

Loving God: Ritual or Relationship?

Malachi 1.6-14

ROMANCE TIP for Men > soon after Valentine's Day GREAT LOVE HARVEST
Women Love Receiving Flowers

GARBAGE BINS all around City > Many Bouquets of Flowers > Next Few Days
Search through Garbage Bins > Find Flowers > Present to that Special Woman!

Prophet Malachi > name DOES NOT occur anywhere else in OT > Little Known

1.1 No Biog. Details, i.e Name of Father > Protection from Angry Recipients??

BOLD REBUKE 1.6 It is you, O PRIESTS, who show contempt for GOD's name

To BORED and SARCASTIC Jews > 450 BC > small Province of Persian Empire

MAIN POINT of vs. 1-5 > GOD LOVES US > Surprising and Selective

SELECTIVE > "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth;
therefore I will punish you for all your sins." Amos 3.2

MUCH IS GIVEN > MUCH WILL BE REQUIRED > Costly Grace

Love MORE Surprising > 1.6-14 > Carelessness and Callousness in Worship

How can Christians in 21st C. Apply OT Prophets Ethical Teaching?

1. Command > particular messenger to particular people
at a particular time > true of all Scripture
2. Context > Covenant Status, and Culture between Us >
Sometimes Greater the Distance, Greater the Difficulty
3. Connections > links to God's OVERALL PLAN AND PURPOSE
Relationships to Creation, Covenant, Christ, Church
4. Common Ground > Apply Relevant Principles
What from this passage speaks to us?

For Example > BITING CRITIQUE of Worthless Worshippers in Malachi 1

1. These were Jews under Persian control in 450 BC, rebuked by Prophet Malachi
Returned from Babylonian Captivity – near END of Old Covenant

NOT message Immediately, Directly Applicable to ICF, Almaty
NO ONE BROUGHT THEIR HALF DEAD HOUND DOGS FOR SACRIFICE

2. Old Covenant > Levitical Laws of Animal Sacrifice > Worship in Temple
3. Image of God > Fallen Sinners > Redeemed to be Saints by Faith thru Grace
4. Called to Worship > Body Living Sacrifice – What do we offer? How do we it?

What does ANCIENT MESSAGE say about MODERN DISCIPLESHIP?

General Principle: LOVE HAS REQUIRED BEHAVIOR
Romantic Love > Man GIVES FLOWERS to that Special Woman

HE thinks “She likes flowers, I have no money, lucky I found flowers in garbage”
HER translation “This man DOES NOT LOVE ME!”

ISRAEL’s Love for GOD had REQUIRED BEHAVIOR > COVENANT
BY GRACE / God’s Initiative: “We love because he first loved us.” 1 John 4.19

LIFE CHANGING LOVE Jesus: "If you love me, you will obey what I command"
Covenant has Stipulations and Duties John 14.15

OLD Covenant Love expressed thru SACRIFICES > Forgiveness & Fellowship

1. Loveless Worship
2. Loving Worship

1. Loveless Worship

a. Crazy Malachi appeals to their OWN DESIRE to BE Respected & Honored

v. 6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master" OF COURSE / Kaneshna

WELL THEN, GOD’S QUERIES... If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty.

v. 8 “When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?” says the LORD Almighty.” >>> EMPHASIS ON ALMIGHTY > WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

Jesus: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God." Luke 12.16-21

Psalmist: “The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." Psalm 14.1 > CRAZY!!

b. Compartmentalized – Divided Life into Separate Spheres > God in One Box

God may be ALMIGHTY of the Religious Compartment > But I am Lord of Lords

Common Thinking and Practice in the West Today > Realistic
Often God’s Box BECOMES SMALLEST and Continues to SHRINK

“Don’t take RELIGION TOO SERIOUSLY – be Called a FANATIC, Extremist”

v. 6 It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. ENDORSED SYSTEM
HAPPY THAT THEY GOT THEIR SHARE > Good Respectable Job

Large CHICAGO HOTEL > American Pastor’s Conference > Many Attended
After Event > Hotel Manager called Conf. Organizer > “please come next year”
CO – asked why? Expecting to hear how friendly, generous, and kind Pastors were
WE HAVE NEVER MADE MORE MONEY ON IN ROOM PORNOG. MOVIES

c. Calculating GOD Wants DEAD ANIMAL > I brought dead animal > Road Kill

Law of Moses: “The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect”
Exodus 12.5

v. 8 “When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong?”

v. 14 "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord.

According to GOD'S AUDIT > Such Worship is CHEATING, Grand Larceny

You NEVER SAVE when you try and ECONOMIZE on God
Ananais and Saphira learned that lesson Abruptly

GOD does NOT NEED our SACRIFICES! "Hear Israel...I am God, your God...I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills...If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High...I will deliver you, and you will honor me" Psalm 50.7-14

COUPLE LIVING TOGETHER > told them "You Should Get Married"
"Marriage, that is Nothing! It is ONLY A PIECE OF PAPER!
Let's go to BANK > Withdraw All MONEY > Give it to Me!
That Money is NOTHING > It is ONLY PIECE OF PAPER

ANIMAL SACRIFICE > Could Never Save > Act of Faith in God their Savior
Perfection of ANIMAL > shows HONOR they had for their Covenant God

SACRIFICE > Signifies the Sincerity of their Repentance over Sin

Slaughter of the Animal performed by the Sinful Worshipper
There, but for the Grace of God, Go I!

d. Cold > They had LOST THAT LOVING FEELING > Drudgery not Delight

v. 12 "But you profane it by saying of the Lord's table, 'It is defiled,' and of its food, 'It is contemptible.' And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously," says the LORD Almighty.

Do I have to pray? Are we going to Church...again? It's SOOO Booring!

Do I have to teach Sunday school at ICF? Ushering?! That means coming EARLY
Lead a Bible Study? Visit an Orphanage? Hospital? Prison? You're Joking!!

Maybe Malachi has VISITED some of our HOMES – and HEARTS

TRAGEDY OF OLD COVENANT > Hearts of Stone, Loveless, Cold

GLORY of NEW Covenant > God: "I will remove from you your heart of stone & give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees...you will be my people, and I will be your God" Ezekiel 36.26-29

e. Cursed v. 14 "Cursed is the cheat" > thought they were ECONOMIZING

Imagined GOD WILL NEVER KNOW > ECONOMIZED their Soul > CURSED

v. 9 "Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"--says the LORD Almighty. "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD, "and I will accept no offering from your hands.

70 A.D. God used ROMAN ARMIES of Titus to Shut Temple Doors FOREVER

ONLY PATHWAY to Salvation in the OLD COVENANT > Symbol...but REAL

Galatians 3.10-14 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not...do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, "The righteous will live by faith."...Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."

NEW Cov Question: "how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?"

2. Loving Worship

a. Holistic > IMPOSSIBLE to Compartmentalize God

v. 14 For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations.

NO WHERE TO HIDE: "If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you." Psalm 139.11,12

NEW CHRISTIAN > Verse Hit Me like BOLT OF LIGHTNING

“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4.13

LIVE like GOD SEES Everything and KNOWS EVERYTHING > HE DOES!!

NON AMERICANS much BETTER at THIS > USA PRIVATIZED RELIGION

EAST AFRICAN REVIVAL > May you live in a house with no roof / no walls

God's Tidal Wave will Deluge our Compartments – “for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” Isaiah 11.9

b. Hurts > Loving Worship is Costly Grace not Cheap Grace

v. 14 “acceptable male in his flock” > Acceptable TO GOD & THE MARKET

Book of Chronicles > written time of Malachi > Focus: Glorious Temple of God
HISTORY of Israel > to Returnees to Homeland > Super-sized & Sanitized
Dirty Secrets of Israel's Heroes > EDITED OUT > David: NO Bathsheeba, Uriah
One Grave Sin of David Recorded > 1 Chronicles 21 > CENSUS > Forbidden
CONFIDENCE IN Mighty God not in Massive Armies

King David's Punishment > God gave him THREE CHOICES

1. 3 years of famine
 2. 3 months of enemy conquest
 3. 3 days of sword of LORD
- David > DOOR NUMBER THREE > Better to be in God's Hand than Enemies

“God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But as the angel was doing so, the LORD saw it and was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel...
"Enough! Withdraw your hand." The angel of the LORD was then standing at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. David looked up and saw the angel of the LORD standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand extended over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell facedown... Then the angel of the LORD ordered Gad to tell David to go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah... David approached, and... said to him, "Let me have the site of your threshing floor so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped. Sell it to me at the full price." Araunah said to David, "Take it! Let my lord the king do whatever pleases him... I will give all this." But King David replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing." 1 Chronicles 21.15-24

God DID NOT ALLOW David to Build Temple > his son SOLOMON Did
 God Enabled David to Give the Materials for the Building

“David ordered all the leaders of Israel to help Solomon...”I have taken great pains to provide for the temple of the LORD a hundred thousand talents of gold, a million talents of silver, quantities of bronze and iron too great to be weighed, and wood and stone. And you may add to them... ”Is not the LORD your God with you? And has he not granted you rest on every side?... Now devote your heart and soul to seeking the LORD your God. Begin to build the sanctuary of the LORD God... the temple that will be built for the Name of the LORD.” 1 Chron 22.14-19

SIGNIFICANCE for Chronicler? Threshing Floor > Site of Solomon’s Temple

SAME SITE > 1000 yrs Earlier > Abraham offered Isaac ALMOST
 SAME SITE > 1000 yrs Later > True Son of Abraham > Jesus > Offered Himself

David, and David’s SON & LORD, Jesus Christ > show Loving Worship HURTS

c. Happy > Christian masochism > Happy as we are Hurting

David speaks of Giving Millions of Talents of Gold and Silver, then says:
 “devote your heart and soul to seeking the LORD your God”

Jesus: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” Matthew 6.21

Loving Worshipper GIVES HIS BEST > Costliest Offering > JOYFULLY
 That person would NOT say v. 12 - `What a burden!’

Pastored Church in Hawaii > Seek Out “Members” who Never Came to Church
 Hawaiian Man “I have been the Kahu (pastor) for several months, never seen you”
 YOU NEVER WILL SEE ME! – Why not?

Church Luau in 1950’s > Man DONATED SIX PIGS > to be Cooked in IMU
 Hours later – pulled Pigs out of Imu – Ground Oven – ONLY 3 PIGS!!
 “Someone at that church stole 3 of my pigs...and I ain’t never going back there!”

“Are you ready to stand before God and say,
 ‘I have refused to worship you for 40 years because of 3 LOST PIGS?’”

LOVING Worshipper> Does not KEEP SCORE > Count Pigs > Gives Pain to God

d. Honoring to God

v. 6 "A son honors his father...If I am a father, where is the honor due me?...
says the LORD Almighty

v. 11 "My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.

This Verse reminds me > FLAG of Kazakhstan > SUN on a Blue Field
PRAYER > Everywhere FLAG Flies > this Nation would Bring God Praise

God's NAME will be Great > Matchless Name > God and Savior Jesus Christ

MALACHI not concerned about MINUTIA of Sacrifices > HONOR OF GOD
GOD WILL BE HONORED IN EVERY NATION > among Every People

Roger Greenway "One half of the world is always in the light, while the other half is always in darkness. When one part of the world is going to bed, another part is just getting out of bed. While one part is hard at work, the other part is fast asleep. While some of God's servants are carrying forward their mission, others are resting in preparation for the new day that will soon dawn. Somewhere, twenty-four hours a day, God's message is being spoken; his Word applied; people are being saved. The sun never sets on the work of God and the witness of his people."

The LORD declares: "Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained."
1 Samuel 2.30