

From Babylon to Jerusalem - (Malachi)

ch.2:14-4:6

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faithfulness in relationships, particularly in marriage and with God, and warns against the consequences of treachery and unfaithfulness.

Duration: 59:53

Scripture: Deuteronomy 14:23, Malachi 4:5-6, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1

Topics: "From Babylon To Jerusalem"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of bringing the whole tithe into the storehouse as a way of putting God first in every area of life. He explains that in the Old Testament, God commanded the people to give 10% of their harvest as a tithe to Him. However, the people were not putting God first, so He called them to bring their tithes to Him. The preacher also discusses the fear of God and how it should be the mark of a spiritual person, particularly in the context of marriage. Additionally, he highlights the role of sorcerers and deceiving preachers as agents of Satan who will face God's judgment.

Transcript

The book of Malachi chapter 2, we were looking at the last few verses in Malachi chapter 2. And if you will remember, we saw there that the word treachery, treachery or being a traitor, that is one who makes a promise to the face and then stabs the person behind the back afterwards, occurs three times in that passage. And it speaks about being treacherous towards God in verse 11. That is by having idols in one's life.

And then it speaks about being treacherous towards one's brother in verse 10, being treacherous towards each other. And then it speaks about being treacherous towards your wife in verse 14. And so we see there are three relationships mentioned there.

One is our relationship with God, the other is our relationship with our fellow believers, and the third is our relationship with our marriage partner. And Malachi speaks against this unfaithfulness in relationships in these three areas. And we see how relevant Malachi is for our time.

Remember he was the last prophet before the first coming of Christ. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ, but before that Malachi was the last prophet. And so he has a message, a prophetic message,

for those of us who are living in the days immediately preceding the second coming of Christ, because the situation in the Church is very much, in Christendom, is very similar to the situation that was prevalent in Israel at the time before Christ's first coming.

And so we see how there is unfaithfulness in one's relationship to God, in one's family life, and in the fellowship in the brotherhood. And there can be many aspects to that. We consider how backbiting and gossiping and suspicion against one's marriage partner and bitter thoughts and allowing something to take the place that God should have in our life, all these are forms of treachery in these three areas.

And these also are covered by three covenants. You see, there's a covenant that man makes with God. It's referred to in verse 8, a covenant relationship with God.

In verse 10, it speaks of a covenant relationship with one's brother. And verse 14, it speaks of a covenant relationship with one's wife. So, all these three relationships are linked by a covenant.

A covenant means an agreement. The thing is, we must see that this word covenant in the Bible is exactly the same today as a registered stamp paper deed signed in a registrar's court. But the thing is, most believers would be a hundred times more careful about signing a stamp paper deed in a registrar's court than they are about, for example, the breaking of bread, which is a covenant with God and with one another.

Marriage is a covenant. But believers are so careless when it comes to these spiritual covenants, but so careful when they come to covenants, agreements signed in a registrar's court. And there's only one reason for that, because we basically love money.

And a registrar's court stamp deed may involve us financially. And therefore, because the love of money is so deeply in the flesh, we are so careful to get a lawyer to read every sentence. But when it comes to the spiritual covenant, oh, every Tom, Dick and Harry comes to break bread, without any seriousness, without any fear of God.

That is the situation in Christendom today. And Malachi has a message, there's treachery there. Being a traitor to your wife, being a traitor to your brother, being a traitor to God, that's a serious thing.

And it's a much greater loss than any financial loss. It's far better to shut your eyes and sign in the registrar's court than to come and break bread without judging oneself. It's a serious thing.

That's the type of thing Malachi is speaking against, treachery in the covenant. And we want to look again at this verse 15. Verse 14, you know, it speaks about the wife of your youth.

We thought a little bit about that last time. And that speaks of the fact that you chose each other when you were young, you loved one another, but now that your wife has become old and perhaps not so attractive, not so charming as she was when she was young, you are beginning to play the fool in your thoughts and with your eyes and being a traitor. Which shows, God Malachi says to these people, that basically you people had only a physical interest in your wives.

That is a proof of it. That when her physical charms decline through age, you are no longer interested. In other words, you never had a spiritual interest, a linkage with your wife.

You were drawn to her through lust. Not through the love of God. And that is the condition of a lot of people in Christendom today.

And that's why even a lot of married people are very unfaithful in their thoughts and with their eyes. They haven't taken this matter of a covenant relationship seriously with their wives. With a registered stamp paper, they'll be very careful.

But a covenant with their wives and their thoughts and their eyes? Oh, they are not bothered about that. The reason is, they do not fear God. That is basically the reason.

The wife of your youth. The Bible says in Proverbs 31, verse 30, that charm is deceitful and beauty is empty. But a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

There are three things you can look for in a woman according to that verse. One is beauty, the other is charm, and the third is the fear of God. If you were drawn by beauty and charm, and you keep admiring beauty and charm, one day it'll fade away, and then you'll be a traitor to the covenant.

But if you admire the fear of God, then you will be drawn to your wife, even if she looks hideous. And even if there is no charm about her at all. Because it's the fear of God that you are drawn to.

That is the mark of a spiritual person. There are very few spiritually minded husbands. And so they are treacherous to their wives, and God says that's a serious thing.

There's a verse in 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 4 and 5, which says, 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 4 and 5, it says, every one of you should know how to possess his own vessel, or in the margin it says, that means wife. Each one of you must know how to possess his wife in sanctification and honor. How do you possess and hold on to your wife in sanctification and honor? It says, each of you should know that.

And not in lustful passion. It's possible to hold on to your wife in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God. But to hold on to your wife in sanctification and honor, where your relationship with her spirit and her personality is more important than just the physical relationship.

Each one of you should know that, he says, otherwise you're just like the heathen. Because they operate purely on the physical level, like the animals. And he says, no, it must be different with you.

And the other thing we see here in verse 15 of Malachi 2 is that God makes a husband and wife one, so that he can have a godly offspring. God is interested in the next generation, that the next generation should be godly. Unfortunately, many parents are not so interested in that.

If they were, they would do everything in their power to be one with each other. This is, as far as I know, the only verse in the Bible which tells us that where there is husband and wife unity, there is a tremendous possibility of the offspring being godly. And where the offspring are not godly, where the children are not godly, the husband and wife, before blaming the children and blaming the circumstances and blaming their school friends and college friends, we are always ready, like Adam, to put the blame on someone else, should perhaps humble themselves before God, the father and mother, and say, is it because the parents were not one with each other? According to this verse, that's a real possibility.

No use blaming the children, let the parents judge themselves to see whether they were suspicious and bitter and critical, and maybe the wife was unsubmitive to the husband, or the husband was dictatorial

over his wife, and there was no concern or love for one another, no unity, always critical of each other's imperfections. And now we try to blame the children for being ungodly, when God says the fault is with you parents, don't blame the children, the fault is with you, you're not one. It's easy to blame someone else.

No, he has made you one, why did he make you one? The margin of verse 15 says, because he desired a godly offspring, therefore, alright, let's forget the past, God says, take heed now to your spirit. In your spirit, in your thoughts, don't be treacherous to your wife, don't be suspicious and bitter and unfaithful in your spirit, in your thoughts. Be faithful there to your wife, for I hate divorce.

That was an Old Testament law. God hates divorce. It's amazing how the Pharisees who came to Jesus and asked him, why did Moses permit divorce, had never read Malachi chapter 2, verse 16.

It's amazing how blind one can be to scripture. Their hearts were hard, and so they couldn't understand what Malachi was saying. God hates divorce.

In the New Testament, it says, husbands, don't even be bitter against your wife, Colossians 3.19. We could say, God says, I hate bitterness in the hearts of husbands towards their wives. I hate it. In the Old Testament, he only said, I hate divorce.

In the New Testament, Malachi would say, God says, I hate bitterness in your heart against your wife. I hate an unsubmitive spirit in your heart against your husband. God says, I hate it.

That is the New Testament standard. And him who covers his garment with wrong, with violence, means one who is cruel towards his wife. And sometimes husbands can be very cruel.

You see, the barbarians hit their wives with their hands and throw vessels at their wives. But the more refined Greeks don't do such crude things. They hit their wives with words.

And words can sometimes be harder than rocks. The only thing is, the injury is not outside. The wife is not bleeding on the outside.

But the hurt in her soul with one word, which can be more than a solid rock. God says, I hate it. I hate the barbarians who hit their wife on the outside, and I hate the Greeks who hit their wife on the inside.

I hate them. Never forget that. God hates a husband who is cruel.

In chapter 1, he said, I hate Esau. Well, here's another person whom God hates. He hates a man who is cruel to his wife in any way.

Therefore, take heed to your spirit. And any person who has got one percent of the fear of God, as a husband, will really take that seriously, if he sees that he can come under God's hatred because of cruelty towards his wife. Cruelty.

Cruelty with words. Therefore, take heed to your spirit that you do not deal treacherously. She's a weaker vessel.

And it's very easy to be cruel to a weaker vessel, because we are stronger physically, stronger emotionally. Therefore, husbands think they can do what they like. And God says, all right, I'll have to reward you if you treat your wife like that.

So take heed to your spirit that you do not deal treacherously with your marriage partner. Then we come to verse 17, which is really the beginning of a new section. He's finished one subject.

And now he says, you have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, how have we wearied him? This is the amazing thing we see right through the book of Malachi, that like the Laodicean church and its leader, they were ignorant of their spiritual condition. When God says to them that you are like this, they say, how are we like this? You know, like the Laodicean church, you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind naked.

They say, what do you mean we are wretched and miserable? They were ignorant of their spiritual condition. The lowest state you can be in spiritually is to be ignorant of your spiritual condition. There's no lower state than that.

That's the worst spiritual state to be in, where we are ignorant of our spiritual condition. That was the condition of the people in Malachi's day. The Lord says, you have wearied me with your words.

This is where we wearied you. And the Lord says, in that you say, everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them, or where is the God of justice? Now, what is the occasion for someone to say that those who do evil are accepted in God's sight? Will we ever say anything like that? We say, oh no, we won't say anything like that. But, do you know what that means? It means that we look around and say, well, is it really worth it being so faithful in our hidden life and so faithful in our married life and so faithful in our thought life? What do we get out of it? There are so many other believers who are so careless about all these things, and God is blessing them also.

And when such thoughts come in our mind, we are actually saying these words, that the evildoers are also accepted by God. And where is the God of justice? We are not getting any special favor or blessing just because we have been so faithful compared to other believers. That's the same old question.

The same old question. And it is particularly in reference to the evildoers in Christendom. When believers are taking it easy and compromising and loving money and doing a lot of things which are contrary to God's word, it looks as though nothing is going wrong with them.

Judgment doesn't come striking down immediately. You know that verse in Ecclesiastes 8, verse 11, which says, Because judgment does not come from God immediately, therefore people keep on sinning. And because God's judgment doesn't come in the church immediately, therefore people keep on gossiping, people keep on speaking evil, doing a lot of wrong things, saying a lot of wrong things, because God's judgment does not come immediately.

And then we look around and it looks as though no judgment has fallen on those other people who are unfaithful, and here we are struggling to be faithful and it looks as though God hasn't blessed us particularly in any way more than them. And there comes the test of our faith. Whether we say, Lord, that's quite all right.

I will still be faithful to you. Otherwise we weary the Lord with our words, words that go on in our thoughts. Why is it? Why is it necessary to be so faithful? So utterly exact and faithful in money matters, in our thoughts, in everything.

Is it necessary to be so careful with our words, for example? Is it really true that every idle word men will give account in the day of judgment? Are lots of believers speaking idle words? They are not being struck

dead, nothing is happening. The judgment hasn't yet been executed, therefore people take lightly this matter of speaking idle words. But we cannot escape it.

And people who take the blood of Christ like a tap water, just to wash away these idle words, they speak idle words every day and then use the blood of Christ like tap water, are actually in the same category as chapter 2, verse 17. They say, yeah, it's not serious, the blood of Jesus is there. And God says, you have wearied me.

Such believers weary God with their attitude towards sin. And their loose attitude to sin and their blasphemous attitude to the blood of Christ. And then God says, alright, here's my answer.

You say, where is the God of judgment? Why doesn't God judge? Okay, God says, here I am, I'm going to send my messenger. And my messenger is the same word as malakai. Malakai means my messenger, but here he's referring to John the Baptist.

I'm going to send my messenger, that was John the Baptist, and he will clear the way before me. John the Baptist came to clear, to prepare the way of Jesus Christ in his first coming. And then the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.

That is referring to the first coming of Jesus Christ to the earth. The Lord whom you are seeking. You are seeking for the Lord saying, when will judgment come? Alright, he's going to come suddenly.

And that's exactly how it was. The Jews went along thinking God is blessing us and we are God's people and all that. But suddenly Jesus came and they were not even ready for it.

They didn't even know when he came. He came and he went and two thousand years have gone by and the Jews even today are not aware that he has come. That's how it is.

It's almost as though Jesus came secretly and went away and the Jews are completely ignorant of it. It's going to be like that in the second coming of Christ. It's going to take a whole lot of so-called believers by surprise when he comes.

Just like the Jews were taken by surprise. He came suddenly, even though God sent a messenger called John the Baptist. Even then they were not ready.

And before the second coming of Christ, the Lord also had the John the Baptist ministry through the church. Preparing people for the second coming of Christ, but still the vast majority of people will not be ready. The Lord will come suddenly and he is called here by this title.

Jesus is called here the messenger of the covenant. Remember we saw that covenant with God, with your marriage partner and with your brothers. Jesus is coming as the messenger of the new covenant.

He is coming to bring a new covenant in whom you delight. You people say that you want the Lord. Your words are so spiritual.

You claim to delight in him. All right, he's coming, says the Lord of hosts. But you don't realize that it's not going to be an easy thing when he comes.

You think he's just going to come and bless you. But who can endure the day of his coming? Now this is not referring to the second coming of Christ. Just wait a minute.

That'll come later in chapter four. In chapter four we read, behold, the day is coming later on. That's the second coming.

But now we are dealing with the first coming of Christ. And who can stand when he appears? Because he is like a refiner's fire. You see, God comes to judge before he blesses.

And we'll see that in a moment. He's like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. Now there are two pictures used here of cleansing.

One is the strong bleach that is used in the laundry for making clothes white. Bleaching soap or powder. Fuller's soap means a laundry man's soap which is full of bleach that can take out all the ugly marks from white clothing.

That is how Jesus cleanses us. That refers to an external cleansing. And the other cleansing is pictured here by a fire.

And fire is that which cleanses that which cannot be cleansed with bleach. For example, if gold is mixed with some other metals, you can't cleanse it away with soap and water. Soap and water can clean externally.

But the inward impurity has to be cleansed with fire. So the Bible speaks about a cleansing by water and a cleansing by fire. Because it refers to an external cleansing, an inward cleansing.

That's why the Holy Spirit is symbolized as water and also as fire. And the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire is really meant to produce this refiner's fire that begins a process of cleansing within me. So the Lord cleanses me externally.

And this Fuller's soap you read in Mark chapter 9. Mark's Gospel chapter 9. When Jesus was up on the Mount of Transfiguration. It says, with Peter, James and John, His garments became radiant, Mark 9.3, And exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them. You see the connection there? That Jesus' garments are cleansed with Fuller's soap.

I mean, not cleansed. There was no need of cleansing. But His garments are so clean, like no launderer on earth can bleach them white.

Now He comes. He's the one who's come. Who's going to do the same work on us.

With the same bleaching, strong bleaching laundry soap. I don't know whether you've ever put your finger into strong bleaching powder and water. It really burns up your skin.

It's strong stuff. And this is the work that the Lord is seeking to do in our external life. It's not just a little bit of ordinary soap that He's going to wipe on it.

It's a strong bleach that cleanses out every impurity in our external testimony before others. Very important, our external testimony before others. The filthiness of the flesh.

But like it says in 2 Corinthians 7, 1, we are to cleanse ourselves not only from the filthiness of the flesh, but also the filthiness of the spirit. There's a fire to do that. And so the Lord cleanses us with water and with fire.

Externally and internally. That's what it says here. He's like a refiner's fire and like Fuller's soap.

We read in Ephesians 5, 26, that Jesus cleanses the church with the washing of water by the Word. And we read in Matthew 3, 11, He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and fire. And so we see the New Testament fulfillment of that.

He cleanses the church with the washing of water with this launderer's bleach, externally, so that it's without spot and wrinkle in the final day. At the same time, He does a work of refining inside. And this does not take place suddenly.

How long does He continue doing it? Until our garments are like His garments, which were so white that no launderer on earth can make it, until our inside is like His inside. In other words, like it says in 1 John 3, 3, to purify ourselves as He is pure. So that's what Malachi is speaking about, that when He comes, do you think you can stand there? You can't just play the fool with sin and say, I'm waiting for the coming of the Lord.

That's what the Israelites did and that's what a lot of Christians are doing today. That's why John says, He who really has this hope within him will purify himself as He is pure. He looks at how pure Jesus' garments are and He looks at His own and says, Lord, I need a little more bleach here.

He looks at Jesus' inner life and He looks at His own inner life. And He says, Lord, I need a little fire now. My relationship with my wife needs quite a lot of bleaching powder and fire.

My relationship with my brothers needs quite a lot of bleaching powder and fire. And all the idolatry in my life, the things I worship, money, material things, job, prestige, a lot of rubbish that I worship, I really need some bleaching powder and fire in my life, Lord. This is the man who is really serious about purifying himself as He is pure.

Malachi says, are you interested in that? And you see how relevant the message is to today's Christendom, where the vast majority of people have not the slightest interest in purifying themselves as Jesus is pure. They are quite satisfied with their defeated, substandard Christian condition. But He says, Jesus, when He comes, He will sit.

He's not going to stand. Because you stand only when you have a short job to do. When you have a long job to do, what do you do? You sit.

And He's going to sit. It takes a long time to cleanse these things out of our life. He's going to sit as a smelter and purifier of silver.

He's going to begin judgment, not with the world, but with the household of God. And He will purify who? The sons of Levi. Who were the sons of Levi? The priests.

Who are the priests today? All believers. So we can put it there. He's going to purify all the believers.

But He won't force us. If you don't want to be purified, you say, alright, go your own way. I won't disturb you.

But those who want to be purified, He'll purify them. And He'll refine them like gold and silver, so that when they come to present to the Lord offerings, their offerings will now be in righteousness. Now that teaches us that my offering to the Lord depends on the the acceptability of it before God depends on the measure

in which the Lord has been able to purify me in my inner life.

In other words, and here's a very important lesson for us to learn. For example, on Sunday morning, when I stand up, or you stand up, we stand up and pray to the Lord, or praise the Lord. We can think, that was a beautiful prayer I managed to pray today.

And we're just living in a world of deception. Because that offering of prayer, the acceptability of it, doesn't depend on the words. It doesn't depend on the beauty of the language.

That is the deception there is in Christendom today. It doesn't depend on how beautifully that chorus was sung. No.

It depends on the purity that there was in the hearts of the people who made that offering. And there, we may see something quite different. Quite different.

The Lord says, this offering is not in righteousness, because this man who is offering it, he sings beautifully, like a nightingale, but his heart is not pure. So the offering is not an offering in righteousness. So the Lord has got to sit with him, if he's interested in it.

The Lord will sit and judge him. And that's why in the church, we have the opportunity for the Lord to sit in the church, with the word of God, and refine us with God's word. Those who are interested in being refined by the word of God, will allow the Lord to sit and put them in the fire, and purify them like gold and silver is purified.

It's a tremendous privilege. He will purify us so that we can present to the Lord an offering in righteousness. And then, and only then, will the offering of Judah, verse 4, be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old.

You know, in Malachi chapter 1, we saw a pure offering? Then the offering will be pure. This is the burden of Malachi, in chapter 1, a pure offering, a pure offering, a pure offering, a pure offering. That's his burden.

A pure offering. Not the amount of your offering. Not the length of your prayer.

Not the amount of money you put into the offering box. But the heart from which it comes. What's the use of putting a hundred rupees in the offering box, if I still love money? It's worth nothing! If I'm covetous, God wants a pure offering.

What's the use of a beautiful chorus or prayer, if my heart is not pure? If I'm treacherous towards my wife or my brother? No, he wants a pure offering. And Malachi, the messenger, his burden in the church will be to make sure that this message is constantly proclaimed. And that's why the book of Malachi has a particular relevance for those who come out of Jerusalem, out of Babylon into Jerusalem.

The burden of Malachi, God's messenger, this nameless prophet. He saw that Malachi only means my messenger. We don't even know his name.

A man who hid himself and proclaimed the truth fearlessly. God wants a pure offering. God wants a pure offering.

And God will sit mean business with those who really want to do business with him. He'll purify them so that they present a pure offering if they are interested. The rest can sit and watch.

But those who are interested in being put into the fire, God will put them into the fire. The message of Malachi is that there is to be a cleansing in the people of God. A continuous cleansing.

Like bleaching powder on cloth, like fire on gold mixed with other metals. And then the offering will be pure. And this is how this messenger who is going to prepare the way before me as it says in verse 1. This is how he's going to prepare the way before me.

He's going to proclaim this message. The Lord's coming. And you, are you fellas ready for his coming? Are you purifying yourself as he is pure? That was John the Baptist's ministry.

Repent, repent. Bring forth fruits, meat for repentance. That was his message.

And he was a hard man. A hard man, John the Baptist. That is the messenger spoken of here.

He spoke about this baptism by fire. He says all this chaff is going to be burnt out. Only the wheat will be gathered in.

Don't just think that any odd person is going to be gathered in. All the chaff is going to be burnt out. No wonder he lost his head.

Because he was hard. He was determined to fulfill his ministry faithfully. And I believe with all my heart.

That the calling of the church is to have that same John the Baptist ministry. Now. To prepare the people for the second coming of Christ.

Exactly the same ministry. That is the prophetic ministry of this hour. Or we would rather say of this last few minutes of this hour.

A John the Baptist ministry. Of preparing people for the coming of the Lord. And then God says.

I'm going to draw near to you for judgment. And I will be a swift witness. Against various categories of sinners.

Described here. And I just want you to look at these categories of sinners described here. First.

The sorcerers. Now the sorcerers. You know it says in Revelation 18 verse 23.

That all nations were deceived by the sorcery of Babylon. So the sorcerers. Are the preachers.

Who deceive people. About God's truth. They are number one.

On the list for God's judgment. I've always said. And you've heard me say that many times.

That the film stars are the number two agents of Satan. And these deceiving preachers and pastors are the number one agents of Satan. Who do not proclaim the whole counsel of God.

And here it is. First. The sorcerers.

These deceiving preachers. Who don't proclaim the whole counsel of God. And second.

The film stars and all the other adulterers. Are listed there after that. It's there.

It's not just a bright idea that came to my head. It's there in the scriptures. That these are the number one agents of the devil.

And these are the number two agents of the devil. Those who promote adultery and sex sin. Like all the films in the world do now.

First. The deceiving preachers. And then.

Those who make films. And. Promote sex sin.

Adulterers. And then. Third.

Liars. Those who tell lies. All liars.

Will find their place in the lake of fire. Those who sign false statements. To make a little more money.

And those who. Submit wrong returns in their offices. Etc.

etc. He's going to judge them. He's going to judge the deceiving preachers.

All fornicators and adulterers. God will judge. All liars will be cast into the lake of fire.

There will be very few people left after that. You know that. And then.

After he's finished with all these people. Then he's going to judge. Another category of people.

Those who oppress. Their servants. In the lab.

You see I'm not a deceiving preacher. I'm not a. Adulterer. I'm not a liar.

But it says. Somewhere in the list. Those who oppress.

Those who work under them. Who work for them. Don't pay them properly.

Make them work much more than. They should. And oppress.

This person who's poor. And struggling to earning a living. Was not fortunate enough.

To be born in such a high family as. You are. But oppress them.

You got authority on them. And your hand is heavy. And hard on them.

For the smallest little thing. Cut their wages for some small thing. God says alright.

The same spoon. With which you measured out to them. I'll use the same spoon for you.

Is that unrighteous? No. For the same measure with which you measure to others. That we measure to you.

That's why it says be merciful. Because God will be merciful to us. In the day of judgment.

Be merciful. Towards those over whom you have authority. And then.

Those who oppress the widows. Those where there's no male member in the house. They take advantage of the widows.

God will severely judge these people. And those who oppress the orphan. Poor fatherless people.

Take advantage of them. Oppress them. Take advantage of the poor people.

God will severely judge them. Those who cheat. The poor people.

Who are. There are a lot of poor orphans for example. And poor people going around.

Selling various things. Who come to our houses. We can take advantage of them.

Be merciful brother. To be find mercy in the day of judgment. And who turn aside the stranger.

And do not fear me. Who take advantage of a stranger. In some way.

There are so many ways. In other words. We can sum it all up by saying.

Those who take advantage of the weakness of other people. Those who are servants and widows and orphans and strangers. They are in a weaker position than us.

And if ever we take advantage. And that's the point. There's a terrific lust in us.

To take advantage. When we have a little authority over someone. To take advantage of it.

Woe unto us. If we don't judge ourselves there. Cleanse ourselves from this lust.

To take advantage over someone. We have no authority over anyone. We have only got to humble ourselves on the God's hand.

And then he says. You should have been judged for all this long ago. But I. The Lord.

Do not change. My mercies. Endure forever.

I am the same. And that is why you are not consumed. That's the meaning there.

He's always the same. In other words. You can come back for the 500th time.

He says in verse 7. From the days of your fathers. You have turned aside. From my statutes.

You have not kept them. Malakai. The Lord says through Malakai.

This is not the first time. I'm talking about all these things. I've been talking about all these things.

For 15. For 1100 years. From the time of Moses.

I've been talking about all these things. About. Not.

Harassing the. Servants. And the widows.

And the orphans. You read that in Exodus. And Leviticus.

And Deuteronomy. But he says. You've just been ignoring it.

You can say that in the church. We preach. And preach.

And the same thing again. People don't listen. And the Lord says.

From the time of your fathers. I've been doing this. And you've just turned aside.

But. He says. Come back to me.

Come back to me. It's just like we say in the church. We're not talking about the past.

We're only talking about the future. Come back to me. Says the Lord.

That is my attitude. I'm still inviting you. For the 6000th time.

For the 600,000th time. For the nth time. Come back to me.

Return to me. And I will return to you. Like the prodigal son.

When he returned to the father. The father ran. To return to him.

The Lord says. You do that. Come back to me.

You see. The desire of the Lord. In speaking.

In the church. It is never for judgment. God did not send his son into the world.

To condemn the world. But that the world through him. Might be saved.

And Malachi. Though his message. Was so hard.

Was not to condemn people. But to save them. And John the Baptist.

Even though his message. Was so hard. It was not to condemn people.

But to save them. And even in the church. We speak quite hard.

Not to condemn people. But to save them. Because the Lord says.

Come back to me. We speak about the past. Only so that we don't.

Do those things. In the future. So the Lord.

So that we can see. How good God is. That he invites us.

Even now. To come back to him. And he goes on to say.

When the Lord says. Return to me. He says.

In verse 7. The last part. But you say. How shall we return? Lord.

We haven't gone away from you. We are there. Close to you.

And singing your praises. And coming to all the meetings. Look at these.

People who are. Absolutely ignorant. Of their backsliding.
God says. You're backslidden. He says.
We haven't backslidden. We are quite alright. And that is again.
The condition. Of the vast majority. Of believers.
I don't have. The slightest doubt. In my mind.
That more than 90 percent. Of today's believers. Are backsliders.
They call that person. He's a backslider. He's gone to the cinema.
He stopped coming to the meetings. I tell you. God calls him.
A backslider. Long. Long.
Long. Before that. But the thing is.
The man's ignorant. That he's a backslider. Do you know.
For example. That when you become. Cold.
Towards a brother. You're a backslider. Sure.
In God's eyes. You're a backslider. When you have.
A little bitterness. Towards your wife. You're a backslider.
That's God's standard. But how many churches. Do you find.
Proclaiming that standard. As a backslider. When you love money.
A little bit. You're a backslider. How many people.
Preach that. That is what God. Calls a backslider.
But they say. No. No.
No. We're alright. Yeah.
It's true. We little bit. Love money.
But then. These things. But.
God says. You're a backslider. Return to me.
And they say. How shall we return. Ignorance.
Ignorance. And no. Awareness.
And that's the thing. We need to pray. Brothers and sisters.

Constantly. Oh God. Oh God.

Don't let me ever. Remain in ignorance. About my.

Spiritual condition. You pray that prayer. I pray that.

Lord. I don't want to live in a delusion. I want you to tell me exactly.

What my spiritual condition is. And it's probably much worse. Than I think about it myself.

I want. I want light. In God's light.

I'll see light about myself. I don't want to live in a world of delusion. I'm such a wonderful spiritual person.

That God says. You're like this. And say.

No Lord. I'm not like this. I'm talking about the new and living way.

We don't. You don't realize. What all doctrines we preach in our church.

And the Lord says. You don't realize your spiritual condition. It's a sad thing.

And then. He goes on to speak. About robbing God.

Verse 8. Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say. How have we robbed thee? In tithes and contributions.

You are cursed. With a curse. For you are robbing me.

The whole nation if you. The favorite. Verse.

For Pentecostal preachers. Malachi 3. Verses. 8, 9 and 10.

Bring the whole tithe. Into the storehouse. So that there may be food.

In my house. You have to live 400 years. Before.

Matthew. 400 years. Before Jesus.

To preach that. Now. We need to understand it.

We saw once. In an earlier study. In Deuteronomy 14.

And verse 23. The living Bible. Paraphrases it as.

God. Has commanded you to tithe. To teach you.

To put him first. Always. God has commanded you to tithe.

To teach you. To put him first. Always.

That's the purpose of tithing. In every area. To put him first.

Particularly in the area of money. That's what they want. He wanted them to learn.

In the Old Testament. When you. Collect your harvest.

Put me first. Remember that I gave you that harvest. Take 10 percent from that.

And bring it to me. And in everything. Take 10 percent.

And bring it to me. The best. And they were not putting God first.

That's why he says. Bring me your tithes. You have robbed me.

Bring me your tithes. You're not putting me first. You're putting Mammon first.

That's another burden of Malachi. You people love money. That's why you bring the lame sheep.

And the blind bull for an offering. Because you love money. You don't bring your tithes.

Because you love money. What is Malachi speaking about basically? There are two masters he says. God and Mammon.

And the trouble is. You fellows are serving Mammon. Even though you're religious.

Like the rich young ruler. He was religious. He kept the commandments.

He was eager to have eternal life. But he didn't realize that he was worshipping Mammon all the time. And Jesus said.

You've got one thing lacking in you. You're an idolater. You're worshipping Mammon.

That's as bad as worshipping Krishna or Saraswati or any such thing. You've got to give that up. And he wasn't willing to give up that worship of Mammon.

That's why he couldn't enter into the kingdom of God. And Jesus said. How can such a man enter the kingdom of God? It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

Than a man who worships Mammon. To enter God's kingdom. That's impossible.

That's what Malachi is saying. You're cursed with a curse. For you're robbing me.

The whole nation of you. God and Mammon are the two masters. And that's Malachi's message to the church even today.

God and Mammon. Whom are you going to serve? Now. I want to apply this to the New Testament.

I want you to see a very important thing. In the Old Testament. God demanded the type.

Ten percent. Do you know what he demands in the New Testament? Our bodies. Now here is a revelation.

Which you won't get from a Pentecostal pastor. I'll tell you that. That the equivalent of the type in the Old Testament.

For us in the New Testament. Is our physical body. In the Old Testament.

They were to glorify God by bringing the type. In the New Testament. It says in 1 Corinthians 6.20. You are bought with a price.

Therefore glorify God in your body. Because your body has been bought with a price. Your body belongs to God.

It says in 1 Corinthians 6.20. There your type belongs to God. Here your body belongs to God. Therefore it says in Romans 12.1. Present your body.

As a living sacrifice to God. Not ten percent. Present your body.

And that's the mark of an Old Testament church. That they preach. Bring your type.

And this is the mark of a New Testament church. That we preach. Give your body.

In the moment of temptation to God. That you don't sin with your tongue. That you don't sin with your eyes.

You don't sin with your ears. You don't sin with your hands. And you don't sin in any other part of your body.

Present your body. And in the Old Testament. Turn back to Malachi 3. Wherever you read the type in the Old Testament.

If you put body. You can understand it in a New Testament way. And here it is.

Bring the type into the storehouse. You are cursed with a curse. He said in verse 9. Because you are not bringing the type.

Now in the same way we can say in the New Testament. If you present your body to God. The curse will be lifted from your body.

There is a curse on the body. If we don't present it to God. But that curse will go.

Bring the whole type into the storehouse. And I believe there is a lot of sickness in the body. Which is a result of the curse as well.

Because the body is not presented to God. It is used for sin. The tongue is used for sin.

The eye is used for sin. Therefore there is sickness in the body. Sickness is not basically God's will for anyone.

Sickness is 100% from the devil. Because it is not a good gift. We all know it is not a good gift.

And God only gives good gifts. And therefore I believe basically. It is not God's will that we should be sick.

He may allow it sometimes for a purpose. Of purification, sanctification. But it is not basically God's perfect will.

And therefore we see. That God wants that curse to be lifted off from our body. Further.

I will rebuke. The devourer. Verse 10.

Another thing I want you to notice here. There is a blessing that will come when we present our body. He says bring your body.

To me. Applying that to the New Testament. And see if I will not open for you the windows of heaven.

And pour you out a blessing instead of that curse. Till there is no more need. And if you want to read something about what the blessing and the curse is.

Read Deuteronomy 28. And you will see there what the blessing is and what the curse is. It is a fantastic chapter.

On the blessing and the curse. And it says here further. Then.

I will rebuke Satan for you. I want you to notice one very important distinction here. Between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In the Old Testament. The Lord rebuked Satan for his people. In the New Testament.

He tells us. To rebuke and resist Satan. Do not say.

Oh God. Please resist Satan. He is not going to do it.

Because it says in James 4. Verse 7. You resist the devil. And he will flee from you. But in the Old Testament.

They could not resist the devil like that. Because of one reason. They did not have.

The name of Jesus. Therefore the Lord had to do it. The Lord rebuked you.

But today. I do not have to tell the devil. The Lord rebuked you.

I am not in the Old Testament. I rebuke you Satan. In the name of Jesus Christ.

This is our privilege. In the New Testament. And we need to stand there.

Do not ask God to rebuke him and resist him. God says. You do it.

It is your calling. Do not be an Old Testament Christian. And I will rebuke the devourer for you.

And then. You will not be fruitless anymore. You will be fruitful in your life.

And. You will be a testimony to others. Verse 12.

All nations will call you blessed. For you will be a delightful land. Your life will be a living testimony to others.

As you rebuke Satan. And fruitfulness comes into your life. Again.

The Lord speaks about words. Your words have been arrogant against me. Interesting how God says so much about words.

The words you speak. Be careful about your words. And yet they are ignorant.

What have we said? What are these idle words we have spoken? Believers are always like that. They always feel the rebuke of the Lord. We do not deserve it.

Even in the church that happens. We hear a rebuke and we say. Oh.

We do not deserve that. What is wrong with us? That is the ignorant condition of most believers. They do not realize.

We do not deserve all that rebuke. That is exactly how it was in Malachi's day. What have we spoken? Against thee.

And he says. You have said. This is the same charge as before.

It is vain to serve God. And what profit is it. That we have kept this charge.

We have walked in mourning before the Lord of hosts. So now we call the arrogant blessed. And not only are the doers of wickedness built up.

But they also test God and escape. You know the same thing earlier. Which we saw in chapter 2.17. These people.

What is the use of our. Being so faithful and walking. Humbling ourselves before God.

It is all useless to be like this. We are not getting anything more. In other words.

Their whole attitude to life. Was this. What have we got.

Through doing all this. You see the self-centeredness there. Their whole approach to.

The Christian life was. What are we going to get out of it. Oh.

We are faithful and we get something. Yeah. Then I will be faithful.

And they did not get anything. They say. What have we got.

Instead of thinking. God has got something. Through my faithfulness.

Yeah. God has got something. Through my being faithful.

Isn't that good enough for me. Or should I think. What have I got.

Alright. I got nothing. I didn't get any material blessing.

Through being faithful. So what. But God got something.

Through my life. He could point me out to Satan. And say.

Look at that man there. You can't make him unfaithful. God got something.

Through my life. In that moment of temptation. Think of that.

Don't just think of. What did I get. That's the mark of a carnal believer.

He's always thinking of. What I can get. And get.

And get. And get. And get.

Instead of thinking. What can I give to God. See that's what they ask.

What have we got. What profit have we got. It's a terrible thing.

When we become Christians. Thinking of our own gain and profit. Thinking of our own material gain.

And profit. We know how it is. So many Christians.

Who joined up with missions. In order to get some. Financial profit.

You know. It's possible for people. To come into.

Our meeting also. In order to get some. Financial help from others.

Brothers here. Are a bit generous. Like to take advantage of that.

Always such people. Will remain carnal. Carnal.

Carnal. Carnal. Carnal.

Carnal. Till we get out of that way of thinking. And say.

Lord. What can I give to you. That is a spiritual attitude of mine.

Not. What profit have we got. And that's what Malachi is rebuking.

He says. You got the wrong understanding. The similar thing.

That the psalmist found in Psalm 73. He said. It is vain to serve the Lord.

But it says. I went into the sanctuary. I went into God's presence.

And then I understood. And that's where we always understand the truth. Now in contrast to all this.

Here is the wonderful thing. We see in Malachi. That there was a remnant.

There was a small group of people. Even in Malachi's day. Just like there is today.

people in our day. Who is a contrast to all this that we read in Malachi. They were the people who were bringing the best bullocks and the best sheep.

And who were giving their tithes and giving themselves. This is the group of people referred to in verses 16 to 18. They feared God.

Here is the remnant. Those who feared the Lord. They spoke to one another.

That means they came together for mutual exhortation. That's exactly how it is going to be in the church in the last days. They will come together.

And when they speak to one another. They won't be speaking the latest gossip that they heard from one another. And they won't be talking the usual rot that a lot of carnal believers talk about.

They will speak about the Lord. Because it says here. The Lord gave attention and heard it.

Do you know that in the Old Testament. There are only two places where you find this phrase. The Lord heard it.

One is where Miriam criticized Moses. In Numbers chapter 12. And the other is where those who feared the Lord here spoke to one another.

The only two places. And the Lord is always hearing one of these two things. Either somebody criticizing some other brother.

Or those who fear the Lord coming together and speaking to one another. I'll tell you the Lord hears both. And he heard it.

And a book of remembrance was written before him. The Lord calls one of the angels and says. Write down the names of these people who fear me.

For those who fear the Lord and who are concerned about his name. You see his name. Whose prayer is hallowed be thy name.

Who are concerned. And the Lord says. They'll be mine.

They are my special jewels. This is the book in which you have 144,000 names. Of those who fear the Lord.

Who are going to stand with the Father's name upon their foreheads in Mount Zion. Here it is. It's in the book of Revelation.

And it's in the book of Malachi. And they will be mine. Says the Lord of hosts.

In that day. When I prepare my own possession. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.

And in that day. These are the real jewels. God's jewels.

They are God's treasure. You know why? Here's the reason. Because God was their treasure.

Their treasure was not money. Their treasure was God. And when my treasure is God.

God says. All right. Then you are my treasure.

That's all. He says. These are my special treasure.

Because these are the people who didn't love money. And in that day. When I come.

You will be able to distinguish. Verse 18. The Lord says.

Between the righteous and the wicked. You can't make out yet. Sometimes you are deceived.

Some people look spiritual. But they are not. But in that day.

You will distinguish between the one who serves God. And the one who does not serve him. We can put it like this.

You will distinguish between the one who serves God. And the one who serves money. Because there are only two masters.

In that day. You will find out. Who served God.

And who served money. But behold. The day is coming.

This is the second coming of Christ. For judgment. Burning like a furnace.

And all the proud and evil doers. Remember that the proud people are mentioned before the evil doers. Because pride came into the world.

Before any other type of evil. So the proud people are listed first. The arrogant and the evil doers will be like chaff burnt in the fire.

And the day is coming. That will set them ablaze. So that will leave them neither root nor branch.

But in contrast to the proud. Are the humble. The God fearing.

Those who fear my name. These are the people who are listed in this book. The son of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings.

What are these people going to be healed from? Not physical sickness. They are going to be healed from the lusts in their flesh. And that's the thing they wanted.

They longed for healing from the lusts in their flesh. More than they longed for healing from colds and bronchitis and coughs and weaknesses and sicknesses and pains and cancers. They said Lord I want to be delivered from the lusts in my flesh.

They're going to be healed from that. And they're going to skip about like calves who have come out of the stall. That means calves who have been loosed from the stall.

Stall means calves who have been loosed from the flesh. They can come now. They're no longer limping like they were before.

They are leaping for joy. And then what will happen? They will go forth. That means they will walk and run.

Not limp. Second. They will grow up.

Skip about like calves in the stall. And they will tread down the wicked. Third.

Verse three. The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet. They shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing says the Lord of hosts.

And then the last paragraph of the book of Malachi. Remember the law of Moses my servant. That is the last commandment in the Old Testament.

Remember the law for another four hundred years. And then grace would come through Jesus Christ. Even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel.

And then I'm going to send you Elijah the prophet. That was John the Baptist. But there's going to be a similar ministry in the church like the ministry of Elijah and John the Baptist fearlessly rebuking sin like Elijah rebuked it in Israel and like John the Baptist rebuked it in Israel before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers. Again speaking about family relationships. He spoke about husband and wife in chapter two.

Here he speaks about fathers and children and the emphasis in Malachi is on the family life and no generation gap in the church. The fathers and the children are one. Lest I come and smite the land with a curse.

The last word in the Old Testament is a curse. And the last word in the New Testament, Revelation 22, is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. And you read in Revelation 22, there is no more curse.

And so we see there's a tremendous message in the book of Malachi to the families, to the fathers and the children, that they should be one, that their hearts, it says here in verse six, should be turned towards each other. Not just externally, their hearts, the heart of the husband to the wife, the heart of the father to the child, the child to the father, a heart unity. But it could not come for another 400 years till Jesus came and established the new covenant.

But now that he has come, and we are living in these days of the new covenant, we can experience that, and be a people purified in that fire, so that we can be a people prepared for the coming of the Lord. A people who are longing to be free from the flesh, and therefore loving the bleaching powder and loving the fire, so that God can receive from us a pure offering. That's what he's looking for.

In every place around the world, he looks today for a pure offering. So may God help us to be faithful in preparing people in the church and those we come in contact with.

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