

TRAVEL

Renewal

Return. Restore. Rebuild.

Chronological Quiet Time Series

Journey of Renewal

Small Group Discussions

Malachi and Me

Join Us As We Seek

Renewal in our
faith & life

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Renewal

Return. Restore. Rebuild.

Everyone seeking to have or continue a relationship with God is at a stage of **renewal**: the replacing or repair of something that is worn out, run-down, or broken. Even when we are running at full speed spiritually there are parts of our life and faith that can get run-down and need a little repair

Some times we have wandered and need to turn to God. Others have let parts of their faith fall into disarray and need to restore the relationship or practice to working order. Finally, we may need to rebuild the structure that our relationship is built, or that our relationships with others are defined. Our series will follow the journey of Isreal returning to Jerusalem. In this story we will find three ways we can have renewal in our relationship with God

RETURN: Come back to and turn one's attention back to God

RESTORE: Bring back a former spiritual practice - like sharing your faith. reading. prayer. discipleship - returning to a condition it was before

REBUILD: Build faith and convictions again after it has been damaged or destroyed

Do you feel a need or desire for renewal?

Do you feel a stirring in your soul for something more, something better or just an old dream realized. Join us the coming weeks as we seek to be RETURNED. RESTORED. AND REBUILT and together experience RENEWAL

“Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, everyone whose **spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the Lord** that is in Jerusalem.

- Ezra 1:5 :



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Contents of Booklet

Chronological Timelines

You will see a complete Old Testament timeline to give understanding of where our narrative fits in the grand story of the old testament. Also, a breakdown of the restoration period.

Chronological Study Series

Looking through the books of the Bible being covered in our sermons and small group discussions. We will chronologically journey through the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Esther.

Small Group Discussion Notes

A 4-Part Discussion Series on the Book of Malachi. We will find great spiritual questions and challenges both in the return to Israel and in our modern lives.

Sermon Series Schedule

Week 1 | Why Exile?

Week 2 | The Time to Return

Week 3 | Don't Neglect God's House

Week 4 | God Never Left

Week 5 | Building A Home

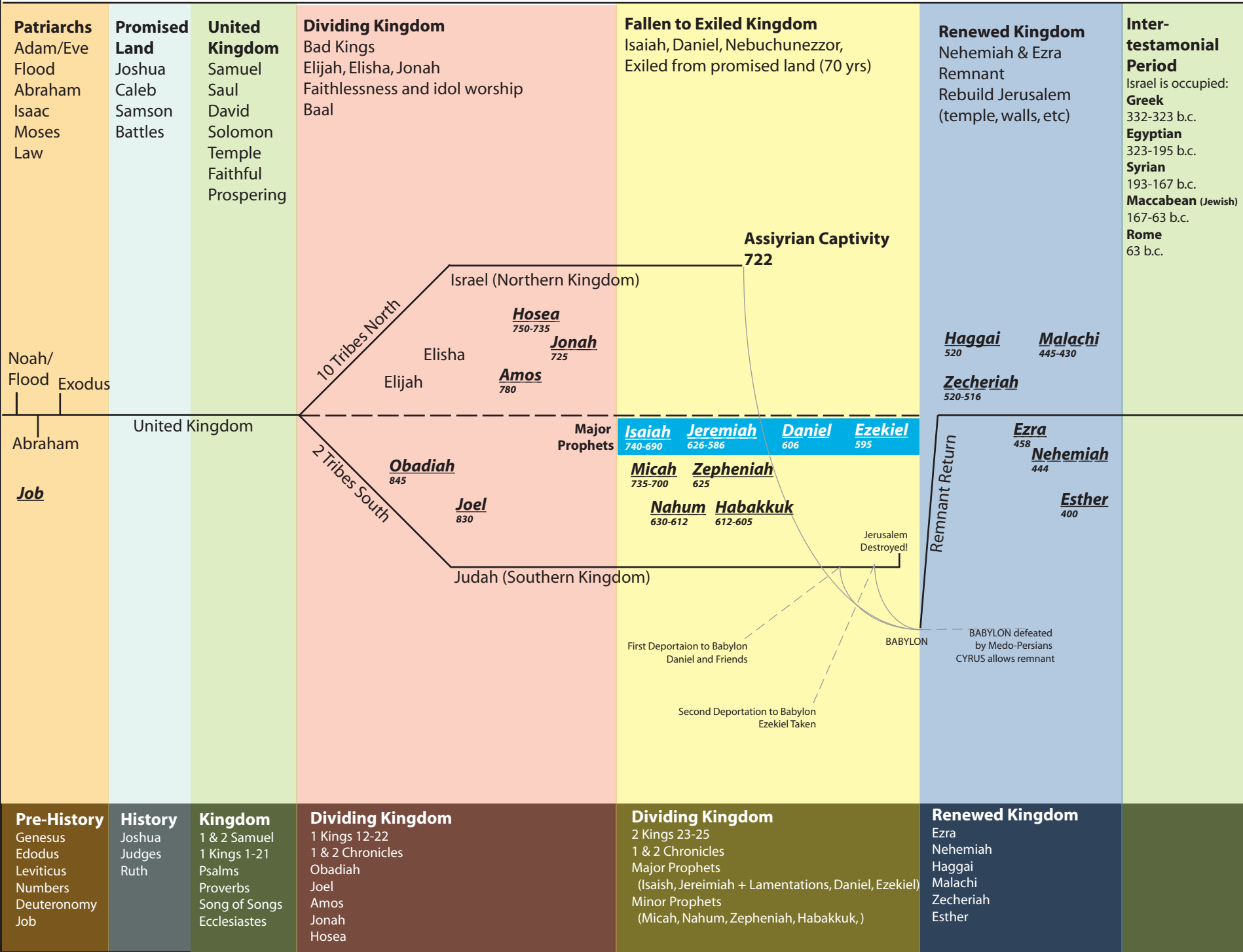
Week 6 | Your Exterior Identity

Week 7 | Why a Messiah?



"Let there be light"

"I am the light..."



New Testament Begins

BOOKS OF O.T.

Pre-History
Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Job

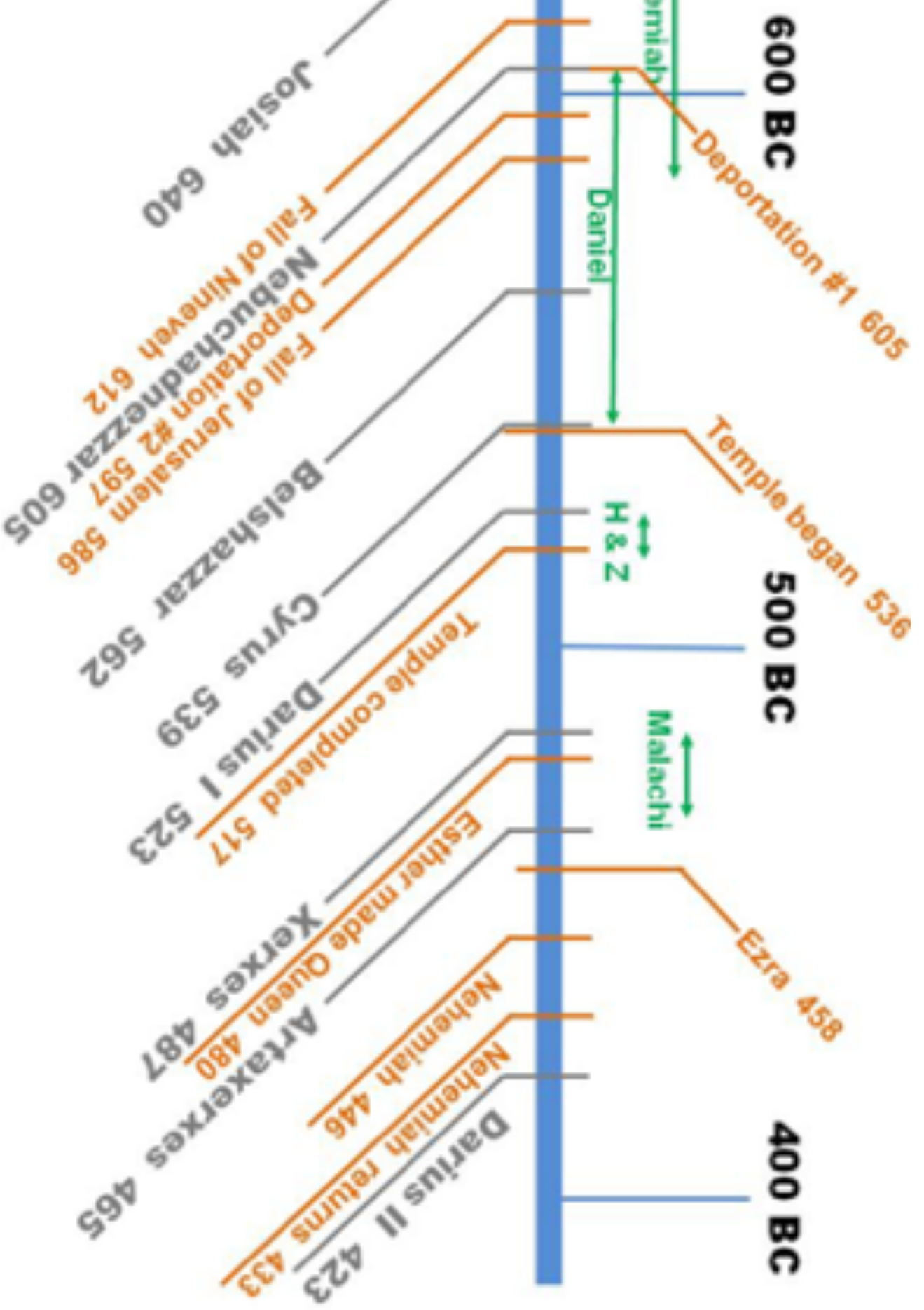
History
Joshua
Judges
Ruth

Kingdom
1 & 2 Samuel
1 Kings 1-21
Psalms
Proverbs
Song of Songs
Ecclesiastes

Dividing Kingdom
1 Kings 12-22
1 & 2 Chronicles
Obadiah
Joel
Amos
Jonah
Hosea

Dividing Kingdom
2 Kings 23-25
1 & 2 Chronicles
Major Prophets
(Isaiah, Jeremiah + Lamentations, Daniel, Ezekiel)
Minor Prophets
(Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk,)

Renewed Kingdom
Ezra
Nehemiah
Haggai
Malachi
Zechariah
Esther



Journey of Renewal

Each week there is an assigned reading that follows the narrative of Israel's return to Jerusalem. Read the assigned passages at your own pace during the week. Each section corresponds with the upcoming sermon.

Week 1 -

Daniel 10-12
Ezra 1-3;
Psalm 137

How did we get into this mess?

You can read more about how the Israelites got into this mess by reading 2 Chronicles 25:1-36:23 and 2 Kings 23:34-25:30. These cover the historical downfall of Judah into the hands of Babylon.

Week 2 -

Ezra 4-6
Haggai 1-2



Week 3 -

Esther 1-10

BONUS BOOK

You can also read Zechariah who prophesied at the same time as Haggai. They both had a similar message to finish the temple.

Week 4 -

Ezra 7-10

Week 5 -

Nehemiah 1-5

Week 6 -

Nehemiah 6-13

Week 7 -

Malachi 1-4



RENEWAL SMALL GROUP SERIES

Malachi and Me

The final book of the Old Testament, Malachi, received its name from its author (Malachi 1:1). In Hebrew, the name comes from a word meaning “messenger,” which points to Malachi’s role as a prophet of the Lord. Some scholars believe that the author could perhaps be Ezra since no father’s name is given to identify Malachi as a real name.

By the time of Malachi’s writing, Israelites had returned to the land after an exile of more than a hundred years and were looking for the blessings they expected to receive for when they returned. Though the temple had been rebuilt, the fervor of those early returning Israelites gave way to a complete apathy for the things of God. This led to rampant corruption among the priesthood and a spiritual lethargy among the people.

Malachi’s unique position as the final book of the Old Testament offers a glimpse into the hearts of Israelite men and women. At the time of Malachi, well over a thousand years after Abraham’s era, the Israelites had the advantage and



weight of history on their side; they could see the shining rewards of faithfulness and the punishments associated with judgment, even to the point of being uprooted from their land.

But even then, with all that perspective, the book of Malachi teaches us that they still strayed from the Lord’s path. They needed God’s intervention as much as ever, so this book, as a final statement of judgment in the Old Testament, anticipates God’s saving work through the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Structurally, the book presents seven statements posed on behalf of God. The people respond to Yahweh’s statement with a question in verses 1:2,6,7; 2:14,17; 3:7,8,13. The Israelites’ questions reveal their hearts and prepare Malachi to deliver God’s response in a way that cements his desires and sets the stage for Jesus.

In this series we will look at a few of these questions and the relevance they still have for people seeking God today.



Small Group Study 1: HE LOVES ME, HE LOVES ME NOT

The common childhood flower dilemma that has left many daisies destroyed. Where is God's love when it hurts? Why do I not feel love? What does His love look like? We can constantly be wondering what God gives to His people so they feel His love.

DISCUSSION STARTER

What was the greatest act of love that you have ever felt?

What was a time in your life that severe pain paved the way for deeper love?

In the Disney animated movie "Inside Out", the primary lesson learned is that sometimes we need to feel the full expression of our emotions, including sadness (to the dismay of Joy).

Here, in the beginning of Malachi, we see that the Israelites were asking "Where is God's love?"

What are some times or situations that we may ask "Where is God's love?"

READ MALACHI 1:1-5

THOUGHTS ON THE VERSE

The difficulty through which "Israel" has gone since 586 B.C. may have led to a cynical questioning of whether Yahweh's love was valid

When are you tempted to be cynical about life?

What does cynicism get us? Are we always right when we are cynical about a situation?

Love and hate are often used in the Bible to mean "choice" and "rejection."

Why do you believe the Bible uses the extremes of love and hate to illustrate chosen and rejected?

READ LUKE 9:25-27

How does this illustration of love/hate relate back to what God said through Malachi?

God demonstrated his love through choosing Israel and giving them a "life plan" through the law, and He rejected Edom by not giving them the law. Jesus calls us to love Him as our "life plan" and to reject (hate) any other influence that could supersede Him.

How would being God's chosen people be a reminder of God's love?

How are we to live in such a way to remain God's chosen people and better understand His love?

CHALLENGE: Identify and "hate" something in your life that takes you away from having a strong relationship with God.

ACTIVITY IDEA: Apples to Apples is a great game. The premise is that you select what you think is the best answer to a specific topic. The player whose turn it is then decides if they love or hate your answer. It is a great illustration that we only win when our answers match the mind of the one set to judge. When we align ourselves with God we can understand His grace and love better.



Small Group Study 2: Tempted to Contempt

DISCUSSION STARTER

Who here has ever searched for a tax deduction?

Maybe was tempted to fudge the numbers a bit?

There is an incredible ability among mankind to exert or spend the minimal resources to get the maximum benefits. Often times we can say, "what's the harm?" Israel had this same human dilemma with their spiritual leaders, the priests. Here we see God call them to account for this thinking.

READ MALACHI 1:6-8

THOUGHTS ON THE VERSE

The law was very expressive that all sacrifices were supposed to be unblemished, healthy animals because God had given His people His best and expected the best from them.

How do you feel when people give you less love or respect than you give them?

What do you think the people were thinking by bringing blind, crippled and diseased animals?

We no longer make sacrifices for sins - Jesus took care of that with his life - but the New Testament still calls us to provide a sacrifice to God.

READ ROMANS 12:1-2

What is Paul trying to teach the church in Rome and us today about how we live?

What does it mean to be a living sacrifice?

Why do you think we would need to renew our mind to discern what is good?

READ MALACHI 1:10-11

Why do you think God would petition for the doors to be closed?

What does this passage say about being "good enough" in our love for God?

What alternative do the Israelites and us today have to closing the doors and giving up? How can we turn it around?

CHALLENGE: This week give something of your best to God. Your first and best hours of the day for reading and prayer. Perhaps evaluate your financial giving and rearrange your budget. *What is a way you can purify your sacrifice and life?*



Small Group Study 3: What's the point of doing good?

DISCUSSION STARTER

When was a time in your life where you felt like it was impossible to get ahead by doing things the right way?

What bothers you the most about people who “cheat” the system to get ahead?

We are offended when people cheat or bend the rules to get ahead, and rightly so. Yet, there is a danger that exists in our hearts that leads us to be envious of the outcome of their way of life. This causes a great temptation to compromise or abandon God's way so we can get our way. The Israelites experienced this and God brought it to their attention through Malachi.

READ MALACHI 2:17

What do you think it means that God is “wearied” by these words?

How do the words of what was said (“All who do evil...”) resonate with society today?

Why are we tempted to feel like “those who do evil are good” and “God seems unjust”?

Have you ever thought that your envy could weary God? How is envying evil/unjust people an act of faithlessness?

It is common in our world that those who lie, cheat, steal or cut corners seem have the good life. We know in our hearts that there are consequences, but it seems like justice will never come. The psalmist felt this way and expressed it in Psalm 73.

READ PSALM 73:1-14

What expressions of discouragement stated in the Psalm do you most relate to?

Why are we so jealous of people's “victories” even when we know they are rotten gains?

READ PSALM 73:15-17

Where did the psalmist go to resolve his struggles?

How is it that spending more time with God (worship, reading, prayer) can transform our outlook?

READ PSALM 73:18-28

What is the new conclusion that the psalmist comes to after spending time with God?

How might the resolution in verse 28 help us not to “weary” God by complaining about the victories of the worldly and the unrighteous?

CHALLENGE:

- Take 3 minutes to write out everything you can think of that you are thankful for.
- Take 3 minutes to write out some ways that following God has or could improve your livelihood.
- Take 3 minutes to write out ways that you can improve spending time drawing closer to God.



Small Group Study 4: Who owns your heart?

DISCUSSION STARTER

What would you do if you were given \$1 million dollars and 24 hours to allocate it? (Note: purchasing a home usually takes time to close... putting the offer in constitutes spending the money.)

What does your usage of money say about your priorities?

READ MALACHI 3:6-7

We see here a faith fact: “For I the Lord do not change.” As we tend to change, and rise and fall with our emotions and situations, God does not change. He is stable and unchanging. So, when it comes to division in the relationship, it is us who moves not God.

Where do we go if we need to return to God?

God says “return to me and I return to you?” - What do you think this means for our lives? In what ways can we look too renew or establish a relationship with God?

One of the primary determinants to our faithfulness is how we spend our money. You can tell a lot about a person by looking at their bank account. What they value, what they like, and what ultimately has your heart.

READ MALACHI 3:8-12

God asks another question about being robbed by the people. One of the ultimate points of the law was to make sacrifices to show faith and trust in God. Imagine that everything you grew or raised in livestock was necessary for your survival and the survival of your family. Every sheep had incredible value. Yet God requires the best. The tithe was meant to be given to God for the work of the ministry.

How is giving to God financially an act of faith?

Why would God feel robbed by people not bringing in the “whole tithe?”

What do you think about the challenge that God says “test me in this?”

The tithe of the old testament is not carried over to the New Testament, but the lesson of God and money being two battling “lords of our life” is abundantly clear.

READ MATTHEW 6:24

What is Jesus trying to teach us about faithfulness?

Why does money have such control over us?

If your bank account was put on public record what would be the top three things people think you valued?

CHALLENGE: Look at your budget or bank statement and write out what it says about your priorities. If you do not like what you see, or if it does not honor God the way you think it should make some changes and goals to remedy it.