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We've been doing a study at Craighouse® on the personal relationships of people in the Old Testament, their prayer lives. When we came to Malachi, it became apparent that it was a word for our time. I believe it is a word that needs to be taken to heart to the extent that we will be convicted by it, convinced by it, and converted. It's not enough to understand the message of Malachi. We must change to conform to what God wants of us. Failure and apathy in certain areas of our relationship with God overshadow the other things we might be doing right. Our awesome God wants to bless His people; so out of love, He speaks.

Malachi is one continual, scathing rebuke from beginning to end from the God who loves and saves His people. It is out of God's grace that He warns through His prophets in order that they might repent and return to Him in order that He might bless them. Thus, Malachi presents the indictment of the Lord and warns of God's curse. Malachi's audience lived in moral degradation and indifference to their spiritual condition. He comes against the people's objections and protests (which are actually prayers) in forcible and unbending terms (Malachi 1:2-5; 2:14-17; 3:7-13). He comes with this burden of the word of the LORD sometime after Nehemiah. The reconstruction of the temple had been completed long enough for abuses to creep in, for corruption to spread, for people to ignore the ways of the LORD.



It's much like today. Many are stuck in their traditions. Not too many associate economic-socio-political conditions with their spiritual condition. Others block the Holy Spirit, who comes with fresh oil and fresh bread, ointment poured forth. Others stubbornly refuse to ascribe to the LORD the glory due His Name. God says through Malachi, His Messenger, that it is despising His love, His Name, His order, His patience, His welcome, and His portion, that which is due Him.

The prayer protests of Malachi are amazingly similar to the messages sent to the Seven Churches in Revelation.

Compare: Malachi 1:2 and Revelation 2:4	despised love
Malachi 1:6 and Revelation 2:9	despised name
Malachi 1:7 and Revelation 2:14	despised order
Malachi 2:17 and Revelation 2:21	despised patience
Malachi 3:7 and Revelation 3:1-3	despised welcome
Malachi 3:8 and Revelation 3:15	despised portion



Consider. In Malachi 1:2, people question the love of God. God says that He loves us, that He has chosen some by election according to His choice and His mercy (example, Jacob and Esau). What do we do when God mystifies us by His ways? With Habakkuk, it was, "Does God care?" Here it is, "Does God love me?" God says He loves His people, yet we question that love over and over again. That amounts to **despising the love of God** for us. We doubt. We disbelieve. We die.

The second indictment in Malachi 1:6 involves **despising the Name of God** and thereby dishonoring God. How do we show our lack of honor and respect for the Name of God, of Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit today? What is it to be

Malachi:

baptized into the Name and then despise that Name? Do we hate the Name we bear? Is it a burden to us to bear the brandmark of Jesus Christ? What don't we like about it?

Malachi 1:7, 13 speaks about prescribed sacrifices being disobeyed. God demands the first and the best, but the divine altar is treated with contempt. Giving God our cast-offs is an insult to Him (1:8-14). Do we expect God to accept such offerings? To whom would we not think to do such a thing? This indictment is of **despising the order of God**, despising the sacrifice God requires, treating the altar of God with disrespect. Despising the order of God amounts to wanting personal freedom, to building our own tower of Babel, etc. This is also despising the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Blood of Christ, and His work on the Cross. "It's offensive; don't talk about it. Tone it down. Talk about God's love and forgiveness for everybody. Make things palatable, something they will swallow. How can my friends and family get saved if you're up there talking about the Blood of Jesus?" Etc.



The priests found it wearisome to do as God asked. Then they pleaded ignorance. Today we want to worship God any old way except God's way; but the Word of God is to be held high. God honors His Word above His Name (Psalm 138:2). The Word of God should be central, not disparaged, in our worship services. People want an experience, but they don't always want to experience the Word of God. They want to be entertained, not please God. They want to be "fed," but then they don't want to serve others in love. They want to receive, not give, and if they give, they want to receive more than they give so that they come out the winner.

Malachi 2:17 is an indictment wearying God with our words, **despising His patience**, of calling evil good and saying that everyone that does evil is good in the sight of the LORD and He delights in them. Saying, "Where is the God of Judgment?" People want justice, or do they really? This is a sin of insincere religious profusion. Such profusely cry out to God for things they think are quite religious sounding yet from insincere hearts and not according to God's heart and ways.

God is the God of All Grace and the Father of Mercies. Mercy is built into His Name. People weary God with untrue, unbecoming words while at the same time assuming the role of innocents. People repudiate God's challenge to them. What? Me? Weary You?

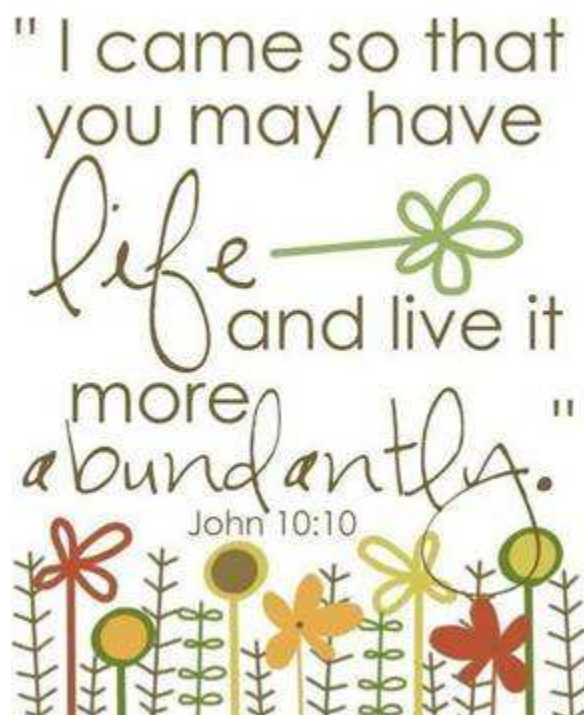
God is long suffering gives room to repent. One day, however, that patience will run its course and God's wrath will descend (Revelation 15:7).

Malachi 3:7 indicts people going away from God's ordinances and not keeping them. God indicts for **despising His welcome** demonstrated in disobedience, self-will and backsliding. He calls His people to return in repentance. Do we welcome God? Do we welcome Jesus? Do we welcome the Holy Spirit?

There is forgiveness in God that He might be feared. The message is: remember, return, repent. [A change in behavior](#)

Malachi:

demonstrates the return to God. Why not rather trust and obey? What is it in God's people that they reject God's commandments in order to go their own way? Jesus said, They will not come to Me that they might have life. (John 10:10) People are stubborn and get defensive. What are they protecting? Love gives and makes one vulnerable. Fear takes and puts up defensive walls. Love trusts in spite of possible loss. Fear freezes to avoid possible loss.



Satan comes in on habitual sin, on the Law. He gets that foothold (Ephesians 4). He takes the spiritual laws of God and uses them against us. Remember, his two-fold overall strategy is to get us to curse God and die and/or to maneuver us into a position where we are cursed by God and die. In Malachi it is the latter. "Cursed be the deceiver" (Mal. 1.14). "I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not lay it to heart." (Mal 2.2) These come because of corruption. "You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation." (3.9) "Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." (Mal. 4.6)

In Malachi 3:8 God indicts for robbery, for taking what is His, for **despising His portion**. The people in Malachi's day protested, and people continue to protest. Don't touch the money god! It's even worse than touching the liquor god. Is it, "My money!" Or did it come from God? How does the Word of God see our income, our incoming resources? 1 Cor. 8:6, James 1:17, Romans 11:36, e.g.

Malachi brings up a specific, how the people of God rob Him in tithes and offerings. "How can I tithe and give God the first 10%? I'll go broke." No, God will put holes in your pockets and even what you have He may take away from you. The devourer will have permission to enter your life. The fruit will fall to the ground. Your work will have been in vain. There is nothing to stop the spirit of abortion, that spirit that would not only abort life but also the life of the plans, purposes, and destiny God has for you.

The first and the best belong to God. To take what God has not given to you is presumption. We take liberties with the things that belong to God and take them. We presume upon God, transgress the boundaries, overstep into God's place, etc. God has not given us to keep the 100%. God is the Source of all life and blessing. We give Him the first 10% of what He gives to us and He protects the 90%. (Today, by the way, God desires that we give graciously, generously, gladly, and as the Holy Spirit guides according to the will of the Father, the mind of Christ, and the heart of the Holy Spirit.)

We don't just rob God in tithes and offerings; we rob Him of service, time, worship, etc. We rob Him of glory and honor. We take like thieves, and plunder God of what is His by right. This also includes the areas of divine providence, e.g., control of history and who saves.

Every commandment, like honor father and mother, do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, and do not covet all have a God-ward dimension as well as neighbor dimension. Malachi calls the people of God to return, to repent, and not to despise the mercy and graciousness of God.

Malachi's name means "the messenger of the LORD." He is the messenger of God. In the end of his message, Malachi speaks of the Messenger of the Covenant. Malachi's message reflects the burden of the word of the LORD to Israel, to the people who call Him LORD. Remember the LORD for the Day is coming. Prior to that great and dreadful day God will send Elijah the prophet. Malachi closes,

*And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children,
And the heart of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.
Malachi 4:6*



For some 400 years God remained silent, not sending a prophet to speak His mind and heart to His people. Jesus Christ, God the Son, was sent by the Father as the final Word. Jesus Christ is superior to angels, preeminent, superior to Moses, bringing a superior covenant with superior promises and priesthood. The body and blood sacrifice of Christ is once for all time, a better sacrifice and the only acceptable offering. (Hebrews) The Scriptures point to Jesus, yet we must come to Him that He might give us eternal life. (John 6:37-40) Nevertheless, no one can come to Jesus except the Father which has sent Jesus draws that one (John 6.44).

“These are the
Scriptures that testify
about me, yet you
refuse to come to me
to have life” *John 5:39-40*

Are you drawn to Jesus Christ? Do you welcome Him? Do you honor Him? Do you cherish His love for you? Do you bear the brandmark of Jesus? Abide in Christ, and live it out, by His grace.

*And this is the record, that God has given to us
Eternal life, and this life is in His Son.
He that has the Son has life:
And he that has not the Son of God has not life.
1 John 5:12*