



# MALACHI

**“When Leaders  
Lose the Fear of God”  
Malachi 2:1-9**

**<sup>1</sup>“And now this commandment is for you, O priests. <sup>2</sup>If you do not listen, and if you do not set it upon your heart to give honor to My name,” says Yahweh of hosts, “then I will send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; and indeed, I have cursed them already because you are not setting it upon your heart. <sup>3</sup>Behold, I am going to rebuke your seed, and I will spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your feasts; and you will be taken away with it.**

**Malachi 2:1-9**

**<sup>4</sup>Then you will know that I have sent this commandment to you, that My covenant may continue with Levi,” says Yahweh of hosts. <sup>5</sup>“My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him as something to be feared; so he feared Me and stood in awe of My name. <sup>6</sup>Instruction of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many back from iniquity.**

**Malachi 2:1-9**

**<sup>7</sup>For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth; for he is the messenger of Yahweh of hosts. <sup>8</sup>But as for you, you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble by the instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi,” says Yahweh of hosts. <sup>9</sup>“So I also have made you despised and low before all the people, just as you are not keeping My ways but are showing partiality in the instruction.**

**Malachi 2:1-9**

## **Big Idea**

**Faithful ministry begins with the fear of God, guards the truth of God, and points people to the Son of God.**

## **Introduction**

**The priests in Malachi's day were still religiously active.**

- **The temple was open.**
- **The sacrifices continued.**
- **The ceremonies were still being performed.**

## **Introduction**

**But something was deeply wrong.**

- **They had lost reverence for God's name.**
- **Their problem was not merely outward behavior.**
- **Their hearts had grown cold toward the glory of God.**

# **Introduction**

**When leaders lose the fear of God, worship becomes careless, truth becomes corrupted, and people begin to stumble.**

## **I. God Commands Leaders to Honor His Name**

**<sup>1</sup>“And now this commandment is for you, O priests.**

**Malachi 2:1**

## **I. God Commands Leaders to Honor His Name**

**God speaks directly to the priests.**

- **They were responsible for guarding worship, teaching truth, and leading the people faithfully.**
- **But they had failed to take God's glory seriously.**

## **I. God Commands Leaders to Honor His Name**

**Spiritual leadership is not ownership.  
It is stewardship.**

- **Pastors, elders, teachers, and leaders are accountable to Christ, the Head of the church.**
- **The priests were still serving outwardly, but their hearts were not honoring God inwardly.**
- **They handled sacred things without reverence.**

## **I. God Commands Leaders to Honor His Name**

**It is possible to be busy in religion while cold toward God.**

**The first sermon a teacher must hear is the one God is preaching to his own heart.**

## **II. God Judges Those Who Corrupt His Worship**

**<sup>3</sup>Behold, I am going to rebuke your seed, and I will spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your feasts; and you will be taken away with it.**

**<sup>4</sup>Then you will know that I have sent this commandment to you, that My covenant may continue with Levi," says Yahweh of hosts.**

**Malachi 2:3-4**

## **II. God Judges Those Who Corrupt His Worship**

**God uses shocking language to show how seriously He takes corrupted worship.**

- **The priests had treated holy things casually, but God did not treat their sin casually.**
- **God determines how He is to be worshiped.**
  - **Worship is not built around personal preference, convenience, or performance.**

## **II. God Judges Those Who Corrupt His Worship**

**A public platform may hide hypocrisy for a season, but God sees what people cannot see.**

**The Gospel reminds us that the failure of human priests points us to our need for a better Priest.**

## **II. God Judges Those Who Corrupt His Worship**

**Human leaders will fail.**

**Christ never fails.**

## **III. Faithful Ministry Flows from the Fear of God**

**<sup>5</sup>“My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him as something to be feared; so he feared Me and stood in awe of My name. <sup>6</sup>Instruction of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many back from iniquity. <sup>7</sup>For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth; for he is the messenger of Yahweh of hosts. **Malachi 2:5-7****

### **III. Faithful Ministry Flows from the Fear of God**

- **Faithful ministry does not begin with talent, personality, creativity, or charisma.**
  - **It begins with the fear of God.**
- **The fear of God is reverent awe, humble submission, and deep awareness of His holiness.**

### **III. Faithful Ministry Flows from the Fear of God**

- **A man who fears people will compromise the message.**
- **A man who fears failure will chase success.**
- **A man who fears God will seek to honor the Lord above all.**

## **III. Faithful Ministry Flows from the Fear of God**

### **Marks of Faithful Ministry**

#### **A. Resolute in Doctrine**

- **“True instruction was in his mouth.”**
- **Faithful ministry teaches what God has spoken.**
- **The message is not invented, softened, edited, or replaced.**

## **III. Faithful Ministry Flows from the Fear of God**

#### **B. Faithful in Character**

- **“Unrighteousness was not found on his lips.”**
- **The faithful servant does not merely teach truth.**
  - **He walks with God.**
- **His life should not contradict his message.**

### **III. Faithful Ministry Flows from the Fear of God**

#### **C. Produce Spiritual Fruit**

- **“He turned many from iniquity.”**
- **True ministry does not simply inform people.**
  - **It calls sinners away from sin and toward God.**

### **III. Faithful Ministry Flows from the Fear of God**

#### **C. Produce Spiritual Fruit**

- **The goal of preaching is not entertainment, applause, or admiration.**
- **The goal is repentance, holiness, faith, and the glory of Christ.**

## **IV. Corrupt Ministry Causes Others to Stumble**

**<sup>8</sup>But as for you, you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble by the instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi," says Yahweh of hosts. <sup>9</sup>"So I also have made you despised and low before all the people, just as you are not keeping My ways but are showing partiality in the instruction.**

**Malachi 2:8-9**

## **IV. Corrupt Ministry Causes Others to Stumble**

- The priests had turned aside from God's way.**
- Their teaching confused the people instead of leading them toward God.**
  - Spiritual leaders rarely fall alone.**
  - When leaders wander, others are often pulled with them.**

## **IV. Corrupt Ministry Causes Others to Stumble**

**Bad doctrine is never merely an intellectual problem.**

- **It perverts worship.**
- **It causes a decline in moral behavior.**
- **It negatively affects how individuals perceive God.**

## **IV. Corrupt Ministry Causes Others to Stumble**

**A preacher may cause people to stumble not only by teaching error, but also by refusing to teach necessary truth.**

## **IV. Corrupt Ministry Causes Others to Stumble**

**There was partiality in their instruction**

- **The priests applied God's truth selectively.**
  - **They showed favoritism.**
- **They treated people differently based on status, influence, or advantage.**

## **IV. Corrupt Ministry Causes Others to Stumble**

**God's Word must be applied faithfully to all people.**

- **The rich and the poor.**
- **The strong and the weak.**
- **The longtime member and the first-time visitor.**
- **The influential and the overlooked.**

## **IV. Corrupt Ministry Causes Others to Stumble**

**When truth changes depending on who is  
standing in front of us, we are no longer  
fearing God above man.**

## **IV. Corrupt Ministry Causes Others to Stumble**

**Where do we see Christ in Malachi 2?**

**Malachi 2 shows us the failure of sinful  
priests.**

**But that failure points us forward to Jesus  
Christ, the faithful Priest.**

## **IV. Corrupt Ministry Causes Others to Stumble**

- **Jesus never despised the Father's name.**
  - **Jesus never corrupted the truth.**
  - **Jesus never showed sinful partiality.**
- **Jesus never caused His people to stumble.**

## **IV. Corrupt Ministry Causes Others to Stumble**

- **Where sinful priests offered polluted sacrifices, Christ offered Himself without blemish.**
- **Where they corrupted the covenant, Christ fulfilled the covenant.**
  - **Where they failed to turn people from iniquity, Christ bore the iniquity of His people on the cross.**

## **Conclusion**

**We must remember that God takes His name seriously.**

- **The church does not belong to the pastor.**
- **The pulpit does not belong to the preacher.**
- **The worship does not belong to the people.**
  - **The truth does not belong to the age.**

**It all belongs to the Lord of hosts.**

## **Conclusion**

**Faithful churches are built not on the fear of man, but on the fear of God and faith in Jesus Christ, who is our perfect High Priest.**

**The gospel is the good news that the just and gracious God of the universe looked upon hopelessly sinful people and sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin in the resurrection so that everyone who turns from their sin (repentance) and believes in Him (faith) will be reconciled to God forever.**