

Malachi Devotionals & Sermon Illustrations

Malachi

Hodgkin, A. M.

Christ in All the Scriptures

Malachi “the Messenger of the Lord” —wished to be known by this name only. Like the Forerunner, of whom he prophesies, he was but a voice. Speaking of Levi, as an example of the true priesthood, he says “He is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts” (Malachi 2:7). He speaks of John the Baptist as God’s “messenger,” and of our Lord Himself as “the Messenger of the Covenant” (Malachi 3:1).

And what is the “burden” of the Lord’s message by Malachi? “I have loved you, saith the Lord.” What a message to a people who were disappointing God’s love!

Malachi bears the same relation to Nehemiah that Haggai and Zechariah bear to Zerubbabel. He lived either at the time of Nehemiah or directly after, for he rebukes the very same sins among the people that Nehemiah dealt with on his second visit to Jerusalem:—(1) The corruption of the priesthood (Nehemiah 13:29; Malachi 2:8). (2) The alliance with idolatrous wives (Nehemiah 13:23–27; Malachi 2:10–16). (3) The neglect of the tithe (Nehemiah 13:10–12; Malachi 3:10). Eliashib the priest was allied unto Tobiah the Ammonite, and had allowed him the use of a great chamber in the courts of the House of God. Eliashib’s grandson also had married a daughter of Sanballat, the Horonite (Nehemiah 13:1–9).

“Wherein?” Malachi’s message is to the priests who ought to have been the leaders in righteousness, and also to the people who followed their lead in neglecting and dishonoring God. His book is marked by its straightforward, plain words of rebuke, by which he brings home their sins to a self-satisfied people, who had a form of godliness, but were denying the power thereof. Every rebuke of the prophet was disputed by the people with the question “Wherein?” or “What?”

(1) Malachi 1:2: “Wherein hast Thou loved us?”

(2) Malachi 1:6: “Wherein have we despised Thy name?”

(3) Malachi 1:7: “Wherein have we polluted Thee?”

(4) Malachi 2:17: “Wherein have we wearied Him?”

(5) Malachi 3:7: “Wherein shall we return?”

(6) Malachi 3:8: “Wherein have we robbed Thee?”

(7) Malachi 3:13: “What have we spoken so much against Thee?”

(8) Malachi 3:14: “What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance?”

(9) Malachi 2:14: “For what?” or “Wherefore?” (referring to what Malachi had said in Malachi 2:13).

Malachi describes the coming of Christ to His Temple. He came as a little babe to the expectant gaze of Simeon and Anna. He came to overturn the tables of the money-changers. He comes to the temple of our hearts. His coming is as purifying fire. With the patience of the Refiner of silver He sits till He sees His own image reflected in the molten metal. And when He takes up His abode in our hearts He is a “swift Witness there against sin.” Our Lord calls Himself “the faithful and true Witness.”

“The Whole Tithe.” This book contains the secret of spiritual blessing. “Bring ye the whole tithe into My store house.” The tithe was the outward recognition that everything belonged to God. We are to bring Him our whole selves, body, soul and spirit, all that we have and all that we are, all that we know about in our lives and all that we do not know about yet. If we thus honestly keep nothing back from Him we may be certain that He will accept us and will open the windows of heaven, and pour us out such a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it, but it shall flow out to all around. “All nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

Amidst all the hypocrisy and formalism there was a little remnant who feared the Lord. His ear was bent down to hear them as they spoke together of Him. He promised that they should be His own special treasure in the coming Day of the Lord. That Day should be as an oven and consume the wicked as stubble, but it should arise upon this faithful remnant as “The Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings.”

The Old Testament closes with the word “curse.” But it is expressive of the great desire of God’s love to avert it, for He says “Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

The New Testament closes with blessing. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

A silence of 400 years lay between the voice of Malachi and the voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” “But there is a remarkable link between the two Testaments: the last figures on the inspired page of Malachi, and the first on the inspired page of Matthew, are the Angel of the Covenant and His Forerunner” (Dr. Pierson).

Malachi 1 - In his sermon "[God Is a Very Important Person](#)," John Piper says: "I've been to church-growth seminars where God is not once mentioned. I've been to lectures and talks on pastoral issues where He is not so much as alluded to. I have read strategies for every kind of recovery under the sun where God is not there. I have talked to students in seminaries who tell me of manifold courses where God is peripheral at best. I have recently read mission statements of major evangelical organizations where God is not even mentioned. I admit freely that I'm on a crusade, and I have one message: God is an important person, and He does not like being taken for granted."

Malachi 1:1-10; 4:5-6

An Amazing Love

“I have loved you,” says the Lord. Malachi 1:2

The final major historic acts of the Old Testament are described in Ezra and Nehemiah as God allowed the people of Israel to return from exile and resettle in Jerusalem. The City of David was repopulated with Hebrew families, a new temple was built, and the wall was repaired.

And that brings us to Malachi. This prophet, who was most likely a contemporary of Nehemiah, brings the written portion of the Old Testament to a close. Notice the first thing he said to the people of Israel: “ ‘I have loved you,’ says the Lord.” And look at their response: “How have you loved us?” (Mal 1:2).

Those who put their trust in Jesus will have eternal life.

Amazing, isn't it? Their history had proven God's faithfulness, yet after hundreds of years in which God continually provided for His chosen people in both miraculous and mundane ways, they wondered how He had shown His love. As the book continues, Malachi reminds the people of their unfaithfulness (Mal 1:6-8). They had a long historical pattern of God's provision for them, followed by their disobedience, followed by God's discipline.

It was time, soon, for a new way. The prophet hints at it in Malachi 4:5-6. The Messiah would be coming. There was hope ahead for a Savior who would show us His love and pay the penalty once and for all for our sin.

That Messiah indeed has come! Malachi's hope is now a reality in Jesus.

Thank You, Father, for the story You told in Your Word of the people of Israel. It reminds us to be grateful for what You have done for us. Thank You for loving us so much You sent us Jesus.

Those who put their trust in Jesus will have eternal life.

By Dave Branon

Malachi 1:2

December 2, 2004

Returning God's Love

Our Daily Bread

READ: Malachi 3:16-18

"I have loved you," says the Lord. —Malachi 1:2

The book of Malachi begins with this wholehearted word from the Lord to His halfhearted worshipers: "I have loved you" (1:2). Though Israel had long been the object of God's love, they no longer returned His love.

God listed the ways His people had offended His love through their disobedience. Israel's response was to question God. When He implored them, "Return to Me, and I will return to you," they questioned Him in their blindness, "In what way shall we return?" (3:7). With divine "tough love," the Lord exposed their many blind spots. He did this so that they might repent and accept His love, and return it with wholehearted obedience.

We too are often halfhearted in our faith, appearing to love and serve God but really loving and serving ourselves. Today, as in Malachi's time, God looks for people who reverence Him by maintaining two spiritual practices: speaking to each other about Him, and meditating on His wonderful attributes (v.16). The first is fellowship with God's people; the second is fellowship with God Himself. Not only are we to receive and share God's love, we are also to return it through glad obedience.

Such worshipers are God's "jewels" (v.17). Are you one of them?—Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

"We love You, Lord Jesus," we often will say,

But are we as ready His will to obey?

Let's heed what God's Spirit would have us to do—

That's how we show Him a love that is true. —D. De Haan

To love God is to obey God.

Malachi 1:2 - "I love you" computer virus -

Spread over world overnight. Overwhelmed computers in Sweden and England. Some got hundreds of the messages. Ted Canova in Minneapolis: "I stepped away from my desk for 30 minutes, and when I came back, there were 177 people who were in love with me. This is in addition to the 200 I had when I signed on today." (Pastor David Holwick asks) How many did I receive? ZIP! [Americanese for "not a single one"] Nobody cares enough to infect me. Sometimes God feels the same way... Malachi 1:2

Malachi 1:2

Spurgeon's Sermon Notes

I have loved you, saith the Lord, Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? — Malachi 1:2

ISRAEL under Malachi was in a captious, querulous condition; his brief prophecy is full of unbelieving questions, in which man seems bent upon having the last word with God.

The text might be treated as bearing upon our own favored nation, for God has been very gracious to Britain, and Britain is sadly ungrateful.

We prefer to consider Israel as the type of the election of grace.

It occurs even to the chosen, when grace runs low, to fall into an ill humor, and to appear beaten down, depressed, and full of sullen unbelief. This is a very wretched state of affairs.

With this state of heart we deal.

I. GOD'S LOVE DECLARED. "I have loved you, saith the Lord."

To every believer the special love of God is declared in the Scriptures, and to that love the text refers. This is clear if we observe the words, which follow:— "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." This is the precise language used by Paul when speaking of the election of grace (Rom. 9:13).

To every believer this love has been shown in—

1. Election in Christ Jesus from of old.
2. Covenant engagements made by Christ on his behalf.
3. Accomplished Redemption by the Lord Jesus.
4. Regeneration and the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus.

5. Pardon of sin, justification by faith, adoption, sanctification, etc.

6. Preservation to this hour, and promise for all future time.

This is a scanty list of the ways by which the Lord has said to each regenerate soul, "I have loved you."

Do we not remember times of love when this was personally sealed upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit?

Even now the Lord speaks thus to his redeemed by his Word, and by his Spirit. Do they not hear it? Are they not touched with so gracious and condescending an avowal of love?

II. GOD'S LOVE QUESTIONED. "Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?"

This is a shocking and disgraceful thing; but, alas, it indicates a condition of heart which has been seen far too frequently.

Such a question has been asked—

1. Under great afflictions in which there seemed no relief. Petulantly the sorrowing one has questioned divine love.
2. In sight of the prosperous wicked in their day of pride many a poor despised believer has rashly doubted the special love of God.
3. In times of grievous doubt as to one's personal salvation, and under heavy temptations of Satan, the same doubt has arisen.
4. Alas, this has also happened when, immersed in worldliness, the man for the time has lost all sight and sense of spiritual things, and has treated distinguishing love as though it were a fiction!

This is a grievous wounding of the Lord of love.

It pours despite upon amazing mercy.

It exposes the questioner to fearful peril.

III. GOD'S LOVE CONSIDERED.

When we solemnly turn, and meditate upon these things, we see—

1. Love lamenting. Is God to be thus treated? Shall he mournfully cry, "I have loved you. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?"
2. Love entreating. Does not each accent say, "Return to me"?
3. Love abounding. Our question shames us. God loves us in ten thousand ways; loves us so as to be patient even when we wickedly question his love.
4. Love conquering. We bow at Jehovah's feet with shame, and yield our heart's best love in return for his love.

Come, ye cast down ones, leave your sullen questionings!

Run into his arms, and receive the quietus of all your fears.

Love-Notes

(Spurgeon's Notes)

A child has willfully disobeyed. For this offense he has been chastised, and confined to his own room. He is very sullen and obstinate, and his father reasons with him, and tells him with tears that he is greatly grieved with him, and feels wounded by the ingratitude which he receives after all his love. The boy angrily replies that he does not believe in his father's love: if he loved him, why did he whip him, and send him to bed? This would be a very rebellious speech; but it would be pitched in the same key as our text. It would also set forth the spirit which is often seen in Christians when they measure the Lord's love by their temporal circumstances, and ask in rebellion whether their poverty, their pains, and their persecutions are fit fruits of divine favor. The Lord knows how foolish we are apt to be when our soul is vexed with bitter anguish, and therefore he does not destroy us for our presumption, but he patiently reasons with us that he may bring us to a better mind.

If it would be marvelous to see one river leap up from the earth full-grown, what would it be to gaze upon a vast spring from which all the rivers of the earth should at once come bubbling up, a thousand of them born at a birth? What a vision would it be! Who can conceive it? And yet the love of God is that fountain, from which all the rivers of mercy, which have ever gladdened our race — all the rivers of grace in time, and of glory hereafter — take their rise. My soul, stand thou at that sacred fountainhead, and adore and

magnify for ever and ever God, even our Father, who hath loved us. — C. H. S.

What is more tender than a mother's love

To the sweet infant fondling in her arms?

What arguments need her compassion move

To hear its cries, and help it in its harms?

Now, if the tenderest mother were possessed

Of all the love within her single breast

Of all the mothers since the world began,

'Tis nothing to the love of God to man.— John Byrom

A very tender parent had a son, who, from his earliest years, proved headstrong and dissolute. Conscious of the extent of his demerits, he dreaded and hated his parent. Meanwhile, every means was used to disarm him of these suspicions, so unworthy of the tenderness and love which yearned in his father's bosom, and of all the kindness and forbearance which were lavished upon him. Eventually the means appeared to be successful, and confidence, in a great degree, took the place of his ungenerous suspicions. Entertained in the family as one who had never trespassed, he now left his home to embark in mercantile affairs, and was assured that if in any extremity he would apply to his parent, he should find his application kindly received. In the course of years it fell out that he was reduced to extremity; but, instead of communicating his case to his parent, his base suspicion and disbelief of his tenderness and care again conquered him, and he neglected to apply to him. Who can tell how deeply that father's heart was rent at such depravity of feeling? Yet this is the case of the believer, who, pardoned and accepted, yet refuses to trust his heavenly Parent, throws away his filial confidence, and with his old suspicions stands aloof in sullen distrust. Oh, how is God dishonored by this sinful unbelief! — Salter

Dr. Chalmers used to say that "As soon as a man comes to understand that 'God is love,' he is infallibly converted."

Malachi 1:1-13

Today in the Word

If you love me, you will obey what I command. - John 14:15

When a little boy's mother refused to buy him the toy he had seen as they passed the toy store in the mall, he began to wail. "You don't love me!" he accused. "Of course I do," his mother replied. The child was not convinced. "If you loved me, you would buy me what I want!"

This seems to have been the attitude of God's people in the time of the prophet Malachi. His ministry took place some time after the Babylonian exile, and the mention of sacrifices being offered indicates that the work of rebuilding the temple was also complete. By this time the initial thrill of returning to the land after decades of exile had worn thin. During the time of Nehemiah, Eliashib the High Priest had allowed Judah's enemy Tobiah to store his personal belongings in the temple (Neh. 13:7). The people intermarried with their pagan neighbors and grew weary of worship (Neh. 13:23-28; Mal. 1:6-8).

The people of Judah had taken the blessings they had received for granted to such an extent that they questioned whether God had ever loved them. When the Lord declared His love through the prophet, the people responded with a kind of adolescent petulance, asking, "How have you loved us?" (v. 2). God proved His love in both the nature and the content of His response to this ungracious challenge. With the kind of patience a loving parent might show a stubborn and unreasonable child, the Lord gently outlined the many ways He had proved His love to Israel in the past. In particular, He reminded them that the descendants of Jacob had been blessed in a way that the descendants of Esau had not (vv. 2-3).

A human parent might have lost patience with a child who behaved as ungratefully as God's people did. Instead of berating Judah, the Lord gently reasons with them, promising to change their attitude while showing them the disgracefulness of their current behavior. His message is clear. The love God has shown to His people merits their love, which would be demonstrated by their obedience, in return.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - The example of Judah should be sobering to all who have enjoyed God's blessings. What seemed so remarkable yesterday may today appear ho-hum. An attitude of thanksgiving can all too quickly change to "What have you done for me lately?" The remedy according to Malachi is the same one revealed in the old gospel song that says, "Count your blessings,

name them one by one.” Begin to practice this today by making a list of as many blessings as you can think of and then “name them one by one” as you give thanks to God. ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Malachi 1:3 “I hated Esau.”

Why does God hate any man? I defy anyone to give an answer but this: because that man deserves it. No reply but that can ever be true.— ([2200 Quotations from the Writings of Charles H. Spurgeon](#))

Malachi 1:2-3

December 2, 2004

Our Daily Bread

It's So Unfair!

READ: Malachi 1:1-5

"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" says the Lord. "Yet Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated." --Malachi 1:2-3

We seem to use some things more than others—our mouths more than our ears, our stomachs more than our minds. We also seem to use the phrase "It's so unfair!" so much more often than "I'm so undeserving."

In Malachi 1:1-5, we read about God's love for Jacob and His hatred for Esau. On the surface it seems so unfair, especially when we think about the kind of person Jacob was. He deceived his father into giving him the blessing that should have gone to his older brother Esau (Genesis 27). It's easy to think of him as a "low-down schemer."

Was God unfair to love Jacob and hate Esau? Why was Esau undeserving of God's love? These are valid questions that are difficult to answer or explain. But have we considered a more basic question: Has anyone ever been deserving of God's love? God is perfect, and even in our best moments we still struggle with sin. Dare we think we are anything but undeserving?

We do not know why God chose to love Jacob. But we do know that none of us deserves God's love. Why does He love us so much that He sent His own Son to die for our sins? We can't explain it. All we can do is respond in gratitude to God's amazing grace and love. —AL —Albert Lee ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Died He for me, who caused His pain?

For me, who Him to death pursued?

Amazing love! How can it be

That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? —Wesley

God's grace gives us what we don't deserve.

Malachi 1 - FELLOWSHIP AT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD BAR - Research that shows the more friendships a person has in a congregation, the less likely they are to become inactive or leave. I once read about a survey of 400 church drop-outs who were asked why they left their churches. Over 75% of the respondents said, "I didn't feel anyone cared whether I was there or not." These are shocking results, especially as church should be one of the most caring places in the world! The neighbourhood bar is possibly the best counterfeit there is to the fellowship Christ wants to give His church. It's an imitation, dispensing alcohol instead of grace, escape rather than reality, but it is a Permissive, Accepting, and Inclusive fellowship. It is Unshockable. It is democratic. You can tell people secrets and they usually don't tell others or even want to. The bar flourishes not because most people are alcoholics, but because God has put into the human heart the desire to know & be known, to love & be loved & so many seek a counterfeit at the price of a few beers.

Malachi 1:7

Our Daily Bread

October 14, 1999

The Polluters

READ: Malachi 1:1-14

You offer defiled food on My altar. --Malachi 1:7

For centuries man has polluted the earth. Now he's cluttering up space. Experts say that enough high-flying debris has accumulated to raise the possibility of space collisions. In addition to all the worthwhile satellites circling our globe, it is estimated that over a million small pieces and many large chunks of metal are orbiting the earth.

Man contaminates more than his physical environment. The Bible says that he's also prone to defile his worship of God. When we fail to give God proper reverence, we bring dishonor to His name and reputation.

That's what Israel did. Malachi 1 pictures the people as polluting their worship by giving the Lord their "leftovers." If the halfhearted respect they showed to God had been given to their human leaders, it would have been rejected (vv.7-8). They littered their worship of God by offering forbidden sacrifices and by complaining that what God required was wearisome and contemptible (vv.12-13).

We know that disobedience and irreverence can be forgiven through Christ's ongoing mercy. But that doesn't change the damage it does in the meantime. God deserves and demands allegiance that is unpolluted. Let's be careful to keep useless clutter out of our worship. —Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

May our best be offered to You,

Gracious God, Almighty King;

As we come to You in worship,

Let our lives Your praises sing. --Sper

True worship acknowledges God's true worth.

Malachi 1:2-3 Genesis 27:36; How Could God Love Jacob?

A minister one day sat in the vestry of his church to meet anyone who might have spiritual difficulties. Only one came. "What is your difficulty?" asked the minister. The man answered, "My difficulty is the ninth chapter of Romans, where it says, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,'" "Yes," said the minister, "there is great difficulty in that verse; but which part of the verse is difficult for you?" The latter part, of course," said the man. "I cannot understand why God should hate Esau." The minister replied, "That verse has often been difficult, but my difficulty has always been with the first part of the verse. I never could understand how God could love that wily, deceitful, supplanting scoundrel Jacob." - 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 1:6-14 Shopping Strategy

"I have no pleasure in you." This was the Lord's stinging rebuke to His people through the prophet Malachi (1:10). God was angry with their careless, shoddy methods of worship. The animals they brought for sacrifice were not acceptable to Him because they were not the best of the herds and flocks. Instead, they offered stolen, lame, and sick animals (v.13).

While we may not be showing this degree of contempt toward God, sometimes we are too casual in our worship. A friend of mine made this observation about herself: "When I shop for simple things like soap or butter, I hardly think about it. But when I'm looking for a blouse to match a skirt, I shop very carefully. I go from store to store until I find exactly what I'm looking for." Then she added thoughtfully, "I should pay that same attention when I am worshipping God. But sometimes I approach Him as casually as if I were shopping for a box of Kleenex."

During worship services in our churches, we may fail to give God our full attention. We rush in late. Our thoughts wander. We need to discipline our minds so that we are not focusing on yesterday's cares or tomorrow's responsibilities. When we worship the Lord with all our heart, He will be pleased with us. — by David C. Egner

Our very best we offer to You,

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At the heart of worship is worship from the heart.

Malachi 1:7 The Polluters

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Malachi 1:1-8 Meaning and Purpose

When our daughter was 3 years old, my wife and I introduced her to the "fine art" of dishwashing. It amuses me that many preschoolers want to wash dishes but parents refuse to let them. Then, when they become teenagers and no longer desire to clean plates, parents insist that they do.

The real issue, of course, is not doing dishes. Rather, it has to do with loving, honoring, and obeying God. As children love, honor, and obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3), they are showing respect for God. And when they do, they find meaning and purpose in their lives.

We are living in a world in which teen suicide is a disturbing reality. Why such despair? Too many young people have not found a reason for living. They don't know the joy of a relationship with God.

In Malachi 1:6, God had to remind His people that He was their Father, because their behavior reflected that they had forgotten their relationship to Him. Not only had they forgotten that God was their Father but also that He was their Master, and they had failed to serve Him.

We can all live meaningful and purposeful lives. How? By knowing God as our heavenly Father, and obeying Him as our Master and Lord. —by Albert Lee

Grant us, Father, hearts that love You,

Hearts that serve You day by day;

Help us find in You our purpose

For the things we do and say. —Fitzhugh

Knowing God gives meaning to life; obeying God gives purpose to life.

Malachi 1:8

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

Present it now unto thy governor. (r.v.)

Malachi's special work was in stirring up the priesthood to their duty, to the proper maintenance of the Temple services. They were very careless of these, and treated their holy duties with great contempt. The special method adopted seems to have been in the presentation of the blind, the lame, and sick on the altar; while the healthy and whole were reserved for private use. "The table of the Lord was polluted, and his meat contemptible." Such unconcealed irreverence and greed could not pass unrebuked. They are asked to compare their service to God with their service to man; their sacrifices in the Temple with their gifts before their governors and rulers. Would these be pleased, and accept the gift, if they were treated in the same way as God was?

Professing Christians might sometimes be addressed in the same terms. When they slip a copper coin into the collecting-bag, which they would not think of offering to the butler in a friend's house; when they give more to the revenue officer than to the Church or poor; when they give to the Lord's work whatever they can spare without loss, and, indeed, are glad to be rid of; whenever they spend more time and strength on public duties than on the calls of Christianity—at such times we might fairly bid them present it to their governor.

In Malachi 1:10 (r.v.) God is heard asking for someone to close the doors of the Temple. He would rather this than be mocked by such heartless rites. It was as though He would rather that no prayers were offered, no services maintained, no holy hymn sung—than that there should be such perfunctory and heartless worship. Let us be very careful against this spirit in our daily devotions!

Malachi 1:13 "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it!"

When we listen to the reading of the Word of God or the preaching of his truth, shall that be a weariness? Yes, when we have no part or lot in it, when it is like reading a will in which we have no legacy. But if the gospel be preached as our gospel, the gospel of our salvation, and we have a share in it, what can so inspire our soul with joy?

If God had been weary of us we need not have wondered. But we ought to blush and be silent for shame, because we have wearied of him. Are we tired of God? If not, how is it that we do not walk with him from day to day? Really spiritual worship is not much cared for in these days, even by professing Christians. Many will go to a place of worship if they can be entertained with fine music or grand oratory, but if communion with God is the only attraction, they are not drawn thereby. ([2200 Quotations from the Writings of Charles H. Spurgeon](#))

Malachi 2:6

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and did turn many away from iniquity. Malachi 2:6

These inspiring words, especially the last clause, might well hang in the secret chamber of every servant of God. They were specially prized by the sainted R. M. McCheyne, whose life was a beautiful exemplar of their meaning. You will notice that covenant dates back to the righteous zeal of Phinehas for the honor of God (Numbers 25). How well God remembers such things, and writes them in ineffaceable characters on the tablets of his memory! But what a contrast between that noble ancestry and the degenerate successors of Malachi's days!

Do you want to turn many away from iniquity? You must walk with God, hourly, constantly, in blessed and intimate fellowship, learning from Him who you are to approach, what line you are to follow in dealing with them, and the message you are to deliver. You must expect to come into collision with them: they are coming in one direction, whilst God and you are will be going in just the reverse. But go on walking with God; fear his fear; know the terror of losing his companionship, even for a moment; be perfectly transparent in speech and life; let your lips be weighted with his messages only. The result will more than compensate. Yours will be the abundant life, and yours the peace which is unspeakable; yours will be the uprightness of soul which carries the Divine radiance on its face, and yours the joy in arresting the way of transgressors and sinners.

Plead this promise: "Lord, let me be used to turn many away from iniquity," and notice that this most blessed result will accrue much less from what you say than from what you are. It was Levi's walk and converse with God; more even than his words, that produced this wholesale reformation.

Malachi 1:10 Trouble At The Top

Read: Malachi 1:6-14 |

"I have no pleasure in you," says the Lord of hosts. —Malachi 1:10

Leadership has its privileges, but more important—it comes with huge responsibilities.

Through the years, I've observed the lives of many Christian leaders. I've noticed that they don't always demonstrate godly traits. Sometimes there can be trouble at the top.

When God removes His hand of blessing because a leader engages in ungodly activity, everyone suffers. That's why it's so important for every Christian in a leadership position to strive daily to keep his heart attuned to God and His Word.

In Israel in 500 BC, there arose some leadership issues that God dealt with directly. Apparently the priests who were supposed to be serving God weren't. They had stopped honoring the Lord, and they were offering defiled sacrifices (Malachi 1:7-8). Those actions caused God to remove His blessing from the priests. He could not accept their sacrifices (v.10). Imagine the difficulties this brought on the people.

Are you a leader? At home? At work? At church? Stay close to God. Give Him the glory and honor due His name. Obey His Word. Worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Don't risk losing the Lord's blessing by causing trouble at the top.

They truly lead who lead by love
And humbly serve the Lord;
Their lives will bear the Spirit's fruit
And magnify His Word. —D. De Haan

Follow the leader who follows Christ.

By Dave Branon

Malachi 2:7

Today in the Word

Read: James 3:1-2; Malachi 2:1-10

For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction—because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty. - Malachi 2:7

TODAY IN THE WORD - Perhaps you've seen the humorous poem describing a common perception of pastors. After spending the week visiting with the sick, counseling the troubled, comforting the bereaved, overseeing meetings, and preparing sermons, the pastor is greeted on Sunday by a churchgoer who exclaims, "What a job you have—you only work one day a week!"

Almost every pastor—and hopefully every churchgoer!—recognizes that the role of the pastor takes far more than just a couple of hours on Sunday. In our passage today, James warns that those who are teachers in the church, which would include pastors as well as others in authority, should take their responsibility and their lives before God seriously.

This is not a new command in Scripture. We turn to our passage in Malachi to see God's warning to the priests of Israel after the nation had returned from the Exile. Here God threatens to judge them for their lack of listening to him or honoring His name. And how is this demonstrated? Through the way they minister and live.

First of all, God rebukes the priests for their false teaching (Mal. 2:8). Such teaching not only puts them in danger, but also causes the people listening to them to stumble. Those who teach God's people are responsible to proclaim truth, and the stakes for the people of God are tremendous. No wonder that James says that those who teach will be judged more strictly (v. 1).

Second, note in Malachi how these priests are living. Their false teaching is manifested in a lifestyle that shows favoritism (Mal. 2:9). God clearly says that this is not His way of dealing with people, and yet the priests have persisted to act in a way that shows partiality. God is concerned with our correct doctrine, but He is equally concerned with our correct conduct.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - If you have a position of authority in your church, whether you teach the preschool Sunday school class or lead an adult Bible study, ask the Holy Spirit to keep your teaching truthful and your life pleasing to God. ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Malachi 2:10-16 A Sad Split

The drama played out in a nest of bald eagles monitored by a webcam. A beloved eagle family, viewed by many via the Internet, was breaking up. After raising several offspring in previous seasons, the mother again laid new eggs in the spring. But then a young female invaded their happy home. When Dad started cavorting with her, Mom disappeared and the life in the abandoned eggs died.

In an Internet chat room, questions and accusations flew wildly. Everyone who loved the pair was distraught. Biologists warned the amateur eagle enthusiasts not to attribute human values to birds. But everyone did. We all wanted the original couple to reunite. Everyone seemed to “know” that the family unit is sacred.

As chat room members expressed their sadness, I wondered if they knew that God feels much the same way about human family breakups. I also wondered about myself: Why did I feel more sadness over the eagles than over the fractured human families in my community? Clearly, I need to revise my priorities.

In Malachi 2, we see God’s view of marriage. It symbolizes His covenant with His people (v.11). He takes it very seriously—and so should we.

Thinking It Over

In Malachi 2:11, what is “profaned” and how?

How does Malachi 2:15 echo Genesis 2:24?

Why is this important? (Mal. 2:15-16).

Put Christ first if you want your marriage to last.

Malachi 2:14 - A DIFFERENT TIME - Dear Ann Landers: If anyone has the slightest doubt that we are living in a totally different world today, I challenge them to browse through the stationery store and check out the card section. I did last week and found beautiful cards with the following messages:

- 'Best Wishes to My Dear Mother and Her Husband' ...
- 'Holiday Wishes to My Former Grandparents. I Divorced Your Grandson, Not You'
- 'Congratulations on a Great Divorce!'
- 'Happy Anniversary to My Former In-Laws Who are Still in MyHeart'
- 'Best Wishes to My Former Husband on His Birthday'
- 'Happy Fourth of July to My Live-In Sweetheart'
- [My favorite:] 'Congratulations on Your Marriage. This one is sure to work. The Third Time is Always a Charm.' (Quoted by David Holwick)

James Q. Wilson wrote this in Commentary Magazine:

The family is not one of several alternative life-styles;
it is not an arena in which rights are negotiated;
it is not an old-fashioned barrier to a promiscuous sex life;
it is not a set of cost-benefit calculations.

It is a commitment for which there is no feasible substitute.

No child ought to be brought into a world where that commitment - from both parents - is absent.

There is no way to prepare for the commitment other than to make it.

Living together is not a way of finding out how married life will be, because married life is shaped by the fact that the couple has made a solemn vow before their family and friends that this is for keeps and that any children will be their joint and permanent responsibility.

It changes everything. (Quoted by David Holwick)

Malachi 2:14 DISCIPLESHIP JOURNAL - Building Marriages For Life by Laurin White HELP IN MAKING CHOICES

1. What do you think is a good way to evaluate how willing you are to seek to grow in your relationship with the Lord for the rest of your life?
2. Are you one hundred percent opposed to ever seeking a divorce from your husband or wife? Why or why not?
3. Write here a statement that shows your commitment to think romantically only about your husband or wife - something you could call to mind to help you whenever you face temptations to think romantically about others.

4. What is something "extra" that you could communicate to your husband or wife today—perhaps something on your mind that you have not had a chance to fully communicate before?
5. What things make it hardest for you to always maintain a servant's attitude toward your husband or wife?
6. In the things you do with your husband or wife and in how you relate to him or her, can you think of any motives that are not entirely good? If so, explain these motives here. (Quoted by David Holwick)

Malachi 2:14

The Marriage Covenant

Our Daily Bread

MY daughter Julie has always enjoyed asking hard questions. When she was only five, she came up with a really tough one. As my wife was tucking her into bed, Julie asked, "Mommy, are you and Daddy ever going to get a divorce?"

My wife held Julie's hand and said, "Honey, Mommy and Daddy are never going to get a divorce."

In a minute Julie was asleep. And secure.

How should a parent respond to such a question? By saying that you don't know if Mommy and Daddy will always be together? By saying that this isn't the time to talk about it? By explaining that lots of people get divorces—but it's not something to worry about?

In this day of easy divorces, my wife's answer may seem over-confident. But it's not. It's no different from the vow we exchanged on our wedding day when, before God, we made a covenant to stay together "until death separates us."

Malachi wrote about the marriage covenant. He indicated that God had designed marriage to be an inseparable, spiritual union that is glued together with absolute fidelity and loving companionship (Malachi 2:14-15). And he made it clear that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16).

When God blesses us with a husband or wife, our job is to use our marriage to show the world a picture of God's love and faithfulness to His people. J D Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Malachi 2:14; Humor: Much Ado about Everything

The soloist got laryngitis, and the flower girl came down with pneumonia. The ring bearer had an accident in his blue-velvet pants just before the ceremony, and the mother-of-the-bride left her dress at home by mistake.

Still, we made it to the altar—despite the fact that it was Maryland's coldest day in 20 years. Things got even crazier after the ceremony. The borrowed 1941 Cadillac we were supposed to ride away in got stuck in the ice in the church parking lot, so I stuffed my gown into the back seat of a two-door compact car. The severe cold caused the water main at the reception hall to break, so the toilets only functioned because a continual bucket brigade came through the reception to flush them.

But that's not all. In the apartment just below the reception hall, the resident had gone out of town and left his oven on to keep his boa constrictor from getting cold. So we wrapped up our reception with the building on fire. Of course there was a blizzard on our honeymoon, which trapped us at the resort. But we figured if we survived our wedding, we could survive anything! 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 2:15

Here is the first wedding in the Bible. God created and led only ONE woman (Eve) down the aisle. The same argument is used in Malachi 2:15.

Once married, the man should really and truly love his wife. Make the marriage work. It is a unique relationship. There will always be others more beautiful, smart, etc. But concentrate on making HER beautiful. Every new bride is pretty; make her your lifetime bride.

A young man sought counsel from G. Campbell Morgan for loving his wife "too much." Dr. Morgan advised: "If you are able to love your wife more than Christ loves the church, then come see me." Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations: Signs of the Times.

Malachi 2:15

Today in the Word

Guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. - Malachi 2:15

Author Phil Waugh offers this insightful summary of what is involved in a committed, Christ-centered marriage. "When a couple shares their wedding vows, they are vowing to God, each other, their families, and the community to remain steadfast in unconditional love, reconciliation, and sexual purity, while purposefully growing in their covenant marriage relationship. God's intent is to bring wholeness to families through covenant marriage relationships." ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**The key to a healthy marriage is to keep your eyes wide open before you wed
—and half closed thereafter!"**

Malachi 2:15

Today in the Word

Monday, September 4, 2000

Read: Malachi 2:10-16; Romans 7:1-3

Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. - Malachi 2:15a

TODAY IN THE WORD - Ask almost any couple married for a long time for the secrets of their success, and they are likely to have one thing in common. Those who stay together over the years, when it's fun and when it isn't, never have the word divorce as part of their marital vocabulary. One Christian couple married for forty-three years put it this way: "Stick to the basics: love, perseverance, commitment. Be true to each other in everything you do and say."

That's good advice for people who want to honor and obey God in their marriages. We have seen that God's will for the marriage covenant includes a man and a woman joining together in a one-flesh commitment that takes priority over every other human relationship. It deserves high honor by all God's people.

God reaffirmed through the prophet Malachi that marriage was to be a permanent, lifelong bond. Paul also used the permanence of marriage to illustrate the relationship of believers to the law of Moses.

The apostle argued that just as death breaks a marriage bond, our death to the law's demands frees us to be joined to Christ. The principle for marriage is that as long as both partners are alive, they are bound to each other by their marriage covenant vows.

Divorce may be a reality, but it's certainly not a command, as Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees (Matt. 19:7-8, see September 9). Moses' teaching on divorce (Deut. 24:1-4) begins with the word "If," showing that this was a concession mercifully made to regulate a harmful practice that was already happening.

Malachi wrote about a century after the Jews had returned from the Babylonian exile. Their spiritual commitment had cooled considerably by this time, judging by the stinging rebukes God delivered through Malachi. The people were defrauding God of His tithes (3:7-12) and defrauding their spouses through divorce.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Many divorced people are the first to say they never wanted or intended their marriages to end. ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Malachi 2:16

Jessica Squier of Montrose, PA has an opinion on divorce that deserves a hearing. She said, "I'm sick of seeing selfish parents trying to reason that divorce is for 'everyone's good.' The best thing to do for your child is to work out your problems in the marriage. We kids become very insecure when our world is shaken. And even though it may not show up on the outside when our parents break up, it leaves a scar. Trust me I'm 14 and I know."—Reader's Digest, April 2002, p 16

Malachi 2:16

John Steinbeck got his first divorce when he was 38 after falling in love with Gwen Conger, a 20-year-old singer. He invited Conger to his house, sat her down in a room with his wife and said, "I want you two gals to talk this out, and the one who feels she really wants me the most, gets me." Steinbeck then left the room. Conger got him. When they divorced 9 years later, Steinbeck said, "Well there goes that experiment." —Biography Magazine, Feb 2002, p. 85. With such a cavalier attitude about marriage, no wonder his relationships headed toward divorce. Fresh Illustrations.

What Do Teens Think of Divorced People?

71% Their parents didn't try hard enough

23% Say that their parents did try hard enough to save their marriage

6% Had no opinion

Malachi 2:17

Our Daily Bread

Reality Or Illusion?

READ: Malachi 2:13-17

(See following devotional also)

You say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord." —Malachi 2:

I had just started to back the van away from the loading area. In my rearview mirror I saw two semi trucks side by side. I had plenty of clearance. Just then it appeared that one of the trucks was moving into my path. I stopped. But then I realized that the other truck was actually backing up, creating the illusion that the standing semi was moving forward.

An illusion, according to the dictionary, is an "erroneous perception of reality." Sleight-of-hand artists use it to "do the impossible." Most illusions are harmless, but some can be fatal. In a desert, chasing a mirage that looks like water can lead to death.

But the most dangerous illusions are the spiritual and moral ones that people are so prone to believe. In Malachi 2, the Israelites were breaking their marriage vows (vv.14-16). They knew that God hates divorce (v.16), yet they were saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord" (v.17).

Doesn't that sound like today's culture? People believe that things like abortion, extramarital sex, and divorce for other than biblical reasons are morally right. Even some Christians believe in such illusions.

It's crucial that we allow the Bible to be the standard by which we distinguish reality from illusion! —Dennis J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Word of God declares what's right

And what is pleasing in His sight;

It also shows that deep within

What we call good may be a sin. —Hess

One of life's greatest illusions is that sin has no consequences.

Malachi 2:16 - In her book *Second Chances*, published in 1989 by Ticknor and Fields, California psychologist Judith S. Wallerstein reports that divorce is devastating to children. She studied one hundred children for more than a decade and concluded that almost half were afflicted with anger, anxiety, and low self-esteem when they entered adult life.

Malachi 2:16 - Blynn de Moss "Scotty" Wolfe holds the record as the world's most divorced man. First married in 1931, by 1986 he had experienced twenty-six divorces and paid more than one million dollars in alimony.

Malachi 2:16 - Children are more likely to suffer from depression when they grow up, if their parents divorce, than if one dies. 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 2:16; Deuteronomy 6:4-18 Only the Ones Who Go to Church

One Saturday night our family took a drive to a cemetery near by. My oldest daughter Rachel had been riding in a car that had hit a tree there the night before. I wanted to see the scene of the accident so that I could understand what had happened. The accident wasn't caused by a teenage driver. The mother of one of the kids in the car had become lost trying to find one girl's street. She had turned into the cemetery by mistake and the further she traveled into the graveyard, the more disoriented she became. Finally, in

trying to find a way out, in growing frustration, her car veered off the pavement and into a large spruce tree. After viewing the scene, Margie and I were discussing the frustration this poor woman was going through. She had recently been divorced. Then Rachel mentioned some other friends of hers whose parents were divorced. I asked her, "Rachel, don't any of your friends come from a home where the parents are still married?" Without hesitation she explained, "Yes. But only the ones who go to church." - 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Editorial Comment - "You May Have Heard That The Divorce Rate In The Church Is 50%... Get Ready To Be Shocked. This is a game-changer. Talk about "an old wives' tale." You've heard it said that 1) 50 percent of all marriages end in divorce; 2) most marriages that do happen to make it are, nonetheless, unhappy, and 3) Christians are just as likely to divorce as non-believers. These claims, long understood to be research-based facts, never quite sat right with me. Still, admittedly, while these assertions do swim upstream against the flow of both our common sense and our common experience, we have, nevertheless, accepted them (present company included) as valid because – well, you know, because "social science ...". As it turns out, your gut was right. It's all nonsense – urban legend of a sort, propagated, most likely, by the same post-moderns who today seek to similarly undermine the God-designed institution of legitimate man-woman marriage by redefining it into oblivion.

Shaunti Feldhahn is a Harvard-trained researcher and author. In her recently released book, ["The Good News About Marriage: Debunking Discouraging Myths about Marriage and Divorce."](#) Feldhahn details groundbreaking findings from an extensive eight-year study on marriage and divorce. Among other things, her research found:

- The actual divorce rate has never gotten close to 50 percent.
- Those who attend church regularly have a significantly lower divorce rate than those who don't.
- Most marriages are happy.
- Simple changes make a big difference in most marriage problems.
- Most remarriages succeed." ([Source](#))

Malachi 2:16; Mark 10:2-9 The Damage to Children in Dollars

Common sense tells us children suffer in a divorce in more ways than one, but now the Census Bureau has measured the damage in dollars.

In the broadest study of its kind, the bureau has found that children can expect to become 37 per cent poorer almost as soon as their families break up.

And perhaps less obvious, the study, released yesterday, shows families that break up are poorer to begin with than families that stay together, suggesting that financial hardship by itself can lead to divorce.

Once parents separate, fewer than half the children surveyed receive child support, further impoverishing them, the study said. The study's trends held true regardless of race and income level.

The study, called "Family Disruption and Economic Hardship: The Short-Run Picture for Children" tracked about 200 families for three years, beginning in 1983.

The families were selected at random and reflected the U.S. population in every way, including income level, location, and race, Ms. Bianchi said.

She said that although the statistics used in the report are already 5 years old, the trends are most likely the same today, but will be more exaggerated if the economic recession endures. - 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 2:16 Recovering from a Broken Heart

The following is a letter my wife, Pam, received from one of her special education third graders:

Dear Mrs Carroll,

My mom and Dad are geting Devarst. But i am still ok. I am trieing to get Beter. It is a hard to reakover from a Broken hart. So I am trieing to kep my head hie.

Love, Layne

6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:3-9 Remarriages

Almost half the marriages in the USA last year were remarriages for at least one of the partners.

The National Center for Health Statistics says 46% of 1990's 2.4 million weddings involved at least one person who'd been down the aisle before, up from 31% in 1970. Fueling the boom: 1.19 million divorces in 1990. In fact, the Census Bureau today reports 64% of divorced women remarry. Divorced men weren't included.

Divorced white women wait an average 26.5 months to remarry; Hispanic women, 29.9 months, black women, 38.3 months. Widows, the bureau says, are less likely to remarry—just 23% do. Widows are older than divorcees—55 years old vs. 28—so have "fewer available men," says Census analyst Louisa Miller. "And the emotional attachment to a former partner would be greater for a widow than a divorcee."

Other Census findings:

- One in four women who divorced and remarried divorced a second time.
- Four of 10 women who have ever been married had a first marriage end in divorce or widowhood. - 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:3-9 Divorce Is Better for the Kids

Ten years before the Civil War, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin, a book that Abraham Lincoln said stirred up the Civil War. In it she showed exactly what slavery was like. She wrote it because she believed that if people knew what slavery really was, they couldn't possibly tolerate it. The thing she found most offensive was the forced separation of families. Husbands and wives sold to different masters, children sold one at a time away from mothers. In Uncle Tom's Cabin, she depicted the horror of that very vividly. This book was the first million copy seller in America and has an incredibly good Christian character action. It is worth reading! Slavery may be behind us, and we still have a ways to go on Civil Rights. But we're still separating families violently, not because somebody's sold a child. Now we do it voluntarily and pretend that it's "better for the kids." The adults involved think divorce meets their needs and they hope the impact on the children is minimal. - 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 2:16; Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-4 Kids from Single-Parent Families

Kids from single-parent families, whether through divorce or illegitimacy, are two to three times as likely to have emotional or behavioral problems, and half again as likely to have learning disabilities, as those who live with both parents.

Teenage girls who grow up without their fathers tend to have sex earlier. A 15-year-old who has lived with her mother only, for example, is three times as likely to lose her virginity before her 16th birthday as one who has lived with both parents. - 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 2:16; Colossians 3:18, 19 O.J. Simpson

Most celebrities have avoided taking a public stand on the O.J. Simpson story, even outspoken film maker Oliver Stone. Both men have children at the same school. Stone told the current New Yorker in an interview done three days after Nicole Simpson's murder, "I saw O.J. and Nicole a few weeks ago in the car outside the school. I was in a fairly sad mood—because of my own divorce problems, and I was thinking, 'Look at O.J. He's got his life together. He's made it. Something's wrong with me.' "O. J. was too nice all the time. So one night he blows. Anybody who's been through divorce will tell you that at one point—they've thought murder. The line between thinking murder and doing murder isn't that major."

Malachi 2:16 Divorce South Korea Style

When couples divorce in South Korea the man gets the children, the woman gets no alimony, and only this morning did South Korea's supreme court rule that divorced women are at least entitled to see their children. 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 2:16; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 Hit by a Mack Truck

Being divorced is like being hit by a Mack truck. If you live through it, you start looking very carefully to the right and to the left. - 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 2:16 It's Hard to Believe a Relationship Can Last

Olivia Newton-John recently was asked why she hadn't gotten married earlier, and she shared how when she was ten years old, her parents went through a devastating divorce. She said, "You know, it's hard to believe a relationship can last when you've never seen one." - 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 2:16 I Am Divorced

I have lost my husband, but I am not supposed to mourn.

I have lost my children; they don't know to whom they belong.

I have lost my relatives; they do not approve.

I have lost his relatives; they blame me.

I have lost my friends; they don't know how to act.

I feel I have lost my church; do they think I have sinned too much?

I am afraid of the future,

I am ashamed of the past,

I am confused about the present.

I am so alone,

I feel so lost.

God, please stay by me, You are all I have left.

6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:3-9 This Is What I Gave Up

Dear Ann Landers: Eleven years ago, I walked out on a 12-year marriage. My wife was a good person, but for a long time she was under a lot of stress. Instead of helping her, I began an affair with her best friend.

This is what I gave up:

1. Seeing my daughter grow up.
2. The respect of many long-time friends.
3. The enjoyment of living as a family.
4. A wife who was loyal, appreciative and who tried very hard to make me happy.

This is what I got:

1. Two step-children who treated me like dirt.
2. A wife who didn't know how to make anything for dinner but reservations.
3. A wife whose only interest in me was how much money she could get.
4. A wife who disparaged my family and ruined all my existing friendships.
5. Finally, the best thing I got was a bitter, expensive divorce.

Ann, tell your readers that anyone who is married and has his or her next mate all lined up is looking for trouble. People don't know what they are giving up until they no longer have it. Then it's too late.

Otis of Wisconsin

6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 2:17

Our Daily Bread

Illusionary Living

You say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord." —Malachi 2:17

An illusion is defined as "an erroneous perception of reality." Magicians depend on it to trick their audiences. But some illusions can be fatal. If I chase a mirage in the desert, thinking it's water, I could die of thirst.

The most dangerous illusions of all are spiritual. In Malachi's time, men no longer saw the seriousness of the marriage covenant and were divorcing their wives without just cause. God's people said, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them" (2:17). They were not seeing things as God sees them.

We are all prone to this kind of self-deception. Sin clouds our ability to see right and wrong. "The heart is deceitful above all things, . . . who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

Living under such illusions must be replaced by reality. And this can happen through hard times. Adversity and pain have a way of ridding our lives of falseness. We are then better able to fill the emptiness with truth.

As we depend on God's Spirit to help us learn and obey the Bible's teachings, illusions are replaced by the truth of God's love and forgiveness in Christ. This is the only reality that truly satisfies the deepest longings of our hearts and leads us to a desire to be like Him.—Dennis J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If we would love what's good and right,

We must be pure within;

But if we compromise the truth,

We lose our sense of sin. —D. De Haan

To avoid being drawn into error, keep a firm grip on the truth.

Malachi 2:13-16 For Life

Let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. —Malachi 2:15

A study by researchers at three West Coast universities says that couples who stay together longer grow happier. The study, reported in Newsday magazine, does not say that time itself turns unhappy marriages into happy ones, but it does support the theory that marriages tend to improve with time. According to Professor Robert Levenson (University of California, Berkeley), couples who stay married "develop the ability to not lose sight of the love in the relationship, and to express it."

In Malachi 2:14-16, the Lord warned against breaking marriage vows. Society encourages divorce on the grounds of incompatibility and unhappiness. But we read in Malachi, "The Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously" (v.16).

When we feel like calling it quits, let's remember what God has said. To make a marriage that lasts will take work, patience, prayer, the encouragement of Christian friends, and perhaps wise counsel. When we encounter difficulty, the Lord urges us to clean the house, not to burn it down. We are to preserve the relationship while we seek the restoration of life within it.

"For better or for worse," we pledge,
Through sickness and through strife;
And by the help and grace of God
We'll keep these vows for life. —DJD

A good marriage requires the determination to be married for good.

By David McCasland

Malachi 2:17

HE'S NOT HERE - During the first day of Boy Scout camp, a scoutmaster was called home because of an emergency and was not planning to return until the following day. As he prepared to leave, he gathered his charges together and made Joe, one of the patrol leaders, the acting scoutmaster until he returned. As soon as the scoutmaster was out of sight, the newly appointed leader began to

give orders. He had the younger boys set up his tent, sent another after candy, and told the rest to clean up the area, even though it was recreation time. "You can't do that," they said. "Mr. Whitten said it was recreation time!" Joe was not impressed. "I can do whatever I want to. And furthermore, I don't care what Mr. Whitten said, because Mr. Whitten isn't here!" He must have seen the smiles on the Scouts' faces, because he turned around to see Mr. Whitten standing there. He had returned for his car keys, had heard everything, and, needless to say, appointed a new acting leader. Joe assumed what the priests of Malachi's day assumed, that they could act in any way they chose because the one who guaranteed justice was nowhere to be seen. But both Joe and the priests found out otherwise. The keeper of justice was seeing their deeds and hearing their words and would ultimately set things right. ([1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching - Michael](#))

Malachi 3:1-18

Today in the Word

Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son. - John 5:22

People consider with great care whom they choose as a messenger for important information. If the President wants to communicate an important policy, he will select a trusted member of his staff. Companies like United Parcel Service and FedEx spend millions of dollars each year to convince customers that they can be trusted to deliver messages.

Two messengers are mentioned in verse 1 of today's passage. The first messenger, who is to prepare the way, is John the Baptist (cf. Mark 1:2). The second is "the messenger of the covenant," the Lord Jesus Christ. This prophecy doesn't refer to Jesus' first coming, but rather to the Second Coming. At that time Jesus will return as a Judge, as One who will establish His kingdom and put down rebellion against God on the earth.

Jesus is compared to a refiner's fire (v. 2). When metals such as silver and gold are originally mined, they are filled with impurities. To remove these, the ore is crushed and washed with pressurized water, and the dirt and some of the waste materials are washed away. Then the ore is heated and refined in a blast furnace at a high temperature. As the gold or silver melts, the impurities rise to the top and are skimmed off, leaving behind the pure metal.

God is quite clear about what sorts of actions will be judged (v. 5). At first glance we may feel tempted to think that we're exempt from the rebuke; after all, we wouldn't think of practicing sorcery. But it becomes clear that we should examine ourselves more carefully--lying, injustice, and a lack of mercy also displease God.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Someday we will all stand before Christ and will give an account for our lives. Are there areas of your life that need to experience the Refiner's fire? ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Malachi 3:1-6 Orphans and Widows

My commute to work is about 25 minutes, and so to pass the time I have become an avid listener of audio books. Recently, I was listening to Charles Dickens' classic novel Oliver Twist. At one point in the story, I had to stop the tape because it was too disturbing. Although I knew the book would have a happy ending, there was something very troubling about the brutal treatment of this poor orphan.

God cares about the plight of the poor and has a special place in His heart for orphans and widows. Malachi wrote that God would judge those who, having no fear of God, exploit widows and orphans (3:5).

Instead of taking advantage of the weak, we as Christians are admonished to help those in need. Believers should care for those God cares about. We should look for opportunities to provide financial and emotional support for those who have lost a spouse or have been orphaned from a parent's care.

Do you know a widow who needs your help? Do you know an orphan or child who has been deprived of the support of a parent because of death, divorce, military service, or abandonment?

As James tells us, a mark of true spirituality is to "visit orphans and widows in their trouble" (James 1:27). — by Dennis Fisher

Open my eyes, Lord, to people around me,

Help me to see them as You do above;

Give me the wisdom and strength to take action,

So others may see the depth of Your love. —K. De Haan

The more Christ's love grows in us, the more His love flows from us.

Malachi 3:2

C H Spurgeon

Morning and Evening

"But who may abide the day of his coming?" — Malachi 3:2

His first coming was without external pomp or show of power, and yet in truth there were few who could abide its testing might. Herod and all Jerusalem with him were stirred at the news of the wondrous birth. Those who supposed themselves to be waiting for him, showed the fallacy of their professions by rejecting him when he came. His life on earth was a winnowing fan, which tried the great heap of religious profession, and few enough could abide the process. But what will his second advent be? What sinner can endure to think of it? "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." When in his humiliation he did but say to the soldiers, "I am he," they fell backward; what will be the terror of his enemies when he shall more fully reveal himself as the "I am?" His death shook earth and darkened heaven, what shall be the dreadful splendour of that day in which as the living Saviour, he shall summon the quick and dead before him? O that the terrors of the Lord would persuade men to forsake their sins and kiss the Son lest he be angry! Though a lamb, he is yet the lion of the tribe of Judah, rending the prey in pieces; and though he breaks not the bruised reed, yet will he break his enemies with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. None of his foes shall bear up before the tempest of his wrath, or hide themselves from the sweeping hail of his indignation; but his beloved blood washed people look for his appearing with joy, and hope to abide it without fear: to them he sits as a refiner even now, and when he has tried them they shall come forth as gold. Let us search ourselves this morning and make our calling and election sure, so that the coming of the Lord may cause no dark forebodings in our mind. O for grace to cast away all hypocrisy, and to be found of him sincere and without rebuke in the day of his appearing.

Malachi 3:3

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver. Malachi 3:3

If you are just now in the fire, dear soul, be of good cheer—it shows at least that you are silver, and that you are capable of performing more acceptable service in God's holy Temple. If it were not so, God would not take so much pains. He chastens those whom He loves, and prunes the branches that are already bearing fruit. What a comfort it is that He surrenders this work to no other hands than his own. He may give his angels charge concerning us when we are in danger; but He keeps our purification beneath his special superintendence.

But notice that He sits. What patience is here! However many years thou mayest have to lie on that couch, He will sit beside thee. The nurses will go off duty, but He never. Love may faint and be weary, and nod into light slumbers; but He never slumbers nor sleeps. Those that were most frequent in attendances may drop off; but He will sit, night and day—when the soul is lonely, and when the room is filled with cheery voices; when the pain is almost unbearable—reach out the hand, you will touch his; breathe the softest sigh, He will answer, "I am here."

And the process will be continued until the scum has passed away, with its rebellion and murmuring, and his dear face shines, sweetly mirrored in its every outline and lineament, Then the fires will die down, and He will bid thee arise to reap the full reward. God is set on reviving the better, holier past, to which some of us revert with tender interest. "It was better with me then than now," we sometimes say. But the tender grace of those days that are dead will come again to the soul, who yields to God's refining. "The offering of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old."

Malachi 3:3 - Jesus—The Refiner

Some years ago in Dublin, a company of women met to study the Bible. One of them was puzzled by the words of Malachi 3:3, "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." After some discussion, a committee was appointed to call on a silversmith and learn what they could on the subject. The silversmith readily showed them the process. "But, sir," said one, "do you sit while the refining is going on?" "Oh, yes, indeed" he said. "I must sit with my eyes steadily fixed on the surface, for if the time necessary for refining is exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver is sure to be damaged." At once they saw the beauty and comfort of the Scripture passage. As they were leaving, the silversmith called after them, "Oh, one thing more! I only know when the process is complete by

seeing my own image reflected on the silver." That is what the Lord Jesus wants to see in you and me as He refines us by fire—His blessed image. And it will be reflected to others, too. — Illustrations of Bible Truths.

Malachi 3:3.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk

THE REFINER'S FIRE

"He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver."-- Malachi 3:3.

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."-- 1Peter 1:7.

NOTHING IS harder to bear than the apparent aimlessness of suffering.

They say that what breaks a convict's heart in gaol is to set him to say carry stones from one side of the prison to the other, and then back again! But we must never look upon the trials of life as punishments, because all penalty was borne by our Lord Himself. They are intended to destroy the weeds and rubbish of our natures, as the bonfires do in the gardens. Christ regards us in the light of our eternal interests, of which He alone can judge. If you and I knew what sphere we were to fulfil in the other world, we should understand the significance of His dealings with us, as now we cannot do. The Refiner has a purpose in view, of which those who stand beside Him are ignorant, and, therefore, they are unable to judge the process which He is employing.

Dare to believe that Christ is working to a plan in your life. He loves you. Be patient! He would not take so much trouble unless He knew that it was worth while. "We do not prune brambles, or cast common stones into the crucible or plough sea-sands!" You must be capable of some special service, which can only be done by a carefully-prepared instrument, and so Christ sits beside you as the Refiner, year after year, that you may miss nothing.

Whilst the Fire is hot keep conversing with the Refiner. Ponder these words: "He shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver." The thought is specially suitable for those who cannot make long prayers, but they can talk to Christ as He sits beside them. Nicholas Hermann tells us that, as he could not concentrate his mind on prolonged prayer, he gave up set times of prayer and sought constant conversations with Christ. Speak to Him, then, in the midst of your daily toil. He hears the unspoken prayer, and catches your whispers. Talk to Christ about your trials, sorrows, and anxieties! Make Him your Confidant in your joy and happiness! Nothing makes Him so real as to talk to Him aloud about everything!

PRAYER - Let the Fire of Thy Love consume in me all sinful desires of the flesh and of the mind, that I may henceforth continually abide in Jesus Christ my Lord, and seek the things where He sits at Thy right hand. AMEN.

Malachi 3 - Giving

When Dr. R. G. Lee was asked about his church's stewardship program he said, "I tell my people there are two kinds of church members—TITHERS and THIEVES!" He went on to say there were more thieves in Baptist churches on Sunday morning than in the jails. Malachi's motivation for tithing was to avoid the sin of robbery.

Money is far more than what we have, it is a reflection of what we are.

One of our tithers who signed up to give a testimony said, "Preacher, we have had a lot of trouble this year, but I want to tell the people how God has blessed us through it all." In my first church, after my first sermon on tithing, a man gripped my hand and said, "Everything you said is true. We cannot outgive God. He just blesses and blesses." Well, that fellow gripped my hand left-handed. Why? Because his right arm had been chewed off all the way into his shoulder by a hay baler. That same year, lightning had ripped away half of his kitchen. And there he was—praising God!

There is something about that one-armed man praising God and giving God His due, that cannot carry a price tag. His arm was gone but not his hope, nor his love, nor his gratitude. Does it pay to tithe? Well, few of us keep score. But we know it costs NOT to tithe. It costs self respect; it costs contentment of soul; it costs power in prayer. The people in the church to be pitied are not those who give God his tenth, do their share and struggle to make ends meet; it is those who steal from God, have plenty to spare, and yet cannot buy what the faithful possess—contentment of soul.

Expository Preaching Through the Old Testament - Expository Preaching Through the Old Testament – Volume 19: Malachi the Burdened Prophet to a Beaten People.

Malachi 3:3

Octavius Winslow.

Daily Walking with God. DECEMBER 1.

"He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Malachi 3:3

"Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the refiner." Proverbs 25:4

MARK the great and glorious end of this fiery process—a righteous offering to the Lord; and a vessel formed, prepared, and beautified for the Refiner; a "vessel unto honor, meet for the Master's use." Blessed result! Oh the wonders wrought by the fire of God's furnace! Not only is "God glorified in the fire," but the believer is sanctified. Have you ever observed the process of the artificer in the preparation of his beautiful ornament? After removing it from its mold, skillfully and properly formed, he then traces upon it the design he intended it should bear, dipping his pencil in varied hues of the brightest coloring. But the work is not yet finished. The shape of that ornament is yet to be fixed, the figures are to be set, the colors perpetuated, and the whole work consolidated. By what process?—by passing through the fire. The fire alone completes the work. Thus is it with the chastened soul—that beautifully constructed vessel, which is to adorn the palace of our King through eternity—the gaze, the wonder, the delight of every holy intelligence. God has cast it into the Divine mold, has drawn upon it the "image of His Son," with a pencil dipped in heaven's own colors—but it must pass through the furnace of affliction, thus to stamp completeness and eternity upon the whole. Calmly, then, repose in the hands of your Divine Artificer, asking not the extinguishment of a spark until the holy work is completed. God may temper and soften—for He never withdraws His eye from the work for one moment—but great will be your loss, if you lose the affliction unsanctified! Oh! could we with a clearer vision of faith but see the reason and the design of God in sending the chastisement, all marvel would cease, all murmur would be hushed, and not a painful dispensation of our Father would afford us needless trouble. David's pen never wrote more sweetly than when dipped in the ink of affliction. And never did his harp send forth deeper, richer melody than when the breath of sadness swept its strings. This has been the uniform testimony of the saints of God in every age. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; for before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept your law." Learn to see a Father's hand, yes, a Father's heart, in every affliction. It is not a vindictive enemy who has chastened you, but a loving Friend: not an unfeeling stranger, but a tender Father, who, though He may cast you down in the dust, will never cast you off from His love. The Captain of your salvation—Himself made perfect through suffering—only designs your higher spiritual promotion in His army, by each sanctified affliction sent. You are on your way to the mansion prepared for you by the Savior, to the kingdom bestowed upon you by God. The journey is short, and time is fleeting; what though the cross is heavy and the path is rough—you have not far nor long to carry it. Let the deep-drawn sigh be checked by the throb of gladness which this prospect should create. "He will not always chide, neither will he retain his anger forever." The wind will not always moan, nor the waters be always tempestuous; the dull vapor will not forever float along the sky, nor the sunbeams be forever wreathed in darkness. Your Father's love will not always speak in muffled tones, nor your Savior hide Himself forever behind the wall or within the lattice. That wind will yet breathe music, those waters will yet be still; that vapor will yet evaporate; that sun will yet break forth; your Father's love will speak again in unmuffled strains, and your Savior will manifest Himself without a veil. Pensive child of sorrow! Weary pilgrim of grief! timid, yet prayerful; doubting, yet hoping; guilty, yet penitent; laying your hand on the head of the great appointed Sacrifice, you look up with tears, confessing your sin, and pleading in faith the blood of sprinkling. Oh, rejoice that this painful travail of soul is but the Spirit's preparation for the seat awaiting you in the upper temple, where the days of your mourning will be ended. You may carry the cross to the last step of the journey—weeping even up to heaven's gate—but there you shall lay that cross down, and the last bitter tear shall there be wiped away forever! Truly we may exclaim, "Blessed is the man whom You chastens, O Lord, and teach him out of Your law."

Malachi 3:5

"Financial Immorality"

A CHURCHGOING businessman and his attorney wife, respectable and wealthy people, asked me to recommend a household employee who could work from eight to five every day caring for two children, cleaning the house, and preparing the evening meal.

They told me the amount they would be willing to pay—and it wasn't very much. I said simply that I didn't know anyone who could fill that role. Inwardly I seethed at their blatant desire to exploit a needy person. They each earned more in thirty minutes than they were willing to pay for a full day's work.

God is just as concerned about financial injustices as He is about abortion, adultery, deceit, and dishonesty. He is grieved when He

sees the rich and powerful take advantage of the poor and helpless.

While relatively few of us are in positions to change the conditions of society at large, all of us can change a small part of it—the part that we encounter every day. We can treat fairly those with whom we deal—babysitters, delivery people, clerks and cashiers, salespeople, parking attendants, waiters and waitresses. In God's eyes, financial immorality is just as despicable as sexual immorality.—H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Malachi 3:6

C H Spurgeon

Morning and Evening

"I am the Lord, I change not" — Malachi 3:6

It is well for us that, amidst all the variableness of life, there is One whom change cannot affect; One whose heart can never alter, and on whose brow mutability can make no furrows. All things else have changed—all things are changing. The sun itself grows dim with age; the world is waxing old; the folding up of the worn-out vesture has commenced; the heavens and earth must soon pass away; they shall perish, they shall wax old as doth a garment; but there is One who only hath immortality, of whose years there is no end, and in whose person there is no change. The delight which the mariner feels, when, after having been tossed about for many a day, he steps again upon the solid shore, is the satisfaction of a Christian when, amidst all the changes of this troublous life, he rests the foot of his faith upon this truth—"I am the Lord, I change not."

The stability which the anchor gives the ship when it has at last obtained a hold-fast, is like that which the Christian's hope affords him when it fixes itself upon this glorious truth. With God "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." What ever his attributes were of old, they are now; his power, his wisdom, his justice, his truth, are alike unchanged. He has ever been the refuge of his people, their stronghold in the day of trouble, and he is their sure Helper still. He is unchanged in his love. He has loved his people with "an everlasting love"; he loves them now as much as ever he did, and when all earthly things shall have melted in the last conflagration, his love will still wear the dew of its youth. Precious is the assurance that he changes not! The wheel of providence revolves, but its axle is eternal love.

"Death and change are busy ever,

Man decays, and ages move;

But his mercy waneth never;

God is wisdom, God is love."

Malachi 3:6 God Is Love

One day C. H. Spurgeon was walking through the English countryside with a friend. As they strolled along, the evangelist noticed a barn with a weather vane on its roof. At the top of the vane were these words: GOD IS LOVE. Spurgeon remarked to his companion that he thought this was a rather inappropriate place for such a message. "Weather vanes are changeable," he said, "but God's love is constant." "I don't agree with you about those words, Charles," replied his friend. "You misunderstood the meaning. That sign is indicating a truth: Regardless of which way the wind blows, God is love." - 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

How Could God Love Jacob?

A minister one day sat in the vestry of his church to meet anyone who might have spiritual difficulties. Only one came. "What is your difficulty?" asked the minister. The man answered, "My difficulty is the ninth chapter of Romans, where it says, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,'" "Yes," said the minister, "there is great difficulty in that verse; but which part of the verse is difficult for you?" The latter part, of course," said the man. "I cannot understand why God should hate Esau." The minister replied, "That verse has often been difficult, but my difficulty has always been with the first part of the verse. I never could understand how God could love that wily, deceitful, supplanting scoundrel Jacob." 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.

Malachi 3:6

April 20, 2005

A God Of Absolutes

Our Daily Bread

READ: Malachi 3:6-12

I am the Lord, I do not change. —Malachi 3:6

I am dubious about the accuracy of our bathroom scale. So I've learned to manipulate it in a self-satisfying manner. The little adjustment knob serves to vary the register, and if that becomes too much bother, I just lean a certain way. The idea is to get a favorable reading—hopefully one that is a few pounds less.

We live in an age when many people believe there are no absolutes. Self-serving behavior is rampant and tramples the moral law given for the protection of society. Our culture prides itself on "freedom" that is actually slavery to sin (Romans 6:16-17).

But there is a God of absolutes whose scales never lose their adjustment. With Him, a pound is a pound, right is right, and wrong is wrong. He says, "I am the Lord, I do not change" (Malachi 3:6).

For us as believers, this puts steel into our spiritual backbone. We gain confidence in the face of difficulty and are assured of the fulfillment of every divine promise.

If God were easily moved by every whim or notion, our eternal destiny would be in constant jeopardy. But because He is the Unchanging One, we "are not consumed" (v.6). "His compassions fail not. They are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:22-23).—Paul Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Unchanging God who reigns above,

His truth remains forever;

And from this faithful God of love

No earthly trial can sever. —D. De Haan

Earth changes, but God and His Word stand sure! —Browning

Malachi 3:6.

Octavius Winslow. Daily Walking with God

It is no small attainment to be built up in the faithfulness of God. This forms a stable foundation of comfort for the believing soul. Mutability marks everything outside of God. Look into the Church, into the world, into our families, ourselves, what innumerable changes do we see on every hand! A week, one short day, what alterations does it produce! Yet, in the midst of it all, to repose calmly on the unchangeableness, the faithfulness of God. To know that no alterations of time, no earthly changes, affect His faithfulness to His people. And more than this- no changes in them- no unfaithfulness of theirs, causes the slightest change in God. Once a Father, ever a Father; once a Friend, ever a Friend. His providences may change, His heart cannot. He is a God of unchangeable love. The promise He has given, He will fulfil; the covenant He has made, He will observe; the word that has gone out of His mouth, He will not alter. "He cannot deny Himself." Peace then, tried believer! Are you passing now through the deep waters? Who kept you from sinking when wading through the last? Who brought you through the last fire? Who supported you under the last cross? Who delivered you out of the last temptation? Was it not God, your covenant God- your faithful, unchangeable God? This God, then, is your God now, and your God forever and ever, and He will be your guide even unto death.

Malachi 3:6

May 14, 2005

Our Changing World

READ: Psalm 102:25-27

I am the Lord, I do not change. —Malachi 3:6

Change is one thing we can be sure of in this life. Our relationships change as we move to new places, experience illness, and ultimately face death. Even the cells in our bodies are always in the process of change. When cells wear out, most are replaced by new ones. This is especially noticeable with our skin—we shed and regrow outer skin cells about every 27 days.

Yes, change is the one certainty in our world. Henry Lyte's melancholy line in his hymn "Abide With Me" is true: "Change and decay in all around I see." But the hymn immediately adds, "O Thou who changest not, abide with me!"

By faith in Jesus Christ we can have a relationship with the unchanging God, who says of Himself in Malachi 3:6, "I am the Lord, I do not change." We can depend on God to be the same forever, as the psalmist says (Psalm 102:27). Hebrews 13:8 adds this reassuring testimony: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." He is our firm foundation, who can give us confidence and security in this changing world.

We creatures, caught up in the swirling tide of time, can rest our souls on the everlasting arms, which will never let us go.—Vernon C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day,

Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;

Change and decay in all around I see—

O Thou who changest not, abide with me! —Lyte

To face life's changes, look to the unchanging God.

Malachi 3:7-12

Today in the Word

TODAY IN THE WORD - Celebrated author Mark Twain read widely, accumulating a library of thousands of books. Some of the volumes vanished during Twain's frequent travels, and many were purchased by private collectors after the author's death in 1910. But at a recent auction in California, a collection of 271 of Twain's books were put up for bid. One bidder was the Mark Twain House in Hartford, Connecticut, a museum in the home where the Twains lived for seventeen years. The museum finally acquired the treasured books, but only at great cost. It took almost all of the small museum's reserve funds to outbid other potential buyers.

We know that anything of value has a cost attached. And things of great value can only be enjoyed at great cost. That's certainly true of worship. God doesn't put a price tag on what it costs to worship Him, but it's obvious that worship which costs us nothing is of no value in His sight.

God had to teach the Israelites of Malachi's day this important lesson. The Lord's indictment in Malachi 1:6-14 is a scathing denunciation of the way the people—even the priests—dishonored God by bringing Him the worst of their flocks. God told the nation it would be better to shut and padlock the temple doors than to bring Him useless sacrifices that were an offense to Him (v. 10).

The nation also held out on God when it came to their tithes and offerings. The people were not only cheaters in worship (v. 14)); they were also robbers (Mal. 3:8).

What would cause people who claimed to worship God to withhold from Him even the most basic portion of their financial resources? (See v. 9.) The problem is not economic, but spiritual. It's not as if God is saying, ""Do you want to worship Me? Here's how much it will cost you financially.""

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - How can we know when we are offering God worship that is of real value to Him? So far this month we have considered several measures of worship. Our heart for giving to God is one. So are the times we invest in worship and the purity of heart we bring into the Lord's presence. And obedience is definitely an ingredient of quality worship. ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Malachi 3:7-12.

Today in the Word

Publishing pioneer Cyrus Curtis bought The Saturday Evening Post in 1897, just before sailing for Europe. He hastily interviewed and hired George Lorimer as editor—a position Lorimer would hold for over forty years.

After more than a year in Europe, Curtis came home and called Lorimer into his office. Looking his editor over, Cyrus inquired and learned that Lorimer's salary was forty dollars a week. "From this day on your salary will be two hundred and fifty dollars weekly," Curtis told him. Lorimer answered, "Yes, sir," and that was the end of the interview.

That's the kind of "accountability session" most of us wouldn't mind undergoing! Curtis knew that Lorimer had been doing a good job

in his absence, and the publisher rewarded him. Sadly, the Israelites of Malachi's day could not give their "Boss" a good account of their stewardship.

Robbery is a pretty serious charge, especially when the One bringing the charge is the Lord Almighty. Back in chapter 1, the Lord through Malachi charged the people with an attitude of indifference and disrespect that led them to bring unacceptable offerings.

Here in chapter 3, we learn that not only was the quality of Israel's offerings poor, so was the quantity. The people were holding back on offerings for the temple storehouse, from which the Levites and priests were supported as they served in the temple. As a result, the entire nation was under a curse. Conversely, there was an equally strong blessing for obedience (vv. 10-12).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Today's text reminds us of the timeless spiritual principle of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7). [Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Malachi 1:8 Compare your commitment to God versus other areas of life. Malachi challenged them - would their [Persian] governor accept this garbage. No way! Assess your own attitude about giving to God, compared to spending on yourself. A humorous assessment:

Funny how a \$20.00 bill looks so big when you take it to church, but so small when you take it to Wal-Mart.

Funny how big an hour serving God looks, and how small 60 minutes are when spent playing golf, fishing or playing bridge.

Funny how long a couple of hours spent at church, but how short they are when watching a movie.

Funny how we get thrilled when a football game goes into overtime, but we complain when a sermon is longer than the regular time.

Funny how laborious it is to read a chapter in the Bible and how easy it is to read 200-300 pages of a best selling novel.

Funny how we can't think of anything to say when we pray, and don't have any difficulty thinking of things to talk about to a friend.

Funny how people are so consumed with what others think about them rather than what God thinks about them.

Genuine commitment costs.

Malachi 3:10

In 2000 the average non-churchgoer gave 1.3% of their income to charity. How much do you think the average churchgoer gave? Another way to ask that question, is how much difference does faith really make in how generous a person is? The answer: 2.3%. Times haven't changed since Malachi's day have they? We still need to hear the message, bring the WHOLE tithe into the storehouse. —Reader's Digest, November 01, p. 172 Fresh Illustrations.

Malachi 3:10 C H Spurgeon Faith's Checkbook Condition of Blessing

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me nowhere with, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."—Malachi 3:10

MANY read and plead this promise without noticing the condition upon which the blessing is promised. We cannot expect heaven to be opened or blessing poured out unless we pay our dues unto the Lord our God and to His cause. There would be no lack of funds for holy purposes if all professing Christians paid their fair share.

Many are poor because they rob God. Many churches also miss the visitations of the Spirit because they starve their ministers. If there is no temporal meat for God's servants, we need not wonder if their ministry has but little food in it for our souls. When missions pine for means, and the work of the Lord is hindered by an empty treasury, how can we look for a large amount of soul prosperity?

Come, come! What have I given of late? Have I been mean to my God? Have I stinted my Savior? This will never do. Let me give my Lord Jesus His tithe by helping the poor and aiding His work, and then I shall prove His power to bless me on a large scale.

Malachi 3:10 GIVING YOUR BEST - Queen Mary made it her practice to visit Scotland every year. She was so loved by the people there that she often mingled with them freely without a protective escort. While walking with some children one afternoon, she went farther than she had planned. Dark clouds came up unexpectedly, so she stopped at a nearby house to borrow an umbrella. "If you will lend me one," she said to the lady who answered the door, "I will send it back to you tomorrow." The woman didn't recognize the Queen and was reluctant to give this stranger her best umbrella. So she handed her one that she intended to throw away. The fabric

was torn in several places and one of the ribs was broken. The next day another knock was heard at the door. When the woman opened it, she was greeted by a royal guard, who was holding her old, tattered umbrella. "The Queen sent me," he said. "She asked me to thank you for loaning her this." For a moment the woman was stunned, then she burst into tears. "Oh, what an opportunity I missed," she cried. "I didn't give the Queen my very best!"

Malachi 3:10 GOD HAS "BIGGER HANDS"! - In the days of the country store, a little boy used to accompany his mother when she went shopping. The storekeeper always said, "Take a handful of candy, Son." But the boy never would. The storekeeper would reach into the box and give him a handful. One day his mother asked, "Why is it, when he asks you to take a handful, you never do?" The boy replied, "Because his hands are bigger than mine."

Ties and Offerings My 5-year-old son was proud of the fact he had graduated from bow ties to a necktie just like Dad's. But one Sunday morning, with his hand clutching the tie, I heard this panicked whisper, "Dad, why did the pastor say they're going to collect the ties and offering?"

IN THE RED - At the board meeting: "The financial report, brought to you in living color—red."

Almost every passage in the Bible on giving ends with a promise or blessing! (See Malachi 3:10). Giving to the Lord is but transporting our goods to a higher floor!—except there is an investment return every time the goods are moved higher!

(a) Spiritual Growth:

John Wesley said: "When I have money, I get rid of it as quickly as possible, lest it find a way into my heart."

(b) Material Growth:

No one ever got bankrupt because he was giving to God! God will be no one's debtor. Note that God does not always return the same things; often different kinds of things are bestowed: peace at home, inner joy, children's progress, assurance of God's care and presence. - Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations: Signs of the Times.

Malachi 3:10 - THE GRAIN ELEVATOR OPERATOR: The day the church treasurer resigned the church asked the local grain elevator manager to take the position. He agreed under two conditions. That no treasurer's report would be given for the first year. That no questions be asked about finances during that year. The people were surprised but finally agreed since most of them did business with him and he was a trusted man. At the end of the year he gave his report: * The church indebtedness of \$228,000 has been paid. * The minister's salary had been increased by 8%. * The Cooperative Program gifts has been paid 200%. * There were no outstanding bills. * And there was a cash balance of \$11,252! Immediately the shocked congregation asked, "How did you do it? Where did the money come from?" He quietly answered: "Most of you bring your grain to my elevator. Throughout the year I simply withheld ten percent on your behalf and gave it to the church in your name. You didn't even miss it!" "Do you see what we could do for the Lord if we were all willing to give at least the tithe to God, who really owns it?" And so the new treasurer had made his point.

Malachi 3:10

Robert Morgan

Several years ago, a company asked me to prepare a series of studies on the major stewardship campaigns in the Bible, and I discovered something that I did not previously know. There are two ways of giving to the Lord in the Bible. The first is by our weekly tithes and offerings, and that is one of the most important disciplines in the Christian life. I had a young couple that go to another church in our area tell me something very interesting recently. They had not been tithing because their finances had been so tight. In fact, never in their marriage had they felt they could consistently tithe because of their distressed finances. Some weeks they weren't sure where the groceries were coming from. Other weeks, they couldn't put gasoline in the car. Their family members had told them, "Don't dare tithe. You can't afford to tithe. It takes every penny just to pay the bills." But things grew worse and worse, and this couple found themselves under incredible stress.

Then one Sunday, the pastor of their church was away, and the associate pastor spoke on the subject of tithing. He said something to this effect: "If you are having financial difficulties, you can not afford not to tithe. God cannot bless you if you aren't honoring Him by returning to Him a small portion, a tithe, a ten percent, of what He is giving to you. It is an act of faith on your part. It's an act of love. It's an act of obedience." The associate pastor quoted Malachi 3:

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will

not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it" (NKJV).

This couple came under great conviction about this matter. They decided that very week to begin tithing, but they said, "It was the hardest step of faith we've ever taken." As soon as they began tithing, they both told me, their financial situation began reversing itself. Work prospects improved dramatically. And two weeks later they wrote another tithing check, and their second tithing check was 243 percent more than their first check due to the increase in their income.

I've always believed this is the basic way in which the Lord sustains His work on this earth—through the regular week-in, week-out tithes and offerings of His people. That's the first way in which we're to give to the Lord. But there is a second way. And we have it here in this passage. Sometimes God puts an opportunity in our pathway. (**A Tent, a Tithe and a Jar Full of Pennies**)

Malachi 3:10 100/20/1 DOLLAR BILLS

Robert Morgan

A \$100 bill, a \$20 bill, and a \$1 bill met up with each other at the shredder at the end of their natural lives. The \$100 said, "Well, I've had a good life. I've seen the whole world. I've been on cruises in Caribbean, safaris in Africa, and vacations in Europe."

The \$20 said, "Well, I've not done quite as well, but I have been to Atlantic City, Disneyland, and Starbucks."

They both turned to \$1 bill and asked, "How about you?" He said, "Oh, I've seen the whole nation from coast to coast. I've been from church to church to church..."

The \$100 bill asked, "What's a church?" (See [Full Sermon](#))

Malachi 3:11 - A Devourer

God promises to rebuke the devourer for tithers. Devourer. That's an interesting word. A word that makes me think immediately of the Tasmanian Devil. Not Bugs Bunny's nemesis, but the animal that haunts the dark nights of the island. The devil is about the size of a cocker spaniel, but don't let its size fool you, its bite packs the same power of an animal four times its size. It has a unusually large head and a mouth that when it is unhinged shows a set of teeth designed to mutilate its prey and frighten its predators. It is an eating machine. In 30 minutes, it can eat up to 40% of its body weight, and when it eats, it devours the entire carcass, bones and all. It is a devourer. When God promised to rebuke the devourer for tithers. I don't think He had the Tasmanian Devil in mind when He made that promise. He had things in mind like greed, selfishness, impulse consumerism and waste—things that can destroy people's resources and squander their opportunities. The very act of giving a tithe is an act of faith. It affirms the belief that living on 90% with God's blessing is better than living on 100% without it. But it also acknowledges our dependence on God and welcomes His protection - Fresh Illustrations.

Malachi 3:16

Robert Morgan

A fourth kind of necessary communication is Soul Talk - talking about matters of the soul, talking about the Lord Jesus. Katrina very often says, "You know, I found an interesting thing in my Bible study today..." When was the last time you said something like that to your spouse? When was the last time you said, "Let me tell you how the Lord answered this prayer of mine..."?

The Bible has a word for this kind of conversation:**Fellowship**. Malachi 3:16 says: Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name. "Then will be mine," says the Lord Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possessions." ([Communication How To Stay Married Without Staying Miserable](#))

Malachi 3:16-18 Returning God's Love

The book of Malachi begins with this wholehearted word from the Lord to His halfhearted worshippers: "I have loved you" (Mal 1:2). Though Israel had long been the object of God's love, they no longer returned His love.

God listed the ways His people had offended His love through their disobedience. Israel's response was to question God. When He implored them, "Return to Me, and I will return to you," they questioned Him in their blindness, "In what way shall we return?" (Mal 3:7). With divine "tough love," the Lord exposed their many blind spots. He did this so that they might repent and accept His love, and return it with wholehearted obedience.

We too are often halfhearted in our faith, appearing to love and serve God but really loving and serving ourselves. Today, as in Malachi's time, God looks for people who reverence Him by maintaining two spiritual practices: speaking to each other about Him, and meditating on His wonderful attributes (v.16). The first is fellowship with God's people; the second is fellowship with God Himself. Not only are we to receive and share God's love, we are also to return it through glad obedience.

Such worshipers are God's "jewels" (v.17). Are you one of them? — by Joanie Yoder

"We love You, Lord Jesus," we often will say,

But are we as ready His will to obey?

Let's heed what God's Spirit would have us to do—

That's how we show Him a love that is true. —D. De Haan

To love God is to obey God.

Malachi 3:17 Glass Beach

"On the day when I act," says the Lord Almighty, "they will be my treasured possession." Malachi 3:17

Early 20th-century residents of Fort Bragg, California, disposed of their trash by throwing it over a cliff and onto a nearby beach. Cans, bottles, tableware, and household garbage accumulated in huge, disgusting piles. Even when residents stopped depositing trash on the beach, it remained an embarrassment—a dump seemingly beyond reclamation.

Over the years, however, wave action broke up the glass and pottery and washed the rubbish out to sea. The pounding surf rolled and tumbled the glass fragments in the sand on the ocean floor, frosting and smoothing the surface and creating gemlike "sea glass," which it then deposited back onto the beach. The surf created a kaleidoscopic beauty at which visitors to Glass Beach now stare in wonder.

Relax in God's #love today.

Perhaps you feel as though your life has become a dump—a mess beyond hope. If so, you need to know that there is someone who loves you and waits to redeem and reclaim you. Give Jesus your heart and ask Him to make you pure and clean. He may tumble you a bit, and it may take time to smooth away the rough edges. But He will never give up on you. He will make you into one of His jewels!

Lord, when we have nothing left but You, we are right where You want us. You can use any situation for Your glory and our good. You never give up on us. Help us to relax in Your love.

God loves us too much to let us remain as we are.

INSIGHT: Paul wrote the letter of 1 Thessalonians to assure the believers that Jesus is indeed coming back, even though we don't know when. Everyone who believes in Him—both the living and the dead—will meet Him in the air and be with Him forever. After assuring us of this wonderful truth (see ch. 4), Paul reminds us in today's reading that while we eagerly wait for Christ's return, God is working in us to prepare us to be in His presence.

By David Roper

Malachi 3:15 Do Those Who Tempt God Really Escape?

Age-old dilemma: why do the godless seem to do so well? Sometimes, you just have to wait a little longer. Recent trial of co-workers of notorious atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair ended in convictions. She had proudly called herself the most hated woman in America. Her lawsuits got prayer and Bible reading out of the public schools. A few years ago, she disappeared. Along with \$600,000 of the organization's money. Months went by. Finally her son William, the one she sued the schools over, the one who later betrayed her by becoming a Christian, reported her missing. No one else had. Authorities believe her fellow atheists murdered her, dismembered her, and stuffed her in 55 gallon drums. Her body has never been found. Perhaps those who challenge God don't escape after all. (David Holwick)

Malachi 3:17

C H Spurgeon

Faith's Checkbook

Exceedingly Precious

"They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."—Malachi 3:17

A Day is coming in which the crown jewels of our great King shall be counted, that it may be seen whether they answer to the inventory which His Father gave Him. My soul, wilt thou be among the precious things of Jesus? Thou art precious to Him if He is precious to thee, and thou shalt be His "in that day," if He is thine in this day.

In the days of Malachi, the chosen of the Lord were accustomed so to converse with each other that their God Himself listened to their talk. He liked it so well that He took notes of it; yes, and made a book of it, which he lodged in His record office. Pleased with their conversation, He was also pleased with them. Pause, my soul, and ask thyself: If Jesus were to listen to thy talk would He be pleased with it? Is it to His glory and to the edification of the brotherhood? Say, my soul, and be sure thou sayest the truth.

But what will the honor be for us poor creatures to be reckoned by the Lord to be His crown jewels! This honor have all the saints. Jesus not only says, "They are mine," but, "They shall be mine." He bought us, sought us, brought us in, and has so far wrought us to His image, that we shall be fought for by Him with all His might.

Malachi 4:2

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings. Malachi 4:2

At the end of the Old Testament it is meet that the sun should break out. The morning that broke on Paradise was clear enough. It was without clouds. But the sky soon became darkened, and at last veiled, with only here and there a chink of blue sky left. All through the dark succeeding centuries there have been gleams of sunshine to let men know that the sun was shining still. Every precious promise, every solemn type, every holy life, that was bathed in supernatural beauty, was like a shining forth of the sun through the bars of human darkness and sin. But evidently more was in store than Old Testament saints had dreamed; and the time was coming when the reign of type, symbol, and parable, would be succeeded by the clear vision of the face of God.

We live in the days of open vision. Let us go forth and exult. We are to rejoice in every good thing He gives us. As the young calves of the early spring manifest their exuberant life in their caperings and gambols in the pastures, so let us give expression to our joy. Exult because of the clear shining of God's love: exult because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth: exult because He is coming again, as surely as He came once. Wake up, my soul, take psaltery and harp, and sing. The Bridegroom is at hand. Hark! are those his chariot wheels reverberating through the air? Even so! Lord Jesus, come quickly!

Malachi 4:2

Our Daily Bread

LET'S GET GROWING

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18

Several years ago my interest in flowers had our home resembling a nursery. There's something about the presence of growing plants that I find very enjoyable. As I daily inspected their progress, I gained from my little green friends a new appreciation of the joy and necessity of the wonderful process of growth.

As Christians, we too are like plants. We should put down our roots, break up through the earth, spread out our branches, and burst into blossom. Such a thriving condition, however, isn't always evident in our lives. It's so easy to become bored and listless in the bland routine of our daily activities. Often we just hang on and merely exist without moving steadily toward maturity and fruitfulness.

At such times we are at a spiritual standstill and must allow Jesus the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. 4:2) to warm our hearts anew with His love. We must send our roots deep into the Word of God by meditating on it day and night (Ps. 1:2). Then we will be like a fruitful tree planted by rivers of living water, and our branches will extend outward in an ever-increasing influence and witness. They will be filled with blossoms that reflect the beauty of righteous living.

If we've become dormant, let's get growing! Martin R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI.

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If God can make a tiny seed
Into a flower so fair,
What can He make, O soul, of thee
Through study, faith, and prayer?
Anon.
When growth stops, decay begins.

Malachi 4:2 Restoring Order

As I looked at family members gathered around the Thanksgiving table, I smiled at the range of talents represented. At one end were doctors; at the other end were musicians. Thanks to doctors, human bodies operate more efficiently. Thanks to musicians, beautiful sounds uplift our spirits and soothe troubled minds.

Although their abilities are very different, doctors and musicians rely on the same thing: an orderly universe. Without order, there would be no predictability; without predictability, there would be no music or medicine.

Within our orderly world, disease is a sign that something is “out of order.” Healing is a sign that God will some day restore all things to their original condition (Acts 3:21). When John the Baptist wanted to know whether Jesus was the “Coming One,” Jesus said, “Go and tell John . . . the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Luke 7:20-22). Healing was evidence that Jesus was Israel’s Messiah (Mal. 4:2).

I am thankful for music that soothes my troubled mind and soul, and for medicine that heals my body, because they remind me of the ultimate healing and restoration that Christ is accomplishing. — by Julie Ackerman Link

What are the prospects for this earth?
What hope is there for man?
A world restored through Jesus Christ
In whom we see God’s plan. —D. De Haan
Jesus specializes in restoration.

Malachi 4:2 Songbird In The Dark

Just before the sunrise, we often hear songbirds welcoming the dawn. Despite the darkness, we know that the radiant light of the sun will soon appear.

Fanny Crosby has been called “The Songbird in the Dark.” Though blinded in infancy, she wrote hymns that inspirationally envision our future reunion with Christ. Early in her life, Fanny had a dream in which she saw the panorama of a glorious heaven, and many of her songs reflect that theme. By the time of her death, she had penned at least 8,000 hymns. Songs such as “Tell Me the Story of Jesus” and “To God Be the Glory” are still popular today.

When Zacharias praised God in anticipation of the Messiah, he also looked forward to a spiritual sunrise. Citing Malachi 4:2, he proclaimed: “The Dayspring [sunrise] from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness” (Luke 1:78-79). That Messiah came to earth, died for our sins, rose again, ascended, and promised to return for us.

Do you feel surrounded by dark and confusing circumstances? You can still lift your praise to God for the bright future you will share with His Son. The words of Fanny Crosby’s beloved hymn “Blessed Assurance” encourage us as we anticipate this glorious reunion with Christ. — by Dennis Fisher

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,

Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. —Crosby

For the Christian, the dark sorrows of earth will one day be changed into the bright songs of heaven.

Malachi 4:2

C H Spurgeon

Faith's Checkbook

Never Despair

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.”—Malachi 4:2

FULFILLED once in the first advent of our glorious Lord and yet to have a fuller accomplishment in His second advent, this gracious word is also for daily use. Is it dark with the reader? Does the night deepen into a denser blackness? Still let us not despair: the sun will yet rise. When the night is darkest, dawn is nearest.

The sun which will arise is of no common sort. It is THE sun—the Sun of Righteousness, whose every ray is holiness. He who comes to cheer us, comes in the way of justice as well as of mercy, comes to violate no law even to save us. Jesus as much displays the holiness of God as His love. Our deliverance, when it comes, will be safe because of His righteousness.

Our one point of inquiry should be: “Do we fear the name of the Lord? Do we reverence the living God, and walk in His ways?” Then for us the night must be short; and when the morning cometh, all the sickness and sorrow of our soul will be over forever. Light, warmth, joy, and clearness of vision will come, and healing of every disease and distress will follow after.

Has Jesus risen upon us? Let us sit in the sun. Has He hidden His face? Let us wait for His rising. He will shine forth as surely as the sun.

Malachi 4:2

C H Spurgeon

Faith's Checkbook

Grow Up

“And ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.”—Malachi 4:2

YES, when the sun shines, the sick quit their chambers, and walk abroad to breathe the fresh air. When the sun brings spring and summer, the cattle quit their stalls and seek pasture on the higher Alps. Even thus, when we have conscious fellowship with our Lord, we leave the stall of despondency, and walk abroad in the fields of holy confidence. We ascend to the mountains of joy and feed on sweet pasturage which grows nearer heaven than the provender of carnal men.

To “go forth” and to “grow up” is a double promise. O my soul, be thou eager to enjoy both blessings! Why shouldst thou be a prisoner? Arise, and walk at liberty. Jesus saith that His sheep shall go in and out and find pasture; go forth, then, and feed in the rich meadows of boundless love.

Why remain a babe in grace? Grow up. Young calves grow fast, especially if they are stall-fed; and thou hast the choice care of thy Redeemer. Grow, then, in grace and in knowledge of thy Lord and Savior. Be neither straitened nor stunted. The Sun of Righteousness has risen upon thee. Answer to His beams, as the buds to the natural sun. Open thine heart, expand and grow up into Him in all things.

Malachi 4:2 Sunrise!

Read: Malachi 4:1-6

The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. —Malachi 4:2

My state's name, “Idaho,” according to one legend, comes from a Shoshone Indian word, “ee-dah-how.” When translated into English, it means something like, “Behold! The sun rising over the mountain.” I often think of that when the sun breaks over the eastern peaks and spills light and life into our valley.

Also, I think of Malachi's promise: "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4:2). This is God's irrevocable promise that our Lord Jesus will come again and all creation "will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21).

Each new sunrise is a reminder of that eternal morning when "bright heaven's Sun" will arise with healing in His wings. Then everything that has been made will be made over and made irrevocably right. There will be no throbbing backs or knees, no financial struggles, no losses, no aging. One Bible version says that when Jesus returns we will "go out and leap like calves released from the stall" (Mal. 4:2 NIV). This is my highest imagination and my hope.

Jesus said, "Surely I am coming quickly" (Rev. 22:20). Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

You have reason for optimism if you're looking for Christ's return.

By David Roper

Malachi 4:2

Our Daily Bread

June 21, 2001

Sunshine For Your Soul

READ: Psalm 84:1-12

The Lord God is a sun and shield. --Psalm 84:11

Many people feel cheerful in fair weather, but they are depressed when skies are gray. The travel industry thrives on this fact by luring millions of people to brighter climates. There's nothing wrong with enjoying the sun and its many benefits. But if we rely on good weather to maintain our good cheer, the climate of our inner world will be as changeable as the weather.

This was my condition before I became a Christian while in my teens. Each morning I would check out the weather. If it was bright, I felt happy; if it was gloomy, so was I. One night I realized I needed Jesus. Kneeling by my bed, I accepted His forgiveness for my sins and invited Him into my life. The next morning I forgot to check the weather! It simply didn't matter anymore. The "Sun of Righteousness" had risen in my heart (Malachi 4:2) and had replaced my fickle source of happiness with Himself.

Since then, my personal world has known some dark times, but the Lord has been my constant "sun and shield" (Psalm 84:11). I still prefer sunny days, but I'm no longer a "sun-worshiper." Instead, I'm a worshiper of God's Son who shines brightly within me—whatever the weather.

Which kind of worshiper are you? —Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

There is sunshine in my soul today,

More glorious and bright

Than glows in any earthly sky,

For Jesus is my light. —Hewitt

Lasting happiness doesn't come from sunny days but from the Son of God.

Malachi 4:2

J C Philpot - Just as the sun rises in the east and gradually mounts up into the meridian sky, dispersing with every ray light, warmth, and gladness; so this blessed Lord Jesus, as the Sun of righteousness, is ever dispersing the beams of his grace and the rays of his favor; and whenever those beams come, and those rays fall, there is light and life, and everything to make the soul holy and happy. Now a man would act very foolishly if, wishing to have light in his room when the sun was shining at noonday, he should shut all the shutters, and strike a match to give him a little light for a few moments. Let us not then be so foolish as to look for happiness or comfort in our own performances when the glorious Sun of righteousness is at the right hand of God, and shining thence upon believing hearts. But when the veil is over the heart, it is like shutters in a room--there is no light to show who, what, or where Jesus is. And then need we wonder that men strike a light and make a fire, that they may "walk in the sparks of their own kindling?" But

what is God's word against all such? "This shall you have of my hand, you shall lie down in sorrow" (Isaiah 50:11). - Daily Portions

September 2

"Unto you who fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Malachi 4:2

Oh, what a mercy for the Church of Christ that the God and Father of the Lord Jesus has not left her as he might justly have left her, to perish in her sins, but has provided for her a Savior, and a great one, and does from time to time encourage every poor, self-condemned sinner to hope in his mercy! The very things, poor, exercised soul, that most try your mind are the very things that make such a Savior suitable to you. You are dark; this makes the Sun of righteousness exactly suitable to enlighten you. You are cold; this makes you need the Sun to warm you. You are cheerless and cast down; this makes you need the Sun to gladden you. You are barren and unfruitful, and lament that you cannot bring forth fruit to God's glory; you need the Sun to fertilize you. You are, at times, very dead in your feelings, and can scarcely find any inclination to pray, meditate, or read the Scriptures; you need the Sun to enliven and revive you. Are not, then, these very trials and temptations necessary to make you feel that the Lord Jesus is the Sun you need, the very Sun that David (Psalm 84:11) felt him to be? What value do those put upon the Lord Jesus who make a fire for themselves, and walk in the sparks of their own kindling? What is Jesus to those who know no trouble of soul? What real and earnest prayer or fervent desire have they after him? what ardent longing for his appearing? what breathings to see and feel his blood and righteousness? Oh! it is sharp exercises, manifold trials, and powerful temptations that make the soul really value the Lord Jesus. - J. C. Philpot. Daily Words for Zion's Wayfarers.

Malachi 4:2

Our Daily Bread

April 22, 1998

The Power Of The Sun

READ: Psalm 85:1-13

The Sun of Righteousness shall arise. --Malachi 4:2

I remember the day I arose early to work in my garden but found dense fog over the entire landscape, limiting my vision to only a few feet. It was so wet that work was out of the question. But my early rising was not in vain. As I sat on a potato crate in the doorway of the barn facing east, I was to behold one of the grandest of all heavenly spectacles, the sunrise.

First there was a brightening of the fog. As the sun shed its light and warmth, the mist began to move upward, and at last the sun burst through in all its glory. The trees dripped with moisture, and a thousand dewdrops on the grass and shrubbery sparkled like so many diamonds as they reflected the sun.

I sat transfixed, forgetting about the beans I had planned to pick. I saw in the sunrise my own experience. Once I too was in a fog, lost and confused until the Sun of Righteousness arose in my heart. First a glimmer of hope, and then one day in a moment the light burst through and I saw the One who scattered all my doubts and fears.

O that we today, like the sparkling dewdrops, would reflect His light and glory. As "we walk in the light" (1 Jn. 1:7), may men and women see the Son shining brightly through our lives and words. —M. R. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Sun of my soul, Thou Savior dear,

It is not night if Thou be near;

O may no earth-born cloud arise

To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes. --Keble

Christians are windows through which the glory of Jesus can shine.

Malachi 4:2

Spurgeon's Sermon Notes

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. — Malachi 4:2

THERE is one grand distinction among men — "him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not." See last verse of previous chapter.

Fearing God is the mark which distinguishes man from man far more than wealth, rank, or nationality.

The coming of Christ is a calamity or a blessing to men according to their character.

What a change of figures! To the wicked, "an oven"! (see verse 1). To God fearing men, a "Sun"!

Our text was fulfilled at our Lord's first coming.

It awaits a far larger fulfillment at his second coming.

It is always true as a general principle, and it is felt to be true when the Lord Jesus spiritually draws near to his people.

I. LET US THINK OF OUR LORD AS THE SUN.

1. He is the center of the whole system of grace.
2. He is to us the Grand Attraction, and Holdfast, keeping us in our places, as the sun keeps the planets in their orbits.
3. He is the source of all good. His beams are righteousness: all that emanates from him is good: all good emanates from him; even as all light and heat come, directly or indirectly, from the sun.
4. He is without variableness or shadow of turning (James 1:17). In himself he is forever the same, shining on without ceasing.
5. To us he has his risings, and his settings. If for a while we are in the shade, let us look for his arising.
6. To those who fear him not he never rises, for they are blind, and know no day, and see no light.

What the world would be without the sun, that should we be without our Lord. Can we conceive the gloom, the death, etc.?

II. LET US ENJOY THE BLESSINGS WHICH HE SCATTERS.

1. What light of knowledge, what warmth of love, what radiance of joy we receive from him! Let us walk in it.
2. What health he gives! Healing for the sick, health for the strong.

Every sunbeam is medicinal, every word of Christ is life.

The earlier we come to Christ the better: his rising is attended with sparkling dews of joy. The more we commune with him the better: let us bask in the sunlight.

3. What liberty he brings! "Ye shall go forth."

When the sun has reached a certain point in his annual course, the cattle which have been stalled are led forth to the mountain pastures; so the Lord

Jesus sets his people free, and they go forth—

To enjoy spiritual privileges.

To perform spiritual duties.

To reach spiritual attainments.

To carry abroad spiritual influences.

4. What growth he fosters!—"and grow up as calves of the stall.

When the Lord Jesus is with his people—

They are abundantly fed.

They are comfortably housed.

They are regularly tended.

They advance rapidly to maturity.

A heart which communes with Jesus possesses a freshness of youth, an ease of life, and other advantages, which admirably fulfill the comparison of "calves of the stall."

As all this comes of fearing the Lord, let us be diligent in worship, careful in obedience, and reverent in spirit.

As all this comes through our Lord Jesus, let us abide under his sweet influences, and never move out of his sunshine into that far off country, where the Arctic winter is never cheered by the Sun of righteousness.

We have not to make a Sun, or move the Sun, or buy the Sun; but only to step into the free and blessed sunshine. Why do we hesitate?

Why do we not by faith pass from darkness into his marvelous light?

Sunbeams

The late Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, called upon a friend just as he had received a letter from his son, who was surgeon on board a vessel then lying off Smyrna. The son mentioned to his father that every morning, about sunrise, a fresh gale of air blew from the sea across the land, and, from its wholesomeness and utility in clearing the infected air, this wind is always called the Doctor. "Now," says Mr. Robinson, "it strikes me that the prophet Malachi, who lived in that quarter of the world, might allude to this circumstance when he says that 'the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.' The Psalmist mentions 'the wings of the wind; and it appears to me that this salubrious breeze, which attends the rising of the sun, may be properly enough considered as the wings of the sun, which contain such healing influences, rather than the beams of the sun, as the passage has been commonly understood." — Burder's "Oriental Customs"

There is a beautiful fable of the ancient mythology, to the effect that Apollo, who represents the sun, killed a huge poisonous serpent by arrows surely aimed, and shot from afar. It intimates that sunbeams, darted straight from heaven, destroy many deadly things that crawl upon the ground, and so make the world a safer habitation. The parable is, in this respect, a stroke of truth, and it coincides with a feature of the eternal covenant. Light from the face of Jesus, when it is permitted to stream right into a human heart, destroys the noisome things that haunt it, as Apollo's arrows slew the snake. — W. Arnot

In all the departments of vegetable, animal, moral, and spiritual life, light stands out as the foremost blessing and benefit which God confers. In physical existence this is especially true. Thousands die for lack of light. No vigorous vegetable life, no healthy animal life, can long exist without light. The pestilence "walketh in darkness".... Sir James Wylie, late physician to the Emperor of Russia, attentively studied the effects of light as a curative agent in the hospital of St. Petersburg, and he discovered that the number of patients who were cured in rooms properly lighted was four times that of those confined in dark rooms. These different results are due to the agency of light, without a full supply of which plants and animals maintain but a sickly and feeble existence. Light is the cheapest and best of all medicines. Nervous ailments yield to the power of sunshine. Pallid faces grow fresh and ruddy beneath its glow. The sun's rays have wonderful purifying power. — H. L. Hastings

"Heaven be praised! I have once more seen the sun," said Dr. Hayes, in his record of the experience of a certain Arctic day, when he, with others had visited a point from which they could see the sun come up for the first time from his long winter isolation. "Off went our caps with simultaneous impulse, and we hailed this long-lost wanderer of the heavens with loud demonstrations of joy."

A man scoffingly asked, "What advantage has a religious man over any one like myself?. Does not the sun shine on me as on him, this fine day?" "Yes," replied his companion, a pious laborer, "but the religious man has two suns shining on him at once — one on his body, the other on his soul." — The Biblical Treasury

Malachi 4:2; Psalm 84:11

Today in the Word

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. - Numbers 6:24-25

When was the last time you watched a sunrise? Perhaps you've slept in too often, and can't remember.

If you've been up, perhaps you've been busy or stuck in traffic, and not taken the time to enjoy this daily drama of nature. Perhaps because sunrise is so frequent, you've been taking it for granted. Yet no two sunrises are exactly the same—our Creator makes a new masterpiece each and every morning!

Today's verses use the sun as a metaphor for God. Notice there is no confusion between the sun and God, as in the case of the pagan nations which surrounded Israel. The sun is a created object, and only the Creator is worthy of worship.

In that case, what attributes of God do the Jewish writers want to highlight by comparing Him to the sun? One answer is His righteousness and glory (Mal. 4:2). For those who revere the Lord, a new day is coming. Like the sun rising, God will appear on the horizon of our wicked world, dispelling the darkness and bringing the fire of judgment to evildoers and granting healing and redemption to His worshipers (v. 1).

In exactly this way, the first coming of Christ was like a sunrise: “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned” (Isa. 9:2; cf. Luke 1:76--79). When the day of the Lord is full, there will in fact be no more need for the sun—“the Lord will be [our] everlasting light” (Isa. 60:19-20).

A second meaning of this sun metaphor spotlights God’s blessing or favor (Ps. 84:11). That’s why the standard priestly blessing included the phrase, “the Lord make His face shine upon you” (Num. 6:25). As with the first meaning, this happy result is only for those who are living righteously, “those whose walk is blameless.”

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Schedule a time soon to get up early and watch the sun rise. Pick a good vantage point. Allow plenty of time. You might even invite a friend to join you. ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Malachi 4:2 Son of Righteousness

Robert Morgan - We can even go to the book of Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, written about 400 years before Christ was born, and find this theme. In Malachi 4—the last chapter of the Old Testament—the ancient prophet avows that the Messiah’s coming will be like the sun rising in the morning, with healing in its rays.

It takes eight minutes and fifteen seconds for a particle of light to travel through space from the sun to the earth. That means that if at this moment the sun would suddenly burn out like a light bulb when the filament blows, we would have just about eight minutes of life left on this earth. Then suddenly the world would be plunged into darkness. I suppose our power stations would work for a few minutes, and I suppose we could see the distant twinkling stars. But for the most part, this planet would be plunged into pitch blackness and we would all be groping around like blind men.

And then, of course, the deadly blasts of cold air would blanket the planet, and temperatures would plunge into a deep freeze. The weather systems would all collapse, and without the sun’s gravitational pull, our planet would wobble out of its circuit and float away into the blackness of the void.

That’s what a person’s life is like without Jesus Christ! The Son of God is to the human soul what the sun above is to planet Earth. He provides warmth and light, and our lives are to revolve around Him in a ceaseless orbit of faith and obedience. Without Him, we grope in the darkness, looking for hope, but all is dark and cold, and our lives grow wobbly and gradually lose altitude until they’re lost in the blackness of eternity.

The Psalmist said, “The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life—of whom shall I be afraid” (Psalm 27:1). ([Inside the Tabernacle - Christ: Our Sufficiency](#))

Malachi 4:4-6 A Family in Trouble

Many of America’s 30 million white-tailed deer find themselves endangered not by guns, but by the cars of our expanding suburbs. I was reminded of their plight when a mature doe dashed through traffic just ahead of me. As I watched, I wondered what had driven her to take such a chance, and why she then stopped on the other side and looked back over her shoulder. As I drove by her, I turned to follow her gaze and saw two small fawns looking helplessly at their mother across the busy street. Instead of following, they turned and walked back into the woods.

This family is not alone. We too can find ourselves in circumstances of separation and danger we did not anticipate. Reading Malachi and Matthew reminds us that we are troubled children of troubled parents who desperately need the help of our Father in heaven. Sometimes we need His help to see and avoid repeating the sins of our fathers (Neh. 9:2-3). Sometimes we need His help to turn back to the example and care of loving parents (Luke 15:18).

Only from our heavenly Father can we find the perfect forgiveness, example, and inner grace we need. He knows we are all fallen children of fallen parents, and even now He offers us the help of His Spirit and the rescue of His Son. — by Mart De Haan

Each day we learn from yesterday

Of God’s great love and care;

And every burden we must face

He'll surely help us bear. —D. De Haan

It's never too soon to turn back to God.

Malachi 4:6

Final Words

Our Daily Bread

"Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse" (Malachi 4:6).

Last words are powerful. Malachi 4 expresses God's final words to Israel under the Old Testament dispensation. For four hundred years He would remain silent until they would hear "the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord'" (Matt. 3:3). Although Malachi 4:6 appears to be a curse, it really is not. It does not close the door on hope. On the contrary, it was God's last appeal of love. The threat of a curse, expressed by the word lest, was aimed at averting the natural consequence of disobedience.

G. Campbell Morgan noted that from Malachi's time until Christ's, rabbis did not end their reading of Malachi with verse 6. Skipping from verse 4 to 6, they then reverted to verse 5, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD." And in the Greek Old Testament, verse 4 is put at the end. Thus the Jews regarded God's final words as spoken in love, not in anger.

God's final prophetic words to believers in the New Testament are also filled with hope: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Rev. 22:20-21).

God's last words to Israel and to the church can give us hope. The assurance of His grace and the warnings from His love will keep us living close to Him. —D. J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Christian's future is as bright as the promises of God.