

I have the opportunity to fill in for Jim this week. I have always heard that every pastor should have a sermon on standby so that when they get the call on a Sunday morning they are ready to go. I have tried this and anytime I get a backup sermon I seem to use it. So this is a section out of Malachi that I studied on Wednesday night with the adults and we are going to look at this morning.

Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. The OT is not arranged in chronological order, it is by genre. Malachi though has been placed last and it is God's final Words to the Israelites. After this book is written there is a 400 year gap of silence until Christ comes in the New Testament.

This is written within the same time period of Nehemiah and it addresses the same group of people. This book is interesting because it is written like a conversation between the people of Israel and God. It is an opportunity for each side to air out grievances with the other.

Malachi 1:1-5

- (1) The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.
- (2) **"I have loved you,"** says the LORD. But you say, **"How have you loved us?"** "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. **"Yet I have loved Jacob**

God declares His unending love for the nation of Israel. And then Israel has the audacity to respond back to God and says prove it. God points to the fact that He created them. I chose you. I made you as a nation you exist as a people because of me and my love for you. You wouldn't exist apart from Me. Esau is Jacobs brother, where are the Edomites? God chose Israel, they exists because of Him, isn't that proof enough of God's love?

This is the first back and forth in the book. Starting in verse 6 we have our next question and rebuttal between God and Israel.

Malachi 1:6

- (6) "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?'**

God then starts to expand on the idea that if I was the one who created you then I am your father and your master. He goes on to point out that if I am your father and master why do you not treat me as such. I am not being honored as I should be and I am not being feared as I should be.

God deserves both their honor and fear.

I have been able to speak on this before; God desires us to fear Him.

Proverbs 14:26-27

- (26) **In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence**, and his children will have a refuge.
 (27) **The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life**, that one may turn away from the snares of death.

Fearing God is not something we should be afraid of. We are to have a confidence in it and realize it is the fountain of life. When we fear God it realigns our hearts to Him. This was God's desire for Israel.

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

- (12) "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, **but to fear the LORD your God**, to walk in all his ways, to love him, **to serve the LORD your God with all your heart** and with all your soul,
 (13) and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?"

Notice what these commands start with, fear of God. When we start to see God for who he truly is it directs our hearts. Peter says it this way in the New Testament.

1 Peter 1:13-19

- (13) Therefore, **preparing your minds for action**, and being sober-minded, **set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you** at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Think correctly, it literally says "gird up the loins of you mind" meaning be ready. We are told to fully set our hope and confidence on the Grace of Christ. We should find no confidence in our works or actions but fully rely on Grace. Peter continues:

- (14) As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,
 (15) but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,
 (16) since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

He encourages us to be holy, live out the Christian life and seek to be more like Christ.

- (17) And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, **conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile**,
 (18) **knowing that you were ransomed** from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,
 (19) but **with the precious blood of Christ**, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Peter commands us to conduct ourselves with fear during the time of our exile. That is our time on this earth, notice the reason at the beginning of the verse, because God is a

righteous judge.

Peters argument is, if you really know who God is fear Him and be sanctified, because you know that you were ransomed, bought with the blood of Christ. So fear God and live like it.

The Israelites did not fear God and they don't see any problem look at the end of verse 6.

Malachi 1:6

(6) "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?'**

Notice their response. What are we doing wrong? Again prove it how are we not showing honor or how are we not fearing? God responds in verse 7.

Malachi 1:7-8

(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.

(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.

God says you have been sacrificing the blind, lame, and sick animals on the altar of God. The law is crystal clear as to what types of animals qualify for sacrifice and which ones don't.

Leviticus 22:17-22

(17) And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

(18) "Speak to Aaron and his sons and all the people of Israel and say to them, When any one of the house of Israel or of the sojourners in Israel presents a burnt offering as his offering, for any of their vows or freewill offerings that they offer to the LORD,

(19) if it is to be accepted for you **it shall be a male without blemish**, of the bulls or the sheep or the goats.

(20) **You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you.**

(21) And when anyone offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering from the herd or from the flock, to be accepted **it must be perfect; there shall be no blemish in it.**

(22) Animals blind or disabled or mutilated or having a discharge or an itch or scabs you shall not offer to the LORD or give them to the LORD as a food offering on the altar.

The law goes into detail that these animals must be perfect. They must not have any blemishes and then it describes what counts as a blemish, scabs, blindness, etc. God did

not want any confusion on this issue and we know why. **All of these perfect animals represented the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ.**

John the Baptist practically jumped out of his skin when he realized who Jesus was.

John 1:29

(29) The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world!

He just said all of the sacrifices for 2000 years have pointed to Him. He is the lamb He is the spotless one. The OT law was clear the sacrificial lamb had to be perfect.

Exodus 12:43-46

(43) And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it,

(44) but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him.

(45) No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it.

(46) It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and **you shall not break any of its bones.**

As Good Friday and Easter are coming up our mind is turning more to what happened at the cross and we know that Jesus was the perfect sinless sacrifice and also physically was the perfect unblemished sacrifice.

John 19:31-36

(31) Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.

(32) **So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him.**

(33) But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, **they did not break his legs.**

(34) But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

(35) He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe.

(36) For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "**Not one of his bones will be broken.**"

Hebrews expands on this idea of Jesus being the perfect sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:3-14

(3) But in these sacrifices **there is a reminder of sins every year.**

(4) For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Think about this verse for a second. The blood of bulls and goats never took away sin. This is the answer to how were people in the Old Testament saved. Not by the blood of the animal sacrifices. It was always about what that blood represented.

- (5) Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me;
 (6) **in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.**

Again think about what is happening in Malachi, God is correcting how they are giving sacrifices, and yet he says I find no pleasure in them. God wanted the perfect blood of Christ.

- (7) Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'
 (8) When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law),
 (9) then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second.
 (10) **And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**
 (11) And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, **which can never take away sins.**
 (12) **But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,**
 (13) waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.
 (14) **For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.**

He is the sacrifice. **Salvation is only found in the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ.** This is what made the actions of the priests in Malachi so detestable. Their blemished sacrifices were telling God that Jesus did not need to be perfect. In fact what was being sacrificed was not really that important.

This is heresy. This is a direct insult to the blood of Jesus. They are saying it didn't have to be You and sin really isn't that bad because it can be involved in the sacrifice.

Here is what is really interesting about this group of people other generations had given the sacrifices and not had their hearts be involved in the offering. Listen to.

Isaiah 1:11

- (11) "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; **I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.**

But notice even this group of people were offering the correct type of animal. Their heart was not involved and it was sin but they still knew what God demanded. **The people in Malachi were actually redefining who God is and what He requires.** They were lowering their view of God and made Him more manageable to interact with.

Think about how loving the priest could have come across when describing to the people what was needed for the sacrifice. (God isn't harsh he doesn't need the best of your flock, He just needs something...)

They now stood in judgment of scripture and decided what it meant and how to practice it. Instead scripture and truth should be standing in judgment of us.

Hebrews 4:12-16

(12) For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, **and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

(13) And no creature is hidden from his sight, **but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.**

We are exposed, laid naked and bare when the truth in God's Word convicts us. This is really a terrifying thought. There is nothing hidden in light of scripture.

(14) Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

(15) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

(16) **Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace,** that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

And yet we can have confidence in the grace offered by Christ.

We must be very careful how we view the Living Word of God. Are we the ones who get to decide what it means? Redefining things for our culture or in light of our modern thinking or is scripture true and we are called to submit and be laid bare in front of the truth in it.

Scripture teaches I am born a sinner and it must be judged. Christ had to live a perfect life so He could take my sin. I can contribute nothing and He had to be perfect so that He could contribute everything!

2 Corinthians 5:21

(21) For our sake **he made him to be sin who knew no sin,** so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This is how incredible our salvation is. **And then we have the audacity to think we can contribute something to it?** When we think we can have a part in this sacrifice we are doing the same thing Israel was doing with the blemished animals. We are redefining

God and we are putting ourselves and our focus and effort as more true and more important than scripture.

We redefine God's Word and want to set the parameters of how to interact with Him and what will be acceptable.

1 Samuel 15:20-21

(20) And Saul said to Samuel, "**I have obeyed the voice of the LORD.** I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, **and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction.**

(21) **But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."**

I took these things to worship, how could you be against this Samuel? Who defined what worship looks like. God had, in this case it was total destruction:

1 Samuel 15:3

(3) Now go and **strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have.** Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

But notice what Saul has done He has invented in his mind. No God will be pleased with this. I am glorifying Him!

1 Samuel 15:20-26

(22) And Samuel said, "**Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD?** Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.

(23) **For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry.** Because **you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king."**

You claim to worship God and yet you have rejected truth. We have to guard our hearts from this we are not the ones who get to decide.

Amelia's will battles (Wanting to drink soy sauce or drinking dirty puddle water)

We think we know best, and want to tell God how it is.

1 Thessalonians 4:3

(3) **For this is the will of God, your sanctification:** that you abstain from sexual immorality;

Following the legalistic rules without a heart engaged is detestable to God notice back in Malachi what he tells the people.

Malachi 1:9-10

(9) And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from

your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the LORD of hosts.

(10) Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and **I will not accept an offering from your hand.**

God says I wish there was someone there who understood this that would shut the doors to the temple and not let you keep sacrificing this way. I would rather you stop entirely than keep going this way.

God goes on down in verse 14 to condemn the ones who are doing this.

Malachi 1:14

(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.

God will be glorified

Philippians 2:8-11

(8) And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

(9) Therefore God has highly exalted him 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.

Galatians 3:1-3

(1) O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.

(2) Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

(3) Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Ephesians 4:17-24

(17) Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in

the futility of their minds.

(18) They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

(19) They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

(20) **But that is not the way you learned Christ!—**

(21) assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,

(22) **to put off your old self**, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,

(23) and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,

(24) **and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.**

Ephesians 5:15-17

(15) Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,

(16) making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

(17) Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

2 Corinthians 5:9-11

(9) So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

(10) **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

(11) **Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.** But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.