTRODUCTION:

Malachi 4:1-3: *“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. 2 **But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.** 3 And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.*

—Just as the first temple was destroyed in 586 BC at the hands of Babylon, because Israel rejected Yahweh and followed after other gods, I believe Malachi is forecasting a historical event in Israel, which Jesus alluded to as well, that under the hands of the Romans, the 2nd Temple would be destroyed in 70 AD, because Israel would reject their Messiah, and the priests would continue to abuse their responsibilities. To some who weren't prepared, that day would be the fire of judgment for those who opposed Christ and rejected His newly established Church (vs. 1), but for those in Christ, there would be freedom from the oppression and persecution of that time (vv. 2-3).

—AND YET, because we haven't taken part in the resurrection, we know there will be a time in the future when Christ comes with fire—to some it will be a refining fire of purification and to others the fire of judgment and condemnation, and although we are *really* interested in *when* that day will be, *what* that time will look like, in Christ **we don't need to shrink back in fear but we realize it will be a day when we go from glory to glory**. A day when we fully realize that we are immortal in Christ Jesus, as we are resurrected into His physical presence to be with him forever! It will be a day when everything is as it should be.

—**Disclaimer:** If you were hoping for a message about how this will look and how this might play out, this isn't going to be it. Too many times, we get sidetracked by attempting to figure out the details, and trying to make sense of it all, that we lose focus from what truly matters. —**Illustration:** Lk. 10 shares that Jesus was over at Mary and Martha's for dinner, and Martha was so busy waiting on tables, that she neglected her guest of honor—Jesus. Lovingly he called her out, *“Martha, you're anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary.”* Literally, come listen to my voice and be in my presence. Today, I want to talk about what truly matters, and not to get side tracked about the things that are outside of our control.

—When we read passages like today in Mal. 4:1-3, our minds are quick to talk about the Great Tribulation and The Day of the Lord... we want to concern ourselves with details, dates, times, and theories, BUT to our detriment sometimes we become so obsessed with these details and questions that we neglect the clear calling of Christ leading up to that day we'll all share in. **Sometimes we are more faithful in fighting for our eschatology than we are faithfully fighting for love and unity.** —Like the Galatians desiring secret knowledge, Christians today can fervently chase after prophecy updates—and yet what's the motivation behind the pursuit?? —**Illustration:** Playing the game “What if...?” What if you had \$100 to spend in the next hour? What if you could travel anywhere right now? The big one: what if you knew the world ended in a week... the answer was usually one of reckless living: change of behavior, taking life seriously.

—For some reading passages like this don't bring about peace but fear, anxiety, and dread, and so this morning I'd love to look at how to live faithfully as The Day of the Lord draws near for all.

MOVEMENT 1:

—2nd Timothy was written during Neronian persecution, and the revolt between the Jews and Romans was heating up; this was a hard time for a lot Christians, and yet I think that until we come face to face with Christ, tribulation, suffering, and trials will be a part of our lives to some degree or another...and **instead of having an escapist mentality, a lazy mentality, or a fearful mentality, that we should have a faithful mentality!**

Illustration: Chaotic car rides, where kids can borrow fear from the future, but the dad asks for trust.

—**2 Tim. 2:20-25:** *Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. 21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready*

for every good work. –As Christians we are to live holy lives; we are set apart to be the kingdom of priests to our world. We have a mission and purpose. What's a vessel of honorable use look like:

–**2 Tim. 2:20-25 (cont. And exegete):** 22 So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, *ALONG* with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 Have **NOTHING** to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome **BUT** kind to everyone, able to teach, *PATIENTLY* enduring evil, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. –**Your faithful life impacts the lives and faithfulness of others.**

–**2 Tim. 4:1-5:** I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom (Vengeance is HIS): 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, *WITH* complete *PATIENCE* and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5 (So freak out, get mad, curse those evil punks, and be discouraged...NO!) **BUT AS FOR YOU**, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. –**Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you, and bless those who mistreat you** (Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:28; Rom. 12:14).

MOVEMENT 2:

–**1 Pet. 2:11** Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. 12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, **SO THAT** when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation (Mt. 5:16).

–**1 Pet. 2:13** (Governing authorities) Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good... –Be a good and respectable citizen, but not at the expense of faithfulness to Christ.

–**1 Pet. 2:18** (Employers) Servants, be subject to your masters *WITH* all respect, **NOT ONLY** to the good and gentle **BUT ALSO** to the unjust.

–**1 Pet. 3:1-2** (wives to husbands) Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, **SO THAT** even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct. –Wives show godly respect and pure conduct to your husbands as a testimony..

–**1 Pet. 3:7** (husbands to wives) Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, **SINCE** they are heirs with you of the grace of life, **SO THAT** your prayers may not be hindered. They're like precious fine china, but also more susceptible to damage.

–**1 Pet. 4:1-2** Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. –**Faithfully use your bodies to love God and love other people no matter the season you're in.**

CONCLUSION:

Tribulation, trials, and sufferings are part of life in this imperfect world, but it's not meaningless for these shape us into Christlikeness, the suffering, trials, and tribulations become the dark backdrop in which our faithfulness to the Lord is visibly seen as a bright light. –**1 Pet. 4:7-10** The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. 8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace....” –We do this, so that in everything we do God is glorified forever and ever. –**The Christian life is not about surviving or escaping tribulation, but it's about being faithful no matter what season you're in and what tribulation is headed your way.**