

God Wants the Best

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes that God desires our best offerings and complete devotion in every aspect of our lives.

Duration: 25:23

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Malachi 1:6-11

Topics: "God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of giving our best to God. He highlights how people are willing to put in great effort and sacrifice for their passions, such as music, arts, and science, but often fail to do the same for the Lord. The speaker shares a story of a man who admires the speaker's knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures and asks how he can attain the same level of understanding. However, the speaker tells him that it may be too late for him. The sermon concludes with the message that God deserves and desires the best from us, and that we should strive to give our best to Him.

Transcript

For our closing message in this part of the conference, could we turn to the last book of the Old Testament, the book of Malachi, chapter 1. We'll begin reading with verse 6. Malachi, chapter 1, verse 6. A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master. If then I be a father, where is mine honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear? Saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests that despise my name. And ye say, wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar.

And ye say, wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, the table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor. Will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person, saith the Lord of hosts? And now I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us.

This hath been by your means. Will he regard your persons, saith the Lord of hosts? Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for naught? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for naught. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts.

Neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the saints, my name shall be great among the Gentiles. And in every place, incense shall be offered unto

my name.

And a pure offering for my name shall be great among the heathens, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, the table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. He said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! And ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts.

And he brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick. Thus he brought an offering. Shall I accept this of your hand, saith the Lord? But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a nail, and vows and sacrifices unto the Lord a corrupt thing.

For I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathens. If we were to give a title to this portion of the word of God, I think we might very well call it God Wants the Best. Now that's a closing thought I'd like to leave with you at the end of this portion of our conference.

God Wants the Best. Let me say this afternoon, God deserves the best. He deserves your best, and he deserves my best.

And you hear his heartbeat in the first chapter of the last book of the Old Testament, crying out to a people who had profaned his name. I think you understand the background of this chapter. All through the Old Testament, under the law of Moses, God taught the people to bring to him sacrifices that were without thought and blemish.

Why did he do that? Well, it was an expression of his greatness, of his majesty, of his holiness, of his righteousness, of the very fact that God deserves the best. In fact, when he gave us a Bible, he even started the Bible that way. In the beginning, God.

Put God first in everything. Well, of course, the people would go out to the flock when the time of making an offering came, and they would look around in the flock. Here would be an animal, a fine animal, fine specimen.

No spot, no blemish, no torn ear, no blindness or anything else. Well, that was the animal they should offer to the Lord. That was also the animal that would bring the best return in the local market.

And so a tension arose. God was far away. God was in heaven.

They didn't see God. And so there was a temptation to sacrifice the glory of God for present material gain. And that's exactly what was happening.

They would sell the good animals down in the market where they would yield substantial return, and then they would take some ragged, poor animal and say, in effect, it's good enough for God. Is there a shocking thing that any human being would ever behave like that in the presence of God? Yes, a shocking thing. It's going on every day among Christian people at the present time.

How's that going on today? Well, let me tell you. Some of you have read the life story of Isabel Kuhn. Isabel Kuhn was brought up in the western part of Canada.

For many years, her mother was the chairman of the women's missionary group in that church, encouraging the work of the Lord in the farm field, encouraging other young people to go out to the mission field, raising funds for the mission field, and all the rest. One day, Isabel Kuhn came home to her

mother and said, Mother, God has called me to the mission field. And her mother said, Over my dead body, Isabel.

That's the way she finally went. Over my dead body, Isabel. And Isabel waited in western Canada until her mother had died, and then she went out to China for God.

What does it mean? Well, it means that anybody else's children, yes, by all means, they should go to the mission field. My child, I don't know, that would never do. A friend of mine was visiting in a Christian home.

There was a fine young girl there in the home, and he said to her, What are your plans for the future? She said, Oh, I'm in nurse's training. I'm planning to become a registered nurse. He said, I hope you keep the work of the Lord in view.

He said, You know, there's a tremendous need in the work of the Lord today. Somebody was listening out in the kitchen. The one who was listening out in the kitchen beamed up to the door, and she said, Don't you talk like that to my daughter.

She said, That isn't what I have planned for her. That's what Malachi is talking about here in the first chapter of his book. How many Christian parents today are holding the work of the Lord before their young people as a desirable way to spend their lives? How many? I fear not too many.

The idea today seems to be to make a name for yourself in the world, to get along materially, to live in a fine home in suburbia, have a good car and all the rest, and give the fag end of a wasted career to the Christ of God. Tell me, is it true or not? I fear in far too many cases it's true. Deep within many hearts today there lurks that idea anything is good enough for the Lord.

I'm challenged by the words of the Lord in this chapter. He says, Offer it now to the governor and see will he be pleased with you. And you know, this is exactly the thing that in our dealings with our fellow human beings, especially those of fame or position, we don't treat them the way we treat the Lord.

And how well Malachi knew that. He knew they'd never go to the queen with a lamb like that, but they'd offer it to the Lord. And this speaks to my heart and it breaks my heart in many ways.

When I think of men of the world today, when I think of politicians and statesmen today, when I think of their tirelessness or their countries, their traveling over land and sea working indefatigably on into the night or wee hours of the morning, men of vision, men of wholehearted devotion to the cause they serve. And I think of the spirit among so many Christians today tired and weary and just get along comfortably for ourselves and leave the rest to the Lord. I think of communists today and their zeal and their fire for their cause.

I think of the sacrifices they're willing to make and I put myself beside them, Christianity in general beside them and I think what in the world has happened. I think of nuns today who have taken on religious orders and lives of devotedness and all of that to their cause. And I think of so many Christians young people today who think, well, I've got to think about myself, I've got to think about my future and so they relegate the Lord Jesus Christ to some inferior closet of their lives, I fear in too many cases.

I think of musicians today and of the way they practice. Somebody said to Paderewski once, how did it happen? How did you get where you are? He said, by practicing so my poor fingers were nearly worn to the bone. Men are willing to do that for music.

They're willing to do it in the arts. They're willing to do it in the sciences. How many are willing to do it for the Lord? You know, it's a strange thing that in many countries of the world today when Christian young people are called up into the armed forces when fellows go off into the army why do people give them a gay send off, you know and congratulate them and all the rest the next thing the fellows are training crawling under machine gun fire.

Nobody thinks anything of it. That's perfectly alright, isn't it? And then they perhaps go out into war with all its mud and blood and stench and all the rest and maybe that young fellow will even lay down his life for his country and people applaud and they think it's perfectly respectable to do so and if that same young fellow had stepped out for Jesus Christ fanatically to serve him with all his heart people would sit at home and cluck and think there was something the matter with him. And many Christian parents would be affronted if they thought saw their young people out on the streets of some foreign country being stoned for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen God wants the best. God wants the best and he richly deserves it and that's what he's looking for from our life. What would be what would constitute a perfect sacrifice as far as the Lord Jesus Christ is concerned? Well I think the first thing that we would have to say is this for a person for a young person or old person either to be completely sold out to the Lord Jesus wouldn't this be to be sold out to the Christ of God.

I think of a young girl who went to Moody Bible Institute some years ago while she was there she sat down in her room one day and she wrote out this covenant with the Lord Lord I give up my own purposes and plans all my own desires hopes and ambitions and accept thy will for my life I give myself my life my all utterly to thee to be thine forever I hand over to thy keeping all of my friendships my love all the people whom I love are to take second place in my heart fill me and seal me with thy Holy Spirit work out thy whole will in my life at any cost now and forever to meet a little spite to die to gain her name Elizabeth Alden Scott later she married a young fellow named John Stam they went out to China and they were privileged to seal their testimony with their blood in China it was a

perfect sacrifice she didn't offer to the Lord something that was torn maimed and blind she said here I am Lord Jesus I give myself to thee wonderful isn't it I think that we need in order to be perfect sacrifices to the Lord we need a vision of the high dignity of serving the Lord Jesus Christ nothing so wonderful in all the world wasn't it thrilling when Spurgeon said to his son my son I should not like it if God calls you to serve him that you should dribble down into a king my we need to capture that vision again today don't we I should not like it if God calls you to serve him that you should dribble down into a king the dignity of being an ambassador for the Lord Jesus Christ the dignity of representing his interest here on earth I tell you it would put something into our step if we

really realized it day by day then I think we need to a vision of the vanity of doing what unsaved people could do just as well remember that young man that came to the Lord full of zeal and enthusiasm determined to follow the Lord to obey the claims of Christ but he said to him first let me go home and bury my father the Lord Jesus said to him let the dead bury their dead but go thou and preach the kingdom of God what did he mean by this well I believe he meant this there are certain things in life that can be done just as well by unsaved people as by saved people there are certain things in life that only a Christian can do don't spend your life don't have as the main passion and thrust of your life doing what an unbeliever could have done just as well mind you it doesn't take any

immense skill to dig a grave six feet long so many feet deep and so many feet wide anybody can do that don't make that the main passion and thrust of your life the indispensable goes out and preaches the kingdom of God then I think too that in order for our lives to be a perfect sacrifice to God we need a fresh baptism of the transience of earthly things the realization of the transience of earthly things I love to repeat what Jim Elliot prayed Lord deliver me from the dread asbestos of other things and I want to tell you today dear friends that material things have a clutch on the lives of people the bondage as we heard last night the church today is immersed in worldliness what do you mean by worldliness I believe worldliness is the love of passing things worldliness is the love of

passing things and I want to tell you the world is a bank that's about to break and people who are wise don't put their riches in a bank that's about to break they don't lay up their treasures there one day in this very city Spurgeon was walking along and in the morning as he was on his way to his office he saw some birds building a nest in the tree in the park he was coming home later on in the afternoon and the men were there with their axes ready to fell the tree the poor birds building their nest in a tree that was about to be taken down and I fear that that's what all too many Christians are doing today they're building their nest in a scene that's doomed to the destruction of God Peter says seeing them that all these things shall be destroyed what manner of persons ought he to be a

vision a realization of the transience of material earthly things and then a willingness to forego social security in a worldly sense you know during this week we've been talking about forsaking all to follow Christ and the thing sounds most incredible forsake all to follow Christ you should say well how would I live it's ridiculous in fact virgin was talking about this one time and the man came to him and he said how would I live said I have to live don't I virgin said I don't admit it said we have to serve God and please him and that's the truth that is the truth we're always thinking of self and how we live actually the fact of the matter is we probably live far better wouldn't we pleasing God and obeying his commandments our obligation is to obey him in all things his obligation is to

care for us seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you and I believe a perfect sacrifice would be would involve a willingness to forego present pleasures and get into the word of God study the word of God and make it the man of our counsel I believe this with all my heart people are wasting their lives on education that doesn't count for eternity and neglecting that which really does count the book that will be with us through heaven's golden years a friend of mine was speaking in Evanston, Illinois recently his name is Robert Little he was ministering the word of God and it was pouring forth from him by the power of the Holy Spirit of God at the end of the meeting a man with white hair came up to him and said oh brother Little he

said mine he said when I hear you ministering the word of God your knowledge of the word of God he said more than anything else in the world he said I'd like to have that I'd like to have a knowledge of the scriptures like that and be able to to read and understand and explain the scriptures the way you do he said tell me how can I do it and Mr.

Little looked at him and the wrinkles in his face and the white hair in his head and he said to him it's too late and there does come a time in life when it is too late that's why it's good to stand here before so many young people this Sunday afternoon and urge them to forego pleasant entertainment and pleasure and really invest in that which is going to count for a long eternity willingness to forego comfort you know a lot of us think we're quite clever if we can go through life comfortably but as our dear brother has just been telling us the cross is something you deliberately choose in life you can shield yourself from the cross you

can cushion yourself from the cross any Christian with half a wit could do that the Lord Jesus is calling us to deliberately choose the pathway of

reproach and suffering and discomfort for his name sake a perfect sacrifice would involve a supreme love for the Lord Jesus Christ wouldn't it I think we're all clear on this years ago the poet Ruskin was courting a young woman in this very country and she was a born again believer and he was not and when he proposed to her she said to him I have a question to ask you and he said what's the question she said do you love Jesus Christ more than you love me and he said I would have to say that I do she said then I couldn't marry you wonderful isn't it a supreme love for the Lord Jesus Christ I believe that's the type of sacrifice that he is pleased with and then I think a perfect sacrifice would involve a willingness to move to pull up our roots to be mobile for the Lord at any time do you

know it's possible to become so encumbered with material things with real estate and all the rest of it we wouldn't be able to move if God called us young man came into my office within the last couple of years and he said oh he said I'm just so sick of it all he had a good job very good job as a world counselor he said you know what he said I'd like to pick up that phone and call my boss and just tell him he can have the job well I said to him Warren tell me something how much do you think you and your family would have to get along and he said well I don't think we could do it much less than ten thousand dollars a year well needless to say I didn't encourage him much further he was so encumbered so many debts and all the rest of really if the voice of God came calling to him that day

he'd be anchored down securely and I believe that God is calling his people to lives of mobility I really believe with all my heart that the life of the Christian should be a perpetual crisis of dependence upon the living God and that's exactly what the flesh hates our lives should be a perpetual crisis of dependence upon the living God God is always trying to stir up the nest in our life and we're always trying to feather it isn't it amazing well God is speaking to hearts today and maybe he's speaking to yours and I suppose that a perfect sacrifice would also mean a willingness to die for the Lord Jesus Christ if necessary Jim Elliot again he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose what does it mean well it means you're going to give up your life anyway how

do you want to give it up would you like to be an accident statistic would you like to be a cancer statistic would you like to pour it out in loving devotion at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ God wants the best he deserves the best will he have the best from us and then I would think that a perfect sacrifice would involve something else and that is an unflagging loyalty to the Son of God you know we live in an age of compromise we live in an age of lack of conviction where people aren't willing to stand up and be counted and a lot of people who call themselves Christians today are willing to put themselves into places where the testimony of Jesus Christ is compromised a lot of young people today are anxious are so anxious for academic prestige especially I'm thinking in the religious

realm that they will go to get degrees to get earthly honors from men and institutions that hate the Christ of God I can't understand it frankly we have a school not too far from us and that school will not give a Ph.D. degree to anyone who is known to disbelieve the virgin birth of Christ they have all kinds of young Christian fellows and they'll never be satisfied until they get a degree from that institution now why why get a degree from an institution like that especially in spiritual things and religious things when these men are about enemies of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ the Lord Jesus wants the best he doesn't want us to come to him with that which is ragged and torn and blind and blemished and all the rest he wants this life your life my life poured out to him without

measure and without reserve I have said before and I say it again that the Lord Jesus comes knocking on every heart's door sometime during life he comes knocking on every heart's door and he waits for our answer will we live for self and lose our lives or will we turn them over to him and gain them unto life everlasting what are the issues well the issues are that I can refuse him and he'll find others to serve him his cause is going to go on and all that the father has given him will come to him at truth but I'll be the loser I'll never find a more worthy savior to serve never in time or eternity and so there you are he stands at our doors today he's knocking he wants a perfect sacrifice will he get it from you today will he get it from me he deserves it he wants it may we by his grace

be able to say Lord Jesus here I am all that I am all that I ever hoped to be I want to yield myself to thee work out thy wonderful purposes in my life for eternity

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