

ADRIAN ROGERS

# LEGACY

C O L L E C T I O N



M A L A C H I

These transcripts are taken straight from live audio recordings of Adrian Rogers during his tenure as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. As such some of the transcripts may contain stutters, stammers, transcription errors, and other authentic remarks as would be common in a live setting.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means-electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other-except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without prior permission of the publisher.



PO Box 38300 | Memphis, TN 38183-0300 | 901.382.7900 | [www.LWF.org](http://www.LWF.org)

Copyright © 2022 Love Worth Finding Ministries, Inc.  
Transcripts are used by permission of the Rogers Family Trust.

# Malachi

1. **The Never Ending War** | *Malachi 1:1–5*
2. **When You Doubt God’s Love** | *Malachi 1:1–5*
3. **What to Do When You’re Weary of Worship** | *Malachi 1:6–13*
4. **How to Keep the Wonder in Your Worship** | *Malachi 1:6–14*
5. **Enjoying Covenant Blessings** | *Malachi 2:1–9*
6. **The Problem of Throwaway Marriages** | *Malachi 2:11–16*
7. **How to Change the Superficial into the Supernatural** | *Malachi 3:1–4*
8. **Opening the Windows of Heaven** | *Malachi 3:7–11*
9. **Faithful in Stewardship** | *Malachi 3:7–12*
10. **How to Obtain Financial Freedom** | *Malachi 3:7–12*
11. **It Pays to Serve Jesus** | *Malachi 3:13–16*
12. **Some Golden Daybreak** | *Malachi 4:1–3*

*(Click on any sermon title to go directly to that sermon.)*

# The Never Ending War

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** January 22, 1989

**Main Scripture Text:** Malachi 1:1–5

*“And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.”*

MALACHI 1:5

## Outline

Introduction

- I. The War Between Jacob and Esau
- II. The War Inside of You
- III. Esau Is a Picture of the Flesh
  - A. He Was Red
  - B. He Was a Born Loser
  - C. He Was the Elder
- IV. Jacob Is a Picture of the Spirit
- V. Esau Minded Earthly Things
- VI. Jacob Minded Spiritual Things
- VII. How the Battle over the Flesh Is Won
- VIII. How the Battle over the Flesh Is Lost

Conclusion

## Introduction

I want you to take God’s Word and open right where we were this morning, to the Book of Malachi chapter 1. I’m not going to be preaching through the Book of Malachi on Sunday mornings and Sunday nights regularly, but tonight I want to cover some material that I did not cover this morning. Actually, I preached three different sermons this morning—one at 8:00, one at 9:30, and one at 10:55—and all three came out different, because I just had too much material in there. I think I came closest to getting it all in at 9:30. There’s so much in this passage of Scripture that I want to say that I’m just going, tonight, to put an addendum on the message that I preached this morning.

The title of our study is this: “The Perpetual War” or “The Never-Ending War.” Now I’m going to read the same verses that I read this morning: *“The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste...”*—now, when God

says, “his mountains,” He’s talking about the place where the Edomites lived; his heritage, his descendents were the Edomites—*“for the dragons of the wilderness.”* That is, the wild animals would live where they used to live: *“Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness,”*—now, watch this next phrase and underscore it—*“and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever”* (Malachi 1:1–4). I want to speak to you tonight on “The Never-Ending War.” There is a perpetual war between Jacob and Esau, and there is a tremendous lesson that is to be learned about this perpetual war.

## **I. The War Between Jacob and Esau**

Now I want you to go back to Genesis chapter 25, and find out how this war began. I’m going to tell you what it has to do with you, in a moment, because it has a lot to do with you. Actually, I’m going to show you, from the Word of God, how to live in victory, tonight. I’m going to show you how to be the winner, in this perpetual war. It is very, very important that you stay with me in all of the scriptures, tonight, because, if you don’t, you won’t have the foggiest idea about what I’m saying, tonight. If you do, you’ll have a tremendous blessing.

I want you to see where all of this got started. It started with the birth of two boys who were twins. They were born at the same time, but there was nothing identical about these two twins. Genesis chapter 25, verse 19 and following: *“And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham’s son: Abraham begat Isaac: and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.”* Now watch this—you’re going to see where the war began: *“And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.”* Well, that was a reasonable thing. She says, “Lord, there’s a battle going on inside of me. What is this battle going on inside of me?” And here’s the answer that the Lord gave her: *“And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger”* (Genesis 25:19–23).

Now isn’t this just an interesting piece of Hebrew history? Well, it is interesting. I’m going to tell you, if you will stay tuned, if you will give me your ear, your mind, and your heart, and if you will listen, you’re going to learn a valuable, and a wonderful, wonderful lesson, tonight.

God said to Rebekah, “In your womb are two sons, and they are the progenitor of

two different nations: the Edomite people, and the Israelite people.” Now these two nations represent, in Bible typology, the flesh and the spirit. I’m going to show you how there is a perpetual war in all of life between the flesh and the spirit, which is between Esau, being the flesh, and, Jacob, being the spirit. Now for a while, you might think I’m forcing this interpretation. If you’ll stay with me, not only will I show how that Esau represents the flesh, and how Jacob represents the spirit, but I’m going to also show you from the Word of God how to have victory over the flesh, how to live in the Spirit, and how to have the blessings that God wants for His children.

## II. The War Inside of You

You see, there is another war that’s going on in you, just like there was a war that was going on inside of Rebekah. Turn with me to Galatians chapter 5, here, for a moment. By the way, we’re going to look at a lot of Scripture, here, tonight, and so, we’re not on radio, so maybe I can slow down just a little bit, and share with you something very beautiful and very wonderful. Galatians chapter 5 and verse 16 through 23—here’s the same kind of war that’s going on inside of you. Notice: *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”* Now when the Bible says *flesh* here, it doesn’t mean, “skin and bones.” It means, “the old Adamic nature.” *“Ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh”*—that old Adamic nature: *“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit,”*—that means it has strong desires and war against the Spirit—*“and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would”* (Galatians 5:16–17).

Have you ever felt that battle going on inside of you? The flesh, as the old nature; the spirit, as the nature of God in you. Have you felt that? Nod your head, please. All right, you’ve felt that. If you haven’t felt that, I don’t think you’ve ever been saved. There is that old Adamic nature that we got from Adam; then, there is that nature that we received from the Lord Jesus Christ, called the spirit.

Now the Bible says that the flesh is there to keep us from doing the things we would do, and the things that we want to do, in the name of the Lord Jesus. He goes on to say, *“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law”* (Galatians 5:18–23).

Now how would you like to know the fruit of the Spirit in your life rather than the works of the flesh? That’s what we’re going to learn, tonight, as we study the life of

Jacob and Esau. Esau represents the flesh, and Jacob represents the spirit.

### **III. Esau Is a Picture of the Flesh**

Back again, now, to Genesis chapter 25, and look with me again, and let me tell you why Esau is a picture of the flesh.

#### **A. He Was Red**

Now notice when the boys were born—I begin reading, here, in verse 24: *“And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau”* (Genesis 25:24–25). Now it’s very interesting that he’s red. Do you know what the name Red means? It means, “Adam.” God called the first man Red. That was his nickname. “Hey, Red.” Adam’s nickname was Red. Well, as a matter of fact, the name Adam is a nickname. It means, “red.” Adam was made of the red earth. He formed Adam of the dust of the ground, and called him Red. You didn’t know that, did you? All right, you’ve already learned something. All right, so here’s Esau, and he’s very much like Adam—he’s red.

#### **B. He Was a Born Loser**

Secondly, I want you to notice that he was a born loser. Notice, if you will, in verse 23: *“And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other...and the elder”—that’s Esau—“shall serve the younger”* (Genesis 25:23). Now what God says is that Esau, and the spirit of Esau, will be ultimately vanquished.

#### **C. He Was the Elder**

The third thing I want you to notice is that he was the elder. Notice, in verse 25: *“And the first came out red”* (Genesis 25:25). That is, he was the first baby born. You see, the flesh always comes before the Spirit. We’re born first of the flesh; and then, we’re born of the Spirit. So the Spirit does not arrive on the scene, until the second birth. The first birth is the Adamic birth. The second birth is the spiritual birth. So first of all, you have Adam; and then, you have the Spirit. First, Esau; and then, Jacob. You’re going to find out that Esau is opposed to the things of God. Notice, in verse 22: *“And the children struggled together within her”* (Genesis 25:22).

Now what is happening is this: There’s a war going on in Rebekah’s womb. It seems that even in the womb, Esau is trying to get at Jacob. Esau is a picture of the flesh. I’m going to show you more of that later on.

### **IV. Jacob Is a Picture of the Spirit**

Let’s talk a little bit about Jacob. Jacob represents the Spirit in you. Now why do I say

he represents the Spirit? Well, look, if you will, in verse 27, where the Bible says, *“And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter,”*—I’m going to tell you more about that later on, that he was a hunter; but notice—*“a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents”* (Genesis 25:27). Do you see the word *plain* there? Look at it. The Hebrew word *tam*—I guess we’d anglicize it *t-a-m*. And in other places in the Hebrew language, this word is translated, “perfect; upright; undefiled.”

Now God is contrasting Jacob with Esau. Esau is that hairy, red man, while Jacob is that plain man. Esau—we’re going to find out—was a hunter. Notice, in verse 27, that he was *“a cunning hunter”* and *“a man of the field.”* *“Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.”* We find out, later, that Jacob was a shepherd. One man was a man of the field, while the other man was a man of the fold. One man had a killer instinct; the other had a protective instinct to guard his flock. Esau’s passion was to kill; Jacob’s passion was to protect.

## V. Esau Minded Earthly Things

Now Esau—you’re going to find out—was a man that just minded earthly things. Continue to read, in verse 27: *“And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob sod pottage:”*—that means, he “cooked stew”—*“and Esau came from the field, and he was faint”* (Genesis 25:27–29). Have you ever been out fishing or hunting all day long, and come in hungry? Boy, I tell you, you just can’t be hungrier than to be out in the field, hunting all day, or fishing all day, and come in. He wasn’t just hungry; he was hongry. Have you ever been that way? I mean, he just felt like, if he didn’t get something to eat, he was going to pass out. So he’s out there; he’s bone weary, and he is famished.

Well, let’s continue to read: *“And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?”* He wasn’t really about to die; but that’s the way he felt at that time. *“What profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright”* (Genesis 25:30–34).

Now get the picture. Esau is bone weary. He’s famished. He’s been hunting all day. He caught a whiff of what Jacob has been cooking—that stew; his stomach growls; his mouth waters; and he says, “Jake.” “What is it, Red?” “Jake, sell me, please—give me some of that.” He says, “Well, you know, I’ve been working all day on this. It’s for me.” He says, “Look,” he said, “I am about to die. Please give me some of that stew.” He

says, “Well, Red, I’ll tell you what I’ll do, buddy. You know the birthright belongs to the elder son, and you’re the elder even though we’re twins; you were born first. But if you’ll just swear to me that the birthright can be mine, I’ll give you some of this stew.” And so with a few hasty words, Esau says, “What do I care about the birthright, if I die of hunger, right now? You can just have the birthright.” And in a few hasty words, Esau showed the darkness of his heart.

Now I’m going to show you that, a little bit later. But he was a man; and it’s very clear, he was a man who was mastered by his appetite. He fulfills the type of the flesh. He was a man destitute of spiritual value. He was a man who was ready to trade the eternal for the temporal. He sold his birthright for a mess of stew. He was a man who was more interested in the physical than the spiritual. He sacrificed the permanent on the altar of the immediate.

Now what did God think about this? Well, if you want to know what God thought about it, read, in the Bible, in Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 16, and you’ll find out what God thought of this act, when old Esau said, “I’ll sell you my birthright for a bowl of stew.” And God warns us, in Hebrews 12, verse 16: “*Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright*” (Hebrews 12:16). For one mouthful of food, he sold his birthright. And for that, God called him *profane*. That doesn’t mean he cursed. The word *profane* literally means, “with your back to the temple.” He was a man who put spiritual things behind him, and material things before him. He was a man who was a materialist, rather than a spiritual man.

## **VI. Jacob Minded Spiritual Things**

Now Jacob, on the other hand, had a heart and a mind for spiritual things. Notice, in verse 31: “*Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.*” Now in a sense, Jacob tricked Esau. In sense, he manipulated Esau. Jacob did wrong. But you’ll miss the point, if you miss this point. Whether he tried to get the birthright the right way or not is not the point here. The point is, he wanted it, and Esau didn’t. The point is that Jacob had a heart for God, and the things of God, and his affections were set on things above (Colossians 3:2). Esau’s affections were set on things beneath. As you study the life of Jacob, you’re going to find out that he didn’t always do things right. As I said this morning, he made many mistakes, yet God loved him. God didn’t love him for what he was. But God loved him for what he could be, because God saw in this man a heart for Him.

Now folks, I’ve been pastoring churches for a long time. And I’ve seen a lot of Esaus, and I’ve seen a lot of Jacobs. As a matter of fact, my mind says, “Adrian, you ought to go with Esau. After all, he’s a man’s man.” I mean, Esau, on the surface, looks a lot better than Jacob. If you had to choose between them, and call one, “Most Likely to Succeed,” you wouldn’t choose Jacob. You’d choose Esau. Esau was a manly guy. He



was a self-sufficient man. He was a guy with hair on his chest. I mean, he was a man's man. He could make his own way—a hunter, a tough guy, self-sufficient guy.

Jacob wasn't. It's amazing, that some people would have called Jacob a sissy. They would have called him *Mother's pet*. He stayed home. And as a matter of fact, his mother kind of had control over him. She didn't even let him have a girlfriend, until he was 70 years old. She wouldn't even let him have a date. She kept him home. She taught him how to cook, and do these other things. So he was kind of tied to his mother's apron strings.

You know, you look at this guy, and he's kind of a homebody, a mama's boy, a liar, and he was a cheat. I mean, if you would put the two up here—if you'd put Esau over here, and if you put Jacob over here—and you'd say, "Which one is the best?" if you didn't have a discerning mind, most of us would choose Esau over and against Jacob. But God didn't say, "Jacob have I loved; Esau have I hated."

Now I'll tell you what God saw, when he saw Jacob. He didn't see Jacob's deeds—are you listening?—He saw Jacob's desires. Jacob, in his heart of hearts—weak as he was, failing as he was—had a heart for God.

In all of my ministry, I look for people who have a heart for God. Do you know where a lot of churches get in trouble? They put the Esaus rather than the Jacobs on the committees, the deacon fellowships, and other places, because these are the guys who can do it. These are the shakers and movers. Do you know what I look for, Jim, when I look for someone to serve on this staff, or someone to serve on a committee? I don't necessarily look for the most talented—not the most gifted, not the most self-assured. I look for people who have a hanger for God—a desire for God. Oh, they may be weak; they may not show up nearly as well in the line-up as an Esau. But dear friend, they have a hunger for God.

Esau despised spiritual things. He felt that religion was a weakling's crutch. He thought that Sunday School stuff was kid stuff. He sold his birthright for a mouth of pottage. Jacob was despised. But I want to tell you: He despised himself, also; he knew he was weak. But God could do something with him. God made a prince out of this man.

Now these two men represent, one the flesh, the other the spirit. Now I want to show you something: God said, over there, in the Book of Malachi, "*Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau*" (Malachi 1:2–3). And then, he says, in verse 4, that He has "*indignation for ever*" (Malachi 1:4). That is, God is always against the flesh, because the flesh is always against God.

## **VII. How the Battle over the Flesh Is Won**

Now keep that in mind. I want you to turn to Exodus chapter 17, now, and I want you to

see something. In Exodus chapter 17, I begin to read in verse 8. The children of Israel were on their way to go into the Promised Land. Do you know what the Promised Land stands for? Not Heaven. Canaan is not a picture of heaven, in spite of what some of our songs seem to say. Canaan—or the Promised Land—is picture of the Spirit-filled life. These Children of Israel had come out of Egypt—which represents the world—and they are they are headed toward Canaan—which represents the Spirit-filled life, or the fullness of Christ. Notice what happens. They're on their way to Canaan. The Bible says, *“Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand,”*—and remember, in that hand was the rod of God—*“that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.”* Now watch verse 13: *“And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword”* (Exodus 17:8–13).

Now I want to show you, right here, how the battle over the flesh is won. Who is this guy, Amalek? Well, if you want to know who Amalek is, I want to tell you that he was Esau's grandson. Now say, “How do you know he was Esau's grandson?” Genesis chapter 36, verse 12, tells us that Amalek was Esau's grandson. Now remember God said, “I have a war, not only with Esau, but also with his kinfolk.” I mean, this is a feud worse than the Hatfields and the McCoys. It goes way back. God says—listen—it is a perpetual war. It is a never-ending war.

And so here again, Amalek is still part of the flesh. It is this flesh that keeps us, or tries to keep us, from entering into victory. It is the flesh that tries to keep us from going into Canaan. Here, God's people are on their way to Canaan. Then comes Amalek. And Amalek says, “No, you're not entering into Canaan.” But they did enter in, because God gave the victory. The way God gave the victory over the flesh is the same way that God is going to give the victory to you, tonight, tomorrow, and the rest of your life.

Now how was the battle won? Well, if you'll notice, in Exodus chapter 17, beginning in verse 9, and going on, you'll notice that Moses went up on the mountaintop, and Moses had in his hand a rod. When Moses lifted up the rod, Joshua went down there on the battlefield, and would prevail over Amalek. But if Moses let down the rod, Amalek—the flesh—would prevail over the children of God, the Israel of God, and the Jacob of God. So here's the battle, as it goes this way, and that way. But finally, the battle is won, because Moses keeps holding out the rod of God. That's where the victory was; not

down there, but up here, with a man with a rod in his hand.

Now what does that rod represent? That's the message, in Moses' rod. Well, you need to learn, tonight, because that's the way you're going to have victory over the flesh, that would keep you from the Canaan, the Land of Promise, which God has for you.

With that in mind, let's just find out something about that rod. Go back to Exodus chapter 4 with me, for a moment, and let's just see about that rod. What was so important about that rod of God that Moses had, that gave victory over Amalek, the grandson of Esau? Well, let's see—Exodus chapter 4, verse 1, and following: *“And Moses answered and said, But behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand”* (Exodus 4:1–4).

Put yourself back there as an observer of this situation. God said, “Moses!” Moses said, “Yes, Lord.” God said, “Moses, I want you to lead my people out of the land of Egypt. I want you to lead them into Canaan, into victory.” Moses said, “But Lord, they won't believe me. I haven't got the goods.” God said, “Well, Moses, what's in your hand?” Moses said, “It's just a rod, just a shepherd's staff.” God said, “All right, Moses, throw it on the ground.” Moses said, “Well, now, now, wait a minute, Lord. You've taken everything else I've got. This is all I've got. It's just a rod. It's harmless. I depend on it. I defend myself with it. I lean on it. It has protected me. It has supported me. Lord God, I like that. It's become a friend to me.” God said, “Throw it down, Moses. Throw it on the ground.”

And so Moses does. And it becomes a serpent. Moses never knew there was a serpent in that rod. But God knew it. There was a serpent in there. This rod became a writhing, hissing serpent. It begins to chase Moses. Moses is running all around from this serpent. You can understand that, can't you? And then, God said, “Pick it up, Moses.” Moses said, “What's that, Lord? My hearing's not what it used to be.” God said, “Pick it up by the tail, Moses.” Moses said, “Lord, there's something you don't know about snakes.” Now every word that Moses said right now was from his heart, because his heart was in his throat. “Lord, there's something you don't understand about snakes, especially a poisonous snake. If you do pick him up, you don't pick him up by the tail, 'cause that leaves the business end free. If you do pick him up, you grab him right behind the head and hold tight.” God said, “No, that's not my way, Moses. Pick it up by the tail.”

Moses reaches down, and he picks up this serpent by the tail. And notice what happens. It becomes a rod again. But no longer is it called the rod of Moses. From henceforth, it is called the Rod of God. Let God take the snake out of it.

Bob Sorrell—the Associate Pastor, and chief administrative officer of this church—you need to take all you learned at International Harvester about leading people—organization, all of that, as good as it is—and throw it on the ground. Let God take the snake out of it. Ken Whitten, you need to take that ability to memorize things, learn things—that ability to just absorb everything that you hear like a blotter—take it and transform it into your personality. You take that winsomeness, that athletic ability, that singing ability, and everything else God has given you, and throw it on the ground. Throw it on the ground.

God doesn't want any of us to do anything for Him. He wants to do something through us. Many of us have never taken our abilities and taken death to them. Do you know what most of us want to do? We want to take our abilities and offer them to God. But God doesn't want them. Some of you are arguing with me in your minds right now. But I want to show you what I'm talking about.

God doesn't want you to do anything for Him. It was no longer Moses' rod. Now it is the Rod of God. As Moses held that rod up, it was then that Israel prevailed. What was God showing? God was showing the victory over the flesh is God-given. Do you know why some of us are not winning the victory over the flesh? I'll tell you why. We're fighting a battle already lost rather than accepting a victory already won. There's nothing worse than the flesh trying to be holy. Now the Bible says, in Galatians chapter 5 and verse 16: *“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh”* (Galatians 5:16). It doesn't say, “Don't fulfill the lust of the flesh, so you can walk in the Spirit.” It says, *“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”*

I have had to do this so many times in my own life. I am not a particularly gifted person. God has given me some gifts. God has given me some abilities. I have tried to take those gifts and those abilities, and say, “Dear God, they are not mine. They are yours. I cast them on the ground, and I take death to those things. And Lord, if you don't ever want me to use them, that is all right. If, Lord, you want me to take it back, it will no longer be mine; it'll be Yours.”

## **VIII. How the Battle over the Flesh Is Lost**

Now that's the battle over the flesh that's won. But let me show you, now, the battle over the flesh that's lost. I want you to turn, now, to 1 Samuel chapter 15. There's another battle that went on. 1 Samuel chapter 15, and I begin to read in verse 1. We're almost finished, and stay with me. Now the children of Israel are in the land. Notice what happens, in 1 Samuel 15, verse 1: *“Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to*

*anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel” (1 Samuel 15:1). Saul was a man head and shoulders above other people. He was a greatly gifted man. He could have been governor or king of anybody’s state or land. “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel...”—now, who was Amalek? Amalek was the grandson of Esau: “I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass” (1 Samuel 15:2–3).*

God said, “Kill them; slay them; destroy them.” Why is this? Well, the feud is still going on. These are the descendants of Amalek. They’re still in the land. God said, “I want them destroyed.” Now it might seem cruel what God said that He wanted done. But I want to remind you who the Amalekites were. They were a bandit nation. They rode roughshod over other nations, slaughtering, raping, torturing for mad joy. They left a trail of blood and tears for 500 years. When they would capture people, many times they would take them, and impale them on sharp sticks, and leave them squirming until they would die. They would pluck the eyes out of their victims. Sometimes, they would cut off pieces of flesh, ears, and noses from the victims, and fling them in the sky as offerings to their god. They would knock out the teeth of their victims. They would curse Israel’s God. They were descendants of Esau. They stand for the flesh. In the flesh dwells no good thing. So God says to Saul, “I want you to put them to death.”

Now I want you to see how Saul pictures the carnal Christian. Saul was one of the most gifted and naturally endowed men that you will ever meet. Now I want you to see what Saul did. And I’m reading, here, 1 Samuel chapter 15, and I begin in verse 13: *“And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed” (1 Samuel 15:13–18).*

Saul had not done this. Saul had an excuse. He had a reason for not doing this. And I want you to notice what Saul said. Saul said, in verse 20, and following: *“And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly*

*destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” Listen to this: “Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king” (1 Samuel 15:20–23).*

Now what has happened, dear friend, is that, here is old Saul, and God says, “Saul, I’ve got a war going on here. I have had indignation against these people forever. It is a perpetual war, and here are these Amalekites, descendants of Esau. I want the flesh put to death. I want it utterly destroyed.” Samuel comes back, and he says, “Saul, did you do what God told you to do?” Saul said, “I sure did, Sam.” Samuel says, “Well, what’s that I hear? I hear the sheep—the bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the oxen.” “Oh,” he said, “well, those,” he said, “they were such fine animals that I did not destroy them. I saved them, because I am going to take these things, and I am going to sacrifice them to the Lord.”

Now if you don’t get anything else, I want you to get what I’m about to say. Saul was a carnal man who tried to give to God the best of what God hates: God hates Esau. God hates the flesh. God hates the Adamic nature. There’s nothing that the flesh has that can be an offering to God. I want every preacher boy in this congregation to listen to me, and I want every Sunday School teacher to listen to me. I’m talking, tonight, to myself. If the devil can’t get you to do bad in the flesh—that is, to drink liquor, and commit adultery; to steal, and to kill—do you know what the devil will try to get you to do? He’ll try to get you to do good in the flesh.

The devil’s not going to get me to commit adultery. I’m not bragging; but, friend, I’m not going to do it. He’s not going to get me to take dope or get drunk. I’m not going to do it. I’m just not going to do it. I’m not going to do it. I’m not bragging on myself, but I’m just not going to do it. Do you understand that? I’m not. My mind is made up. I’m not going to do that. The devil knows that. Do you know the devil says, “I can’t get Adrian to do bad in the flesh; maybe I can get him to do good in the flesh. Maybe I can get him just to preach in the flesh. Maybe I can get him just to minister in the flesh”? But friend, it doesn’t matter what you do in the flesh; that which is flesh is flesh.

Here was Saul. He said, “Well, look—I’m going to give these sheep to God. I’m going to sacrifice these sheep to God.” God doesn’t want them. God doesn’t want anything the flesh has to offer. Betty Stalnecker can sing; but, if Betty Stalnecker sings in the flesh, it’s an abomination to God. Margaret can play that piano. But I don’t care how beautiful it is. It’s the bleating of sheep, and the lowing of oxen, if she hasn’t thrown that rod on the ground, and given it to God.

Do you know what happens in many churches? Do you know why there is deadness? Do you know why the flesh prevails so much? We are trying to do good in the flesh, and offer to God that which God hates. What happens in so many churches—and people don't even know that it's happening in the pulpit, and in the choir, and in the classroom—is flesh on parade. That's right. It's the flesh. The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. Friend, there is a perpetual war that's going on.

Now I want to tell you what happened. I'm really finished now. I want you to see how Saul is at the end; this carnal man becomes a wicked, bitter old man. I want you to see how he died. Turn to 2 Samuel, now, chapter 1. Look with me, if you will, in 2 Samuel chapter 1 and verses 1 to 5: *“Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag; it came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance. And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped. And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also. And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?”* (2 Samuel 2:1–5).

And now notice verse 6–10: *“And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here am I. And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite. He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me. So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord”* (2 Samuel 1:6–10). Never a man had a better start, but never a man did more ignominiously than Saul.

## Conclusion

I'm finished, but you listen to me. Saul spared Amalek; but Amalek didn't spare Saul. Who was it that killed Saul? Who was it that murdered Saul? It was an Amalekite. Who was it that took Saul's crown? It was an Amalekite. You may show mercy to the flesh; but the flesh will never show mercy to you. If you spare the flesh in your life, one day it will destroy you, and take your crown. Don't offer to God the best of what God hates.

Let's bow in prayer. Heads are bowed. Eyes are closed. I wonder if you see the

Esau nature in you. I wonder if you see that old nature, the nature of Esau, that which is born first, that which is so self-sufficient. I want you to know that your efficiency without His sufficiency is but a deficiency. I want you to say, "God, I'm sick and tired of depending on the flesh. I'm going to take whatever gift you've given me, whatever rod there is in my hand, I'm going to throw it on the ground, and let you take the serpent out of it. If you want to give it back to me, God, that's your business. From now on, it will not be the piano of Margaret; it will be the piano of God. From now on, it will not be the song of Betty Stalnecker; it will be the song of God. From now on, it will not be the sermons of Adrian; it will be the sermons of God. It will not be the leadership of Bob Sorrell; it will be the leadership of God. I'm not going to give to you, God, the best of what you hate. I'm going to take death to it. I'm going to let You, dear Lord, live Your life in me, and give victory over the flesh." Why don't you just pray for just a moment, as I'm quiet? Let the Lord speak to your heart right now.



# When You Doubt God's Love

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: January 22, 1989**

**Main Scripture Text: Malachi 1:1–11**

**Sponsored by: Sponsor**

*"I have loved you, saith the LORD."*

MALACHI 1:2

## Outline

Introduction

- I. God Loves with a Sovereign Love
- II. God Loves with a Strong Love
- III. God Loves with a Steadfast Love
- IV. God Loves with a Seeking Love

Conclusion

## Introduction

You take God's holy word and find the last book in the Old Testament, the book of Malachi, and then look up here—the last book in the Old Testament. Today, we begin a brand new series of studies: "God's Word for the End of an Age." May I ask you a question? When you were a child, did you ever doubt that your parents loved you? I mean, sometimes after you got a spanking or sometimes when you wanted them to give you something and they wouldn't give it to you? Or you wanted to do something and go somewhere and you didn't get your way and you doubted your parents' love? And then later on you grew up and you realized how silly and how immature you were.

Now we're going to be dealing with some immature people who in Malachi's day doubted God's great love for them. And I'm speaking to some people here today, some people who are having financial difficulty, some people who are having health problems, some people who are having financial problems, some people who are not getting what they want, not getting to do what they want to do, some people who are in difficulty who may be doubting Calvary's love. And so the title of our message today is, "When You Doubt God's Love."

Let's read. "The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the LORD. But ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?" And then God answers. "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD; yet I loved Jacob. And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and the people against whom the LORD hath indignation forever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.”

Now Malachi lived at the end of an age, and the people there were indifferent, insensitive, and sometimes insolent in their relationship to God. They were very much like the people who live in the end of this age. You know, the major grouping of people that we have in this age in America, we call them the “baby boomers.” There are about 70 million of them. And these baby boomers have seen America for the first time fight in a war that she didn’t win. They’ve seen their friends go off, many of them die; others who’ve come back in disgrace after the Vietnam War. They’ve seen drugs ravage their high schools and turn the girls they dated into prostitutes. They have seen the great institutions of America mocked. They have seen a President resign in disgrace. They’ve seen attempted assassinations of the great leaders of our country. They have seen marriage and the home disintegrate. They have seen abortion legalized. They have seen so many institutions crumble. And many of them are disillusioned at anything called the establishment. And yet, they don’t really know where to turn.

Very similar were the people in Malachi’s day. And what God said to Malachi, I feel certain that God is saying to the people of our day. Now Malachi starts out and he says to the people of God, he says in verse 2, “I have loved you...” And they answer with a smart question; I mean, a smart aleck question, what I call a silly question. They say, “Oh, you’ve loved us? Where have you loved us?” Now the implication is, “God, if you really love us, why are we having so much trouble? If you really love us, why all of this difficulty?”

And this is the first of seven insolent, sarcastic questions that the people of God ask God in the book of Malachi. And the very first is, “How have you loved us? Wherein have you loved us?” With a sneer they say, “Oh yeah, well, if this is love, no thanks.” That’s the idea. “Where have you loved us, O God?”

Now you would think for a silly question they would get a silly answer. I mean, for an insincere question that they would get an insincere answer, like the conductor who was on the train, and the train stopped and a lady said, “Why is the train stopped?” The conductor said, “We’ve hit a cow and they’re cleaning the cow out of the cowcatcher on the train.” She said, “Oh, was he on the track?” He said, “No, ma’am,” said, “we had to chase him all over a field in order to hit him.” You would think for a silly question that God would give a silly answer, a sarcastic answer, but He doesn’t. He’s not like us. God answers a very, very sincerely about the love of God, and He gives them four statements about God’s mighty love. And I want to give you those four statements,

those four wonderful truths, because some of you, if you're immature, may doubt God's mighty, mighty love, especially if you're not getting your way, especially if you're having difficulties and problems.

## **I. God Loves with a Sovereign Love**

Now, first of all, let me tell you how God loved those people and how God loves you. Number one: He loved them with a sovereign love. Look again in verse 2: "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." Now Jacob and Esau were brothers. As a matter of fact, they were twins. And God says, "I loved one of them and I hated one of them." Well, right away, dear friend, that's going to cause you a lot of theological questions. A lot of problems are going to begin in your mind to hear God say, "I loved this one and I hated that one."

Now what on earth does this mean? Well, I want us to pause, and I'm going to slow down here a little bit because you need to get this. You see, there are some people who read this and then they read the apostle Paul's commentary on it in the book of Romans, and they say that this means that before these babies were born God had determined that one baby would go to heaven and God had determined that another baby would go to hell. They call that "unconditional election." They call that that God just simply elects and predestines some to go to heaven and some to go to hell.

Have you ever heard that? Sure, you have. That's around in the land today. There is nothing more debilitating to evangelism and soul winning and missions than that foolishness, and don't you believe it for one skinny minute. Let me tell you something, friend. God wants all people to be saved, and God never ever predetermined that anybody would go to hell. God never ever predetermined that anybody would go to hell.

Now I'm going to slow down here just a little bit and I'm going to give you some material to show you what God did not mean before I tell you what God did mean. God did not mean that anybody is predestined for hell and there's nothing that he or she can do about it. Turn with me in the New Testament to 1 Timothy 2 and let me show you something here. I want you to mark it in your Bible because it's very important that you know this. First Timothy 2 and I begin to read in verse 3: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior." Now listen to this—verse 4: "Who will have all men to be saved,"—now underscore the phrase "all men." It doesn't say some men. God wants all men to be saved—"and to come to the knowledge of the truth." God wants all men to come to the knowledge of the truth. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"—now watch verse 6—who gave himself a ransom for all..." Underscore the word all.

Now the Bible says that Christ died for everybody, and the Bible says that God wants all people to be saved. He says the same thing in 2 Peter 3:9 in another way

where he says, “The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Somebody says, ‘Oh, yes, but they can’t come unless God draws them.’ That is true. No one can come unless he’s drawn by the Holy Spirit, but listen to what the word of God says in John 12:32. Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” The Holy Spirit of God has already drawn all men to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says that Christ is that light that lighteth all men that come into the world. There are some people who talk about unconditional election, unconditional election, that you’re unconditionally elected to salvation, and therefore you are saved, you’re going to heaven, no matter what, or you’re unconditionally not elected and you’re going to hell, no matter what.

Friend, that’s the kind of an election they have in Russia. It’s already settled before people go to the polls. I don’t believe in that kind of an election. I believe that God is a God of love who gives everyone an opportunity to be saved. Jesus Christ looked at those who refused Him, and with a broken heart He said in John 5:40, “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” He does not say that they could not come, but they would not come. They willed not to come.

Some people talk about irresistible grace and they say when the Holy Spirit calls you, you can’t resist the Holy Spirit of God. Oh, yes, you can, dear friend. You read in the book of Acts where Phillip was preaching, and they gnashed on him. He said, ah, with their teeth. He said, “You stiff-necked people. You do always resist the Holy Ghost.” There are those who can say no to the Holy Spirit of God. Christ calls all, but not all are saved. Some people would make a farce of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Mount of Olives as He looked down at that city of Jerusalem that had rejected Him and turned from Him. And Jesus Christ, with a broken heart; Jesus Christ weeping great salty tears; Jesus looked down at Jerusalem and Jesus said in Matthew 23:37, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered you, even as a hen doth her chicks, but ye would not.” Notice what He said. “I would, but you wouldn’t.” That is, it is not that the Lord did not desire for them to be saved. It is not that they could not have been saved. Again, Jesus said, “And ye will not come unto me that you might have life.”

The idea that some are predestined for heaven and the idea that some are eternally predestined for hell is not in the Bible in my estimation. My dear friend, there is nothing more damning, more debilitating, more stultifying to evangelism and missions and soul winning than the idea that some are predestined to hell and there’s nothing that we can do about it. Let me show you another Scripture. Turn, if you will, to 2 Timothy chapter 2 and see what the heart of the great apostle Paul was, the greatest soul winner that ever lived. Second Timothy chapter 2 and look with me in verse 9. Well, let’s get verse 8. “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.” Paul loved to preach the gospel that Christ was raised from the dead.

And then he says, “Wherein I suffer trouble...”

Now Paul got in trouble for preaching the gospel. Paul knew trouble. Every day he had some kind of trouble because he was preaching the gospel. And may I say this to you, my dear friend: Jesus Christ did not come to get us out of trouble. He came to get into trouble with us. And the apostle Paul says, “I suffer trouble as an evildoer...” They said all kinds of bad things about the apostle Paul. They acted like he was a criminal, and so they put him in jail, even unto bonds. That is, “I’m in shackles. I’m in bonds. I’m in chains. Why am I in chains? For the gospel.” But he says, “I am in jail, I’m in bonds, but the word of God is not bound.” Praise God, you can’t chain God’s truth. Hallelujah for that.

But now notice verse 10: “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” Paul, why do you suffer? Paul, why were you beaten? Paul, why did you fast? Why did you pray? Why did you travel? Why were you stoned? Why were you pickled in the Mediterranean? Why did you languish in prison? Why in jail? Why? He says, “For the elect’s sakes, that they might be saved.”

Now, friend, if they’re just going to be saved anyway, Paul, why don’t you just go fishing? Paul, why don’t you just take it easy? If they’re elect and they’re going to be saved, Paul, why do you do all of this? Just take it easy, Paul. Don’t worry about missions. Don’t worry about evangelism. Don’t worry about soul winning. But I’ll tell you, my dear friend, the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Who wants to run in a race when the outcome is already settled, when the winners are already posted and the names are already engraved on the trophies? Who wants to get in that kind of a race?

Friend, I want to tell you that we have a responsibility. You open your Bible to the book of Ezekiel and let me show you something in Ezekiel 33:7. God says, “So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and shall warn them from me.” God says that those of us who are His children are like watchmen set on the wall to warn when the enemy comes. And then God says in verse 8, “When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou doest not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” Does that sound to me like it’s already settled? Does that sound to me like there’s nothing that can be done? Oh no, not at all. But notice verse 9: “Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”

Some people, according to this passage, may die and go to hell if we don’t tell them. That’s the reason the apostle Paul could lift up his hands and say, “I am free from the

blood of all men. I've not shared, shunned to declare unto you the whole gospel of God." Oh, my dear friend, I believe it is a liability on the character of God to say that He took a little baby before that baby could know the light of day and say, "You're going to hell and there's nothing you can do about it." I don't believe in that kind of God. My friend, there is an elect. But let me tell you about the elect of God. They are elect according to the foreknowledge of God. Write in your Bible there by the passage there in Malachi and let's get back to Malachi chapter 1. Write in your Bible 1 Peter 1:2. And here God describes it. God describes it as the elect according to the foreknowledge of God. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God.

Now, friend, listen. Election is based upon foreknowledge, not upon predetermination. God knows the future. And when God sees those in the future who will trust Him, they become His elect. The Bible says, "Whom he did foreknow, them did he also predestinate." You see, it's based in foreknowledge.

Now here's God. God is up in eternity, and we're down here in time. And God in eternity, God can see the past. God sees the present. And God sees the future all at one time. God knows it all. And God is there in eternity, and He sees a young man. Oh, he doesn't look like much to me. He's mean. He gets in street fights. He skips school. You know what his name is? Adrian Rogers. Just a little boy. And God sees him down there. And God sees that little boy. God sees him bowing his head. God sees him opening his heart. God sees him trusting Jesus. God sees it before it happens, and God says, "He's one of my elect. He's one of my elect." "Whom he did foreknow, them He did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." My dear friend, God's foreknowledge is the basis of His election. First Peter 1:2: "We are elect according to the foreknowledge of God."

Now, many of us have read about Halley and Halley's comet. You know, Halley was an astronomer, and Halley was able to predict with great accuracy when Halley's comet would appear on the scene. Now he predicted because he had foreknowledge. And at the precise moment the comet appears. Question: Did Halley cause the comet to appear? No. He just simply foreknew that it would. But his foreknowledge doesn't cause it to appear. It appears, however, because it is fixed that it will appear.

Now, dear friend, God did not just simply choose Jacob to go to heaven, and God did not choose Esau to go to hell. But God saw that Jacob would have a heart for Him and Esau wouldn't. Jacob would have a spiritual sensitivity and Esau wouldn't. Each man had a right to choose Him. And the Bible says, "Whosoever will, may come." But God has elected those who choose Him. You listen to me, dear friend. The elect are the "whosoever wills," and the non-elect are the "whosoever won'ts." And if you want to be saved, you can be saved, okay? Now let's continue to read here. Look here in Malachi chapter 1 and again in verse 3. He says, "I loved Jacob," and then in verse 3 he says, "I

hated Esau...”

Now that gives us another problem, doesn't it? I mean, how could God hate somebody? Well, friend, this is not hate in the sense that you and I use the term hate. It's not an emotional hate. It is not personal animosity. God doesn't have any of those childish and wicked feelings in His heart. No. All that means is that He preferred one above another because one chose Him and the other didn't.

Let me show you how the word hate is used in the Bible. Turn with me, please, to Luke 14. And don't lose your place in Malachi, but let's just turn to Luke 14 and here the words of the Lord Jesus. In Luke 14, look in verse 26. The Lord Jesus is talking about being His disciple, and He says, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Okay. That's what Jesus said. Well, I want to tell you I love my father and mother. And I want to tell you something else. I love my wife, and I love my children, and I love my brothers and sisters. So does that mean I can't be a disciple? Not at all, if you understand how God is using this word here when He says that we're to hate them. It simply means preference.

You see, listen. Joyce knows that she's not number one in my life. She knows that. She knows that she's number two in my life, and she knows that Jesus is number one in my life, and Joyce wants it that way, because Joyce knows that I'll love her a whole lot more making Jesus Christ number one than I would if I made Joyce number one. Do you understand? I can now love Joyce with the love of the Lord. I can love her as Christ loved the church. She likes it that way because Christ is number one.

All he's talking about Jesus is saying, "You must prefer me above all others." He's certainly not teaching us to hate our father and our mother and our brothers and our sisters and our children. No, not at all. And that's the same sense in which the word is used here in the book of Malachi: just simply because here was a man named Jacob, and God did not love Jacob for what he was, but He loved Jacob for what He knew He could make out of him, because Jacob would chose Him. And there God set upon him therefore His sovereign love. And it is a sovereign love. Thank God for that love.

Oh, my dear friend, He didn't have to love us. We love Him because He first loved us. He just chose to love us. Hallelujah for that. Friend, Jacob wasn't much to love if you look at him, but God took this man Jacob and made a prince out of him. Learn this. Learn this. *God does not change you so He can love you; He loves you so He can change you.* You see, it's the very fact that He loves us, no matter what. Just as we chose Him, His love begins to work in us.

Now some of you may be in deep trouble today. Jacob was in a lot of trouble. If you read the life of Jacob, you're going to find out not only did he get in trouble, but God engineered his trouble. But it did not mean that God did not love him.

Years and years ago, I read a story of a stagecoach that was going across western Montana. And in the back of that stagecoach there was a woman who had a little baby, a very young, almost newborn baby. She was traveling across the badlands there. And it was very, very cold in Montana, very cold. And this mother had begun to take the extra clothing from her body and to wrap the baby more and more in that clothing because she was afraid the baby would freeze. And this loving mother was taking the shawl, the coat, and everything from herself. The driver of the stagecoach looked back. He saw what was happening. He saw this woman as her eyes began to close as she nodded her head to sleep that sleep that those sleep who are about to freeze to death. He knew that something must be done. He went back and tried to stir her to try to arouse her, but she wakened and tried to stir about and rub her hands. But after a while he looked back and he saw her nodding again. He knew something had to be done. He stopped the stagecoach, went back there and ripped the baby out of her arms and got in the stagecoach, threw her out on the ground, and drove off with her baby.

When she saw what happened, she jumped to her feet in the snow and said, “My baby! My baby! My baby! Stop! Stop!” She ran and tried to catch the stagecoach. Then after a while, he stopped it and let her back in. And the blood was flowing and the glow was on her face. She might have thought for a while that’s the cruelest man I’ve ever known, but he wasn’t cruel. Sometimes we don’t understand God’s love. Sometimes it seems like what God is doing is so cruel and so callous.

That’s the way these people were so long ago. They doubted God’s love. But, my dear friend, I want to tell you it is a sovereign love. And if you’re in difficulty, don’t look at circumstances to try to prove God’s love. You look at God’s character to prove His love. He loves you with a sovereign love.

## **II. God Loves with a Strong Love**

Now there’s something else I want to say. Not only does He love you with a sovereign love, but, my friend, He loves you with a strong love. Notice in verse 3: “And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.” God brought judgment upon wicked people. And God says, “I brought judgment upon wicked people as proof of my love.”

Now, dear friend, did you know that hate is proof of love? Did you know that? Did you know that you cannot love without hating? And if you don’t have any hate, you don’t have any love? Did you know that? If you don’t have any hate, you don’t have any love.

You see, you cannot have a quality without having the opposite. For example, you can’t have hot without cold. There can be no hot without cold. There can be no high without low. There can be no big without small. There can be no love without hate. For example, if a judge loves justice, he’ll hate crime, isn’t that right? If a doctor loves his



patients and love help, he'll hate disease. If people love God, they will hate sin, isn't that right? Now if you don't hate sin, you don't love God. Do you know the kind of a love that you have? It is a maudlin, sentimental love. It is not love at all. It is not like God's love. God said, "I love Jacob. And, therefore, I hate those that would harm him."

Again, it is not an emotional hatred. It is a choice against all that is wrong. There's a lot of hypocritical love going on around here today that's not love at all. Take your Bibles and turn with me to Romans chapter 12 and look in verse 9—Romans 12:9. Do you have it? It's worth turning to. God says, "Let love be without dissimulation..."

Now look at that word dissimulation. You say, "Pastor, what on earth does that mean?" It means let it be without hypocrisy, without camouflage, without fraud, without pretense. Let it be real. And then he tells you what real love is. He says, "Abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good." Friend, if you love the sheep, you're going to hate the killer wolves. God says, "I loved Jacob. Therefore, I hated Esau, because of what they had done to the people of God."

Don't tell me you love God if you don't hate the drug traffic. Don't tell me you love God if you don't hate pornography. Don't tell me, dear friend, that you love God if you don't hate the wicked unbelief and doubts His word and the liberalism that has invaded our churches. Don't tell me that you love babies if you don't hate abortion. Don't tell me, my dear friend, that you're a person of love. You're just a hypocrite: that's all you are. "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." That's the kind of love God has. God's love is a sovereign love. God's love is a strong love. It is not a maudlin, sentimental love. That is not love at all.

Now, my dear friend, the Bible speaks of things that God hates. You read it in Proverbs 6: "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him."

### **III. God Loves with a Steadfast Love**

I want to say a third thing about God's love. Not only is God's love a sovereign love, and not only is God's love a strong love. But, friend, God's love is a steadfast love. It is not fickle. It doesn't change. Look again now, if you will, in verse 4: "Whereas Edom saith,"—those were the enemies of God—"We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people"—now watch this—"against whom the LORD hath indignation forever." God says, "I'm going to keep on acting the same way I act." Now Edom, representing the power of Satan, says, "We're going to make a comeback." But God says, "And you come back, I'm going to knock you down."

There is a perpetual warfare against sin. And, my dear friend, we already know how

it's going to end. *Sin can't win and faith can't fail. Satan sails a sinking ship, and Satan rules a doomed domain.* I want to show you a wonderful passage of Scripture, 1 Corinthians 15. Turn to it. First Corinthians 15, and look in verse 24. And if you're going through trouble, and if you're going through difficulty, and if you think that God has forsaken you, He has not. Notice that God is not finished yet. First Corinthians 15:24: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Friend, God's not finished yet. The old devil keeps trying to make a comeback, but he's not going to do it.

There was a poet who watched the waves out on the reef breaking and recoiling. But she noticed that even while the waves seem to fail, the tide just kept coming in. And the poet wrote these words:

*On the far reef the breakers recoil in shattered foam,  
While still the sea behind them urges its forces home.  
Its song of triumph surges o'er all the thunderous din:  
The wave may break in failure, but, the tide is sure to win.*

And then this is what she said:

*O mighty sea, thy message in clanging spray is cast.  
Within God's plans of progress it matters not at last  
How wide the shores of evil, how strong the reefs of sin.  
The wave may break in failure, but, the tide is sure to win.*

—PRISCILLA LEONARD

That's what God is saying in this verse. Edom says, "We'll rebuild. We'll do this. We'll do that." But God says, "Oh no. Listen. I have indignation forever." If you doubt God's love because you're in trouble, just wait a while, friend. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.

#### **IV. God Loves with a Seeking Love**

There's one last thing I want to say about God's mighty love. Not only is it sovereign love, and, my dear friend, not only is it strong love, and not only is it steadfast love, but, my dear friend, this love is seeking love. Notice in verse 5: "And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel." Some translations give it, and rightly so, "beyond the border of Israel." What is God saying? God is saying this love is not just for the Jew. This love is not just for Jacob. This love is for all people. Look in verse 11: "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same shall my name shall be great among the Gentiles."

Hey, folks, that's us! Beyond the border of Israel. Hallelujah! For people who live in

this day. “From the rising of the sun to the going down thereof...” There is no place where God’s love does not seek. And I want to say to those who are listening to me, people of all colors, all conditions, all circumstances, all classes, all characters, all companies, God loves you! Remember it. God loves you! I love that verse in Ephesians 3:18 where Paul is praying for the saints, and he says, “That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of God which passeth understanding.”

In the Inquisition they found in a prison where a man had carved in the stone a cross. And at the left hand of that cross, near the bruised and bleeding heart of God, he had written “breadth.” And over there at the right hand, the hand of omnipotence, He that rules the world, he had written “length.” And down there at those bloody, nail-pieced feet that walked the burning corridors of hell for us, he had written “depth.” And above that thorn-crowned head, he had written “height.”

That, my dear friend, is the dimension of God’s love. There’s no one He doesn’t love: east and west, north and south. A man may go to hell unsaved, but he’ll not go to hell unloved. Not unloved. If you want to be saved, you can be saved.

*Oh, the love that drew salvation’s plan!  
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!  
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span  
at Calvary!*

—WILLIAM R. NEWELL

## Conclusion

Folks, don’t you let circumstances or Satan cause you to doubt the love of God. Let’s pray. Heads are bowed. Eyes are closed. The elect are the “whosoever wills.” God extends His love to you, but you can refuse that love or you can accept that love. If you will accept that love today, receive Christ, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you want to be saved, would you pray a prayer like this: “Oh God, I’m a sinner, and I’m lost, and I need you, and I want you. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Forgive my sin, and save me, and give me the strength this morning to confess you as my Lord and Savior. In your name I pray. Amen.”

# What to Do When You're Weary of Worship

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: January 29, 1989**

**Main Scripture Text: Malachi 1:6–13**

*“Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts;”*

MALACHI 1:13

## Outline

Introduction

- I. Recognize the Nature of God
  - A. God Is a Father
  - B. God Is a Master
- II. Reverence the Name of God
  - A. God's Name Can Be Despised by Our Sacrifices
  - B. God's Name Can Be Defiled by Our Service
  - C. God's Name Needs to Be Declared
- III. Realize the Nobility of God

Conclusion

## Introduction

Find the Book of Malachi—it's easy to find because it is the last book in the Old Testament. Sometimes, Malachi is called a minor prophet. I can tell you that his message is not minor. It is mighty, and it is not just a message for yesterday; it is a message for today. Malachi lived at the end of the dispensation, at the closing of an age; and, so do we. Much of what Malachi had to say to his day, he will say to our day.

Now I want us to begin reading here, where we left off last week, in verse 6. Malachi 1 and verse 6: *“A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?”* (Malachi 1:6). We've been talking, this morning, about the name of our God. Malachi says, *“...that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?”* Here comes another one of those sarcastic, insolent, and flippant questions back to God: “Oh yeah, how do we despise Your name?”

Then, I want you to move over to Malachi 1, verse 13, if you will: “*Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts*” (Malachi 1:13). Now that’s the key—verse 13. There were those who were saying, “Oh my, how tedious and how tasteless the hours! What weariness all of this churchgoing is, all of this worship is, all of this singing! I am sick and tired of it!” And then, verse 13 says, “*And ye have snuffed at it.*” Now what does that mean? Well, *The Living Bible* gives a paraphrase I think that well explains it: they “turned up their nose” at it. They just snuffed, snuffed, snuffed at worshipping God. Thus, the title of our message: “What to Do When You Weary of Worship.”

I suppose that the greatest malady of our age is not lack of worship, but lack of true worship. So many people trudge to church, Sunday after Sunday, like they are doing God some wild favor. They sit in church and check things off the bulletin. They look around, and they take things in, that they are trying to interest themselves in. They can hardly wait for the service to be over, and they say, “Well, I’ve done my duty again—what a weariness it is.” The thrill is gone; the excitement is gone. They have just lost the zest and the joy of serving our Lord.

Now if you are that way, let me say that you are in a dangerous predicament. You need to pay attention, if the joy, the zest, and the life, is going out of your worship. If you are tired of church and tired of worship, this message is for you, because I’m going to show you three ways, today, to put the zest back, the reality back, and the life back, in your worship to the Almighty God.

So many people are bored with church. I heard of a man who missed a church service for quite awhile, and his pastor went out to see him. He said, “John, we have been missing you at church.” John said, “Pastor, I know I should have been there, but you know, I’ve been out of work, and the kids have been sick. You know, we’ve had this rain; it’s just rained and rained and rained.” And the pastor said, “Yes, but it’s dry at church.” And John replied, “That’s another reason I haven’t come.”

Well, what do we do about these dry church services? What do we do about these people who are unexcited Christians? Now I tell you, dear friend, that, *an unexcited Christian is simply a Christian who has forgotten who God is*. That’s all he is. He is a Christian who has forgotten who God is. That’s what Malachi is going to remind us of right here. Malachi is going to remind us of just exactly who God is, because, when you see who God is—I mean, really see who God is—enthusiasm is the result. As a matter of fact, we get our word *enthusiasm* from two Greek words, which mean *en theos*, or “in God.” Or, “God in us.” You cannot truly believe the things that we’re supposed to believe, and be lukewarm about it.

Now there are three steps and three things I want to show you. By the way, let me say this. I’m not talking about being tired *in* the work. Sometimes, we do get tired. You

know, I preach four times on Sunday; and many Sunday's, I'll have a deacons meeting, and a new members' fellowship every Sunday also. Sometimes, after I've preached four times, had the deacons meeting, had the new members' fellowship, and other things, they just kind of slide me under the door on Sunday night. I am tired *in* the work; but, I can tell you, I am not tired *of* the work. I'll give you this testimony before God, that I am as excited today about serving the Lord Jesus Christ as I've ever been in all of my life. That is not rhetoric. That is the truth. I'm saying it before God, and saying it before you. I thank God for the zeal, the zest, the glow, the thrill, and the excitement, of serving the Lord Jesus. He gets sweeter and sweeter every day. Now if it's not that way with you, I want you to pay attention.

I want to say again that, if you are weary of worship, it is because you don't understand who God is. And so there are three things that we learn about God here in the Book of Malachi.

## **I. Recognize the Nature of God**

First of all, I want you to recognize the nature of God. Look, if you will, in verse 6: "*A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?*" (Malachi 1:6). God says that He is a father and a master. That's His nature.

### **A. God Is a Father**

First of all, the nature of God is the nature of a father. If God is a father, then we are his sons and daughters. What does a son, what does a daughter owe to a father? They owe to a father honor. The Bible says, "*Honour thy father and mother*" (Ephesians 6:2).

So the word *honor*, what does it mean? Well the Hebrew word actually means, "to attach weight to something." That is, "to take something with seriousness." Now if you don't take God seriously, worship is going to be a bother to you. When you understand that God is your Father—that you've been born in to a family by a new birth, and that He loves you—then, dear friend, you're going to come before Him, not in a lackadaisical, *don't care* attitude. You're going to come with such love and devotion to honor our great God.

Now people who don't honor God are simply people who don't take God seriously. You see, listen. Our Lord had rather you not come to church at all than to come to church and not take Him seriously. You say, "Pastor, can you prove that?" Indeed I can. In Revelation chapter 3, verses 15 and 16, our Lord speaks to another church at the end of the age, and our Lord says, "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15–16).

Now pay attention—God would rather have you cold—out and out against Him—then to have you lukewarm, coming to church, and insulting Him with half-hearted worship. Do you know what G. Campbell Morgan said about half-hearted worship? He said that, “Lukewarmness is the worst form of blasphemy.” It is worse than not even believing God. Why? Because lukewarmness says, “God, I believe in You, but You just don’t inspire me. You just don’t excite me. You—I know you’re there, but You’re not worthy of my whole-hearted worship.” Our Lord said, “I’d rather have you out and out against me. I’d rather have you cold than to have you lukewarm.”

So first of all, when you come to church, when you come to a worship service, I want you to understand that God is your Father. You bow your head, and say, “Dear God, in everything I do—the way I sit, the way I talk, the way I smile, the way I sing, and the way I listen—God, may it honor You.” God says, “I’m your Father. You’re my son. You owe me honor.”

### B. **God Is a Master**

Then, God says, “I’m the Master. You’re my servant.” You see, we’re sons, and we’re servants. Then, He says, “If I’m your Master, then, you owe me fear.” Now what kind of fear is this? That doesn’t mean we quake in our boots when we think of God. It means that we come before His presence with a holy awe and a reverence.

You see, the idea of our being servants is the idea of being bondslaves. A bondslave is somebody who’s been taken out of the marketplace of sin, and put into the service of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Since he’s been bought, the Bible tells us, in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 19: “We’re not our own. We are bought with a price. Therefore, we’re to glorify God in our body and in our spirit, that are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19).

The two things that are necessary, when you come into this place of worship, are: number one, “O God, I want to honor You—You’re my Father”; and, number two, “O God, I want to fear You—You are my Master.” *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom”* (Proverbs 9:10). We sit in church sometimes, and we’re so frivolous. We sit in church sometimes, and we’re so indifferent. God says, “You ought to be fearing me.”

Now this is not unhealthy fear. It’s a healthy fear. It’s not a filthy fear. It’s a clean fear. The Bible says, *“The fear of the LORD is clean”* (Psalm 19:9). Turn to Exodus chapter 20. This is really worth turning to. Exodus chapter 20, and look in verse 20. I was looking at this verse, this morning. What a blessing it was. Listen: *“And Moses said unto the people, Fear not...”*—now, wait a minute. Are we supposed to fear? Malachi says, we are to fear; and now, Moses says, we are not to fear. Keep on reading, and it will make sense: *“And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces”* (Exodus 20:20).

There are two kinds of fear. There's that outward fear of circumstances. There's that inward holy fear of Almighty God. God says that, if you'll have the right fear—the fear of God—you won't fear anything else. There's one fear that will remove all other fears: when you understand that God is who He is, and you come in reverence, and you bow before Him. That's what Moses said: that you don't have to fear, if the fear of God is before your face. The man who can kneel before God can stand before any man. *"If God be for us, who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31).

Dear friend, do you know what the fear of the Lord is? It's not cringing dread of God. It is the reverence that is due to His name. It is the worship, the praise, and the awe of the awesome, mighty God who is our Master. *I'll tell you what the fear of the Lord is: It is love on its knees. The one who fears God the most is loving Him the best.*

What is the nature of God? God is the Father, and we are sons. God is the Master and we are servants. The two things that will put life into your worship are this: number one, you honor God; number two, you fear God. Never sit in a worship service without honoring God, and without fearing God. Always keep that holy fear there, and always keep that great honor there. It will put life into your worship.

## **II. Reverence the Name of God**

Now very first of all, I said, you need to recognize the nature of God. That's verse 6. Secondly, if you would put life in to your worship, you need, dear friend, to reverence the name of God. Continue to read here, in verse 6. He goes on to say, in Malachi chapter 1 and verse 6, *"O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?"* (Malachi 1:6).

Now what made their worship weariness? It was that they had despised the name of God. They asked this flippant question, these Old Testament priests: *"Wherein have we despised thy name?"* Now remember, in the New Testament, we're priests also. The Scriptures tells us that we're a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9). So this applies to us, too.

### **A. God's Name Can Be Despised by Our Sacrifices**

Now God's name may be despised. How did they despise the name of Jehovah? Well, they did it with their sacrifices. Continue to read. They say, in verses 6, *"Wherein have we despised thy name?"* And God answers the question, in verse 7: *"Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee?"* Here's another smart aleck question—God answers again: *"In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible"* (Malachi 1:7).

Now the table of the table of the Lord that was laid out there before the altar was where they would take the animal sacrifices, cut them up, and get them ready for the burnt offering. They said, *"The table of the Lord is contemptible."* Here is how they said



it with their lives—look in verse 8: *“And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts”* (Malachi 1:8). Notice again, in verse 13: *“Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord”* (Malachi 1:13).

Now here’s what they did. They had the audacity—they had the unmitigated gall—to come to worship God; and, for their offering, they brought an old flea-bitten goat, they brought an old blind sheep, they brought a dead cow that had been torn in the field, or killed by a wolf, they brought the carcass, that which was torn—verse 13 says—and they offered it to the Lord. In Exodus 12, and in Leviticus 23, God says that every offering that is made to the Lord is to be unblemished. Why? Because those offerings were a picture of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: a lamb without spot and without blemish. When these people brought these blemished animals—these lame, and these torn, and these flea-bitten, crippled, and blind animals—as an offering to God, it was an insult to God. It shows something of their respect for the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was very low. I’m telling you, the Lamb of God—God’s perfect spotless Lamb—died for you. How dare we bring less than our best to the Lord Jesus?

Here’s how they despised His name. They brought these kinds of offerings to the Lord. Do you know what the Bible says, in Exodus chapter 22, about these kinds of offerings? As a matter of fact, the Bible says, in Exodus chapter 22 and verse 31... Well, it’s worth turning to. Just turn to it with me, for a moment, and look at Exodus 22 and verse 31, and see what would happen to an animal that had been killed in the field by a wild beast. They’d go out there, and they’d find one of their cows killed out there in the field, and God says that you can’t offer it to the Lord: *“And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs”* (Exodus 22:31). You go out there, and you find a dead sheep, and it’s been killed by a wolf—don’t eat it. Don’t eat it. It died the wrong way. Give it to the dogs.

Let me tell you what they were doing. They were giving God dog food. That’s what they were doing. They were taking that which was torn in the field—that carcass of an animal, these crippled animals, and these blind—and offering them to God. You want to make your worship come alive? You give, when you come before the Lord, the very best that you have, and your worship will come alive. Because, *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Matthew 6:21).

My dear friend, many people have heartless worship, because they have never really given anything to God. They just simply give God the cast off, the castaways, and the second best. We treat human beings better than we treat God, and wonder why we

don't get anything out of worship. Notice what Malachi says there: he says—listen—  
“And try it on your governor. See if your governor will like that; see what your governor is going to say.” In verse 8, look at it. He says, in verse 8, *“Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee?”* (Malachi 1:8). That is, see if you can get by with it on a human plane.

“Well,” you say, “illustrate it for me, Preacher.” All right, taxes are due April 15th. Let's just suppose that, when your income tax is due, on April 15th, you write the Internal Revenue Service, and you say, “Friend, at our house, we had a streak of bad luck. Our children have been sick. I've been out of work some days. And so we want you to know that we're not going to send in our income tax, this year. It's not that we don't love you, and it's not that we're not concerned about you. But you know, we have other responsibilities.” Now do you think the IRS is going to say, “That's fine; it's okay”? “Now just try it on your governor, and see if he will accept this kind of an offering.”

People come to the Lord, and they say, “Lord, I know that the tithe is holy unto You; but, Lord, you know, we've had sickness in our home, we've had difficulty, and I've been out of work. So Lord, forget it. I'm not going to tithe. I'll give You a few flea-bitten leftovers. I'll eat the cake, and I'll give You the crumbs, God. I want You to know, Lord, You're still my Lord, You are still my Master.” God says, “I'm insulted by that; I'm insulted by that kind of worship.”

Let me give you another illustration. What do you do with your boss? What do you do with your boss, the man you work for? Do you treat him like you treat God? Many would not. On a day like today, when it's raining, there will be people who will roll over in bed, peek out the window, see that it's raining a little bit, and decide they're not coming to church, when it's raining. Isn't that right? Have you ever done that? Don't answer. Don't answer. I believe for every drop that falls, a Baptist stalls. Why do they do that? Well, “I just didn't feel...I just thought I'd sleep in.”

Well, I want to ask you a question: If it's raining tomorrow morning, will you go to work? Or, will you tell the boss, “It was raining, so I just decided I wouldn't come. I just thought I'd sleep in”? Or, would you tell the boss this: “You know, I was coming to work, but we had company to come in unexpected. Since we had company come in unexpected, it would be rude to go off and leave them at eight in the morning; so we stayed home with our company”?

You see, what Malachi's saying is that you should try it on your governor, and see if he'll accept it. Mister, you buy a three hundred dollar suit, and get your wife a ten dollar dress from a rummage sale, and see what happens. “Try it on the governor, and see if he will accept it.”

Now how did they despise the name of the Lord? They were eating the cake, and giving God the crumbs. Do you want to make your worship come alive? Bring to God

your very best. Give him the first fruits of all thine increase (Proverbs 3:9). Upon the first day of the week, honor the Lord with the best, and don't you let God take second place in your offerings to the Lord. Reverence the name of God. You can despise the name of God, by your sacrifice.

Now listen to me. If your gift means little to you, it will mean little to God. Take your Bibles, and turn with me to 2 Samuel 24. I want to show you something, in 2 Samuel 24. David wanted to make an offering to the Lord. There was a plague upon the land, and David wanted the plague to be stopped. He knew the way to stop the plague was to truly worship the Lord. And so we pick up the reading, in 2 Samuel 24, about verse 20—David is coming to a place where there's a man named Araunah—Araunah, who owns a threshing floor, and some animals: *“And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing floor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood”* (2 Samuel 24:20–22).

Araunah said, “You don't have to buy it, David. Just take what you want. Take my animals, and kill them. Take my plows and my threshing machines, and use them for wood to burn the sacrifice. I'll give it to you, David. Verse 23: *“All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king.”* That is, he gave like he was a king himself back to king David: *“And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.”* But I want you to notice David's great heart. And every stingy Christian needs to mark verse 24: *“And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing”* (2 Samuel 24:23–24). Do you see that? Araunah said, “David, I'll give it to you; you worship.” David said, “I can't do it. I will not come before the Lord my God, no matter how wonderful the offering is, if there is not a price to pay. If it doesn't cost you something, it will mean little to God.”

Friend, I want you to listen again. If it means little to you, it'll mean little to God. Now you want worship to be an excitement to you? You want praise to be real to you? When you come before the Lord, you bring an offering, and you bring the best. You bring of the firstlings of the flock. You bring the first fruits. Don't give God the leftovers. Don't give God things that you wouldn't have yourself. People bring cast off furniture down to the church they wouldn't use in their own houses. They want God to have second-best. They want the best for themselves. That's the reason they *snuff* at it, and say, “What a weariness it is” (Malachi 1:13).

## B. God's Name Can Be Defiled by Our Service

Dear friend, God's name—God's name—can be defiled by our sacrifice. God's name can be defiled by our service. Look, if you will, in Malachi 1, verses 12 and 13: *"But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it!"* (Malachi 1:12–13).

Now friend, there's more than one kind of profanity. Not all profanity takes place in the poolroom. A lot of profanity takes place in the church house. I want to tell you what kind of profanity it is. When we stood this morning to sing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," and, if you rolled those words off your lips, and didn't meant them, that is profanity. If you just rattled off all of these things—you said in a humdrum way, in a lackadaisical way, these words—I believe, dear friend, it's a from of profanity. You're not taking God seriously. You're not attaching weight to His name. He's a Father. Honor Him. He's a Master. Fear Him. It's not the profanity of the mouth. It's the profanity of the heart. God says, "You have profaned my name."

In prayer, your mind wanders. During the sermon, you're cooking up a business deal. At the end of the service, you begin to watch the clock. Souls start getting saved, and the invitation goes a little long. You try to find a way out. God, have mercy! The same people get all excited, when a basketball game goes into overtime. The reason, my dear friend, is this: that God means little to you; you despise His name, and you profane His name. You despise His name with your sacrifice, and you profane His name with your service.

Do you know what Malachi said? Look at Malachi 1, verse 10: *"Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought?"* (Malachi 1:10). Why doesn't somebody go up and nail the church door shut? Now our *King James* doesn't give it to us as clearly as some other places give it to us. What he is saying is that it would be better for you to nail the doors shut than to continue to offer this vain worship. He says, "You shut the doors for nought"—that is, because of the vanity of your worship—*"neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought"* (Malachi 1:10). That is, the fire that you kindle is vain fire.

You see, if you're going to worship God, God's got to be present. God had just written *Ichabod* over that whole place. God had moved out. And so Malachi says, "Why don't you just shut the doors and quit playing church?" You listen to me right now. *America would be far better off if we had fewer churches, and all of them on fire for the Lord Jesus Christ.* Malachi says, "God is sick and tired of it." You profane my name. You despise my name. You offer flea-bitten animals for sacrifice. You snuff at my worship. Just go ahead and close the church, and quit playing church. It's an insult to Almighty God, half-hearted worship is.

### C. **God's Name Needs to Be Declared**

Now dear friend, God's name can be despised, and God's name can be defiled, but God's name needs to be declared. Look at Malachi 1, verse 11: *"For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name"* (Malachi 1:11). What is that talking about? That's talking about the time when Jesus will come. Malachi looked forward to the time when the Son of God would come, He would minister to Gentiles, and God's name is going to be praised. God will get the glory due to His name.

Do you know what the name Jesus means? It means, "Jehovah saves." That's what it means. That's the way the name of Jesus, like incense all over the world, is ascending to God in praise. How God loves that sweet incense of the name of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen, friend. We are people of the name. We are people of the name. We are saved by that name. Acts chapter 4, verse 12: *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). We worship in that name. Jesus said, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20).

There is authority in that name. The Bible says *"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him"* (Colossians 3:17). Friend, there's answered prayer in that name. Jesus said, *"If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it"* (John 14:14). *"From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's name"* is to be offered to God as sweet incense (Psalm 113:3). Friend, listen. Learn something of the nature of God, and learn something of the name of God—the power in that name. Worship will come alive to you.

I cannot tell you, Jim Whitmire, how much I worshipped this morning, as you selected those beautiful songs, and choir, as you sang, and these soloists sang about the name of Jesus. Friend, if you're saved, and you love the Lord Jesus Christ, I'm telling you, there's something that vibrated in your spirit, when you heard His name go up like incense. Isn't that true? Wasn't there just something that just made you well up, and just say, "O God, how great and how wonderful you are! Blessed be the name of the Lord"?

There's power in that name, my dear friend. If you want worship to be alive, do it in the name of Jesus. If you want prayer to be real, pray in the name of Jesus.

I was speaking to Ron Dunn, a preacher friend of mine, last week, and we were having a cup of coffee together. Ron told me an experience he had. He said, "When my children were little, we all went to the fair, and," he said, "some of my relatives were there with my children, and they all wanted to ride the rides at the county fair. But rather than paying for the rides one at a time, I bought a big roll of tickets, because we were

going to be there all day.” He said, “The kids would line up at the Octopus, or the Ferris Wheel, and I’d just stand there, and tear off the tickets, as the kids came by. They came by with their hands up.” He said, “I was standing in front of one ride, and all of the kids came past, and I just was tearing off the tickets, and a little boy that I’d never seen before just came right on through, also, and put out his hand. I looked at him, and took my tickets back like this.”

Ron said, “My son came to me, and said, ‘Daddy, that’s Jimmy. He’s a friend of mine. And I told Jimmy you’d give him a ticket.’” Do you know what Ron said he did? He said, “I gave him a ticket, because I wouldn’t let my son be a liar. My son said that I would give him a ticket; then, I was going to give him a ticket.”

My dear friend, that’s what it is to pray in the name of Jesus. The Lord Jesus says, “Father, here’s Adrian; hmm, he’s my friend. Father, I told him You’d do this for him. Do it in my name, Father. Do it in my name.” O friend, *“From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD’s name is to be praised”* (Psalm 113:3). There’s salvation, worship, authority, and prayer in the name of Jesus.

Take the name of Jesus with you. Come before His presence, offering up that name as sweet incense, and see if worship doesn’t burst alive in your heart.

### **III. Realize the Nobility of God**

I want to say a final thing. Not only do you need to see the nature of God—He’s a father and a master; not only do you need to understand the name of God; but, my dear friend, you need to see the nobility of God, if you want worship to be real. Look, if you will, in Malachi 1, verse 14: *“But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the LORD a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen”* (Malachi 1:14)—*“I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts.”*

Three things we’ve learned about our Lord in this passage: number one, He’s a Father, and we are sons; number two, He’s a master, and we are servants; number three, He’s King, and we are subjects. Keep that in your mind, every time you come to worship. He is a father—honor Him; He is a master—serve Him; He is a king—bow before Him. Bow before Him; He is a great King. Oh, I love the way the passage begins in verse 6, saying, “He’s a father.” It ends in verse 14, saying, “He is a king.” Have you noticed how much like the Lord’s Prayer that is? *“Our Father...for thine is the kingdom”* (Matthew 6:10–13). Isn’t that wonderful? I have a Father who can hear me, and a King who can answer me, which is sympathy and sovereignty, all in one person.

Understand, dear friend, that when you come to the service, that the King of kings is here. Perhaps, one day, we’ll have the president of the United States to visit our worship service. It is possible. In one church, the president of the United States had

been talking with the leadership about a possible visit. Word got out in the community that the president might come. Many people who had normally not attended decided they wanted to be there that particular Sunday. One lady called the pastor, and she said, “Is it true that the president of the United States is going to be here Sunday? What service? I don’t want to miss it. Is it true that he will be here?” The pastor knew her ways, and he said, “No, madam, the president will not be here Sunday; but the King of kings will be.”

Friend, when you come to church, you’ll never be in higher company than you are at the feet of the King of kings. Oh, if Ronald Reagan, or George Bush, were to come, we’d all sit goggle-eyed, and look, and fawn, and all of that. But Jesus is here. Jesus is here.

*All hail the power of Jesus’ name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown him Lord of all.  
—EDWARD PERRONET*

## **Conclusion**

Friend, understand His nature. He’s a father; we’re sons. He’s a master; we’re servants. Understand His name. His name is to be great among the Gentiles. Understand His nobility. He is the King of kings, and Lord of lords. As sons, give Him your love. As servants, give Him your labor. As subjects, give Him your loyalty.

Let’s bow in prayer. Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. Would you ask God to have mercy on you, if you’ve been guilty of half-hearted worship, if you’ve said, “What a weariness it is.” If you’ve felt that going to church on Sunday is a duty rather than a delight, it’s because you’ve underestimated and devalued God; you’ve not understood just who God is.

Father, I pray that you’ll make worship real, alive, and bright to us, and God, that we’ll never weary of worship. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

# How to Keep the Wonder in Your Worship

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: January 5, 2000**

**Main Scripture Text: Malachi 1:6–14**

*“Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and  
ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts;”*

MALACHI 1:13

## Outline

Introduction

- I. Recognize the Nature of God
  - A. God Is Our Father, and We Are His Sons
  - B. God Is a Master, and We Are His Bond-Slaves
- II. Reverence the Name of God
  - A. There Is Salvation in That Name
  - B. There Is Worship in That Name
  - C. There Is Authority in That Name
  - D. There Is Prayer in That Name
- III. Respect the Nobility of God

Conclusion

## Introduction

I want you to find the Book of Malachi. That’s the last book in the Old Testament. What I want to talk to you about tonight is, “How to Keep the Wonder in Your Worship.” We’re talking about giving God glory, and I believe one of the worst things in this world is half-hearted worship. No matter how many people are attending, how sad to see a full church of empty people trying to overflow! How do we have that wonder in our worship?

One man had been missing church for a long time. The pastor went to see him and call on him. And, the man began to give an excuse after excuse. He’d been out of work. The children had been sick. He’d had difficulty with the farm animals. But then, he said, “It’s been raining and raining and raining every Sunday.” The pastor said, “But, it’s dry at church.” He said, “Yeah, and that’s another reason I haven’t come.”

Oh, what do we do about these dry services? How do we put some spiritual lubrication in our worship? Well, we’re going to see. Look now, and I’m going to read an extended passage of Scripture. I tried to shorten it, but it’s all there, and I just want to



read it, beginning in Malachi 1, verse 6, and read right on through verse 14. Here's what God says: "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts. And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts. Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye have brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrifice unto the LORD a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen" (Malachi 1:6–14).

Now, what is the key to all of this passage that I've read? It's in verse 13, talking about worship, and look at it: "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 1:13). I looked it up in the *Living Bible* in a paraphrase, and it says, "And you turn up your nose at it." Weariness in worship—"Oh, what a weariness it is! Are we going to church again? Are we going to have sit there and be bored again?" What happens when the joy, the wonder, the thrill, the enthusiasm goes out of our worship? I hope that never happens to me. I'll tell you what, I want to resign, stop preaching, get out of the way the minute I'm no longer excited about what we're doing for the Lord Jesus Christ—when it gets to be humdrum, when it gets to be a weariness, when the joy goes out and the love goes out like some marriages.

They were before the marriage counselor. The counselor says to the man, "What do you think is wrong with your marriage?" "Well," he said, "old what's-her-name says, 'I don't love him anymore.'" Have you gotten that way about your love for the Lord?

Now, notice he's talking to a priest in this chapter. Go back again, if you will, and

he's talking about those of us who are priests, and he says, in verse 6: "*A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name*" (Malachi 1:6). Well, you say, "Adrian, that doesn't apply to me. I'm not a priest." Wrong! You are a priest. First Peter chapter 2, verse 9: "*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood*" (1 Peter 2:9). Look at yourself sometime in the mirror and say, "Hello, priest," or, if you're a woman, "Hello, priestess." We are priests.

Not only are we priests; we're kings. And, we're to offer to the Lord sacrifices, day by day, holy sacrifices, and whole sacrifices we are to offer unto the Lord. And, we're to do it with enthusiasm, not weariness. You know what the word *enthusiasm* means? It means *en theos*—"in God," or, "God in you." You say, "Adrian, don't you ever get tired? Don't you ever get weary?" Yes, I get weary *in* the work, but I've never ever been weary *of* the work. And, I'm as excited today about serving Jesus Christ as I have ever been in my whole life. And, God knows I'm telling the truth. If I'm not, I don't know that I'm not, because I am excited tonight about serving the Lord Jesus Christ, and every day it gets sweeter.

Now, what I want to do is talk to you about how to keep the wonder in your worship. I want to talk to you tonight about how to keep the fire in your faith, how not to let it become weary, how not to snuff at it, how not just simply to come and sit. I watched in the song service tonight. Did you know that we had some folks sitting up in the balcony who wouldn't even stand? Now, they're here, but they're not excited. What is that? What cools us down? Why are we not thrilled about the things of God? How can you keep the wonder in your worship? Three ways.

## **I. Recognize the Nature of God**

Number one: You need to recognize the nature of God—recognize the nature of God. Look in verse 6: "*A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?*" (Malachi 1:6).

### **A. God Is Our Father, and We Are His Sons**

Now, first thing: God is our Father, and we are His sons. And, fathers are to be honored. The word *honor* comes from a word which means, "weight; giving weight to." It means, "to be taking someone seriously." Do you take God seriously? I mean, are you serious about your worship? That's the reason the Bible says, Jesus said, in Revelation chapter 3, verses 15 and 16, to the church at Laodicea, "Because thou art neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15–16). I've told you before, G. Campbell Morgan said that "lukewarmness is the worst form of blasphemy."

Jesus had rather have you cold than lukewarm. He'd rather have you out-and-out against Him than lukewarm. Why? At least a person who's against Christ has the respect enough for Him to be against Him. But, a person who is lukewarm says, "I believe. I'm just not excited about it. Lord, You don't move me." We come to church sometimes and yawn in the face of God. God says, "I'm a Father. Where is My honor?" That's the reason when Jesus taught us to pray, how did He teach us to pray? How do we begin our prayer? "*Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name*" (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2). So, God is a Father. That's one way that we recognize the nature of God.

### **B. God Is a Master, and We Are His Bond-Slaves**

And, not only is God a Father, but God is a Master. Look at it again in verse 6. And then, He says, "*If I be a master, where is my fear?*" (Malachi 1:6). Now, God is a Father; He deserves honor. And, if God is our Master, He deserves fear. I think O. S. Hawkins, when he was here in my absence, preached on the fear of God, did he not? You know, we have a generation today that does not fear God.

Now, the word here is a *bond-slave*—a servant, his master. The word *servant* there is the word *bond-slave*. It's someone who was bought in the marketplace. You and I were slaves of sin, and we've been bought by the Lord Jesus, and we have become His slaves. Some people say, "I don't believe in a religion built on fear." All true religion is built on fear—not a filthy fear. The Bible says, "*The fear of the LORD is clean*" (Psalm 19:9)—not a dread, not a cringing horror of God. What is fear? Listen to Exodus 20, verse 20: "*And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not*" (Exodus 20:20). "Fear not." "Fear God." Now, what is that? What he's saying is that there is one fear that removes all other fears.

I don't know who's going to be elected President of the United States, but I'll tell you one thing. I'm not going to come out of this election with my head down, no matter who wins and who loses, because there's a God in the Glory, and I'm not going to fear. I am not going to be afraid, because there's one fear that removes all other fears. *The fear of God is love on its knees*. And, we need old-fashioned reverence for God. Somebody says, "Well, tell them, preacher. We don't want any more of that loud music; we want reverence. We don't want any more handclapping; we want reverence." Friend, if you only understood how they praised God in the Bible, you'd get on to us for being too quiet. I mean, in the Bible, yes, there were quiet times, and the Bible says, "*Be still, and know that I am God*" (Psalm 46:10). But, in the Bible, there were drums and cymbals, and leaping and dancing, and praising God with all of one's might, and shouting unto the Lord. That doesn't mean you're irreverent; it means that you're so full of joy that you

cannot be still; you cannot be quiet.

But, there is this fear of God in our hearts. How do we serve the Lord? God is a Father: give Him honor. God is our Master: give Him fear. What a mighty God we serve! So, the very first thing to do, if you want to put wonder in your worship: Recognize the nature of God.

## II. Reverence the Name of God

Not only recognize the nature of God, but then, right on the heels of that, you reverence the name of God—you reverence the name of God. Now, begin in verse 6 again, and listen to it: *“A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests”*—now, watch this—*“that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?”* (Malachi 1:6). Well, He goes on to tell us in verse 11, *“For my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD”* (Malachi 1:11–13). Now, remember, God’s name stands for His character. What is His character? He is a Father, and He is a Master.

Now, how can we despise God’s name? Well, this is especially true in this time of the Love Offering. We can despise God’s name by half-hearted worship. Look in verse 6, and go right on through with me now, and don’t lose it—the last part of verse 6: *“If I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?”*—now, listen—*“Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee?”*—boy, these are smart aleck questions they’re asking Almighty God—almost insolent questions. God answers, though—*“In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.”* That is, “I don’t have to bring the best offerings and lay them on the table for our Lord.” *“And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts”* (Malachi 1:6–9).

Now, what were they doing? They were coming to the Lord, and in that day they would offer animal sacrifices. We don’t do that in this day. But, in that day, they would offer animal sacrifices. And, they’d go out to the flock. And, if they had some crippled sheep, some lame oxen, some blind animal, something that was worthless, useless, something that had a scab, a scar, a blemish, or something perhaps that had even died in the field, they would bring it and offer it to the Lord. Now, the Bible absolutely, totally is against that.

I want you keep your bookmark there in Malachi chapter 1, and I want you to go

back to Leviticus chapter 22. We're talking about making an offering, a Love Offering, to our God—Leviticus 22—and I want you to look in verse 17: *“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, Whatsoever he be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that will offer his oblation for all his vows,”*—now, watch this—*“and for all his freewill offerings,”*—that's the closest thing we'd have to a Love Offering—*“which they will offer unto the LORD for a burnt offering; ye shall offer it at your own will”*—that is, “Nobody's going to force you to do it”—*“ye shall offer it at your own will a male”*—now, watch this—*“without blemish, of the beeves,”*—of the beef; the cows, the cattle, that's what that means—*“of the sheep, or of the goats.”* That is, “You take your choice.” *“But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you. And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen,”*—that means, “a swelling”—*“or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the LORD.”* You say, “Well, they're going to be burned anyway.” God says, “No, you don't offer them to the Lord.” *“Either a bullock or a lamb that hath any thing superfluous or lacking in his parts...”*—that is, an animal that has any extra growth or something that's been severed—*“any thing...lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer for a freewill offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted. Ye shall not offer unto the LORD that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut; neither shall ye make any offering thereof in your land”* (Leviticus 22:17–24).

Now, why did these offerings—why were they required to be perfect? Because every one of them was a picture of who? Jesus. And, remember what Peter said about Jesus, in 1 Peter 1, verse 19: “He was a lamb without spot and without blemish” (1 Peter 1:19). He was the perfect offering. And, all these Old Testament offerings were a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. And, God says, “Don't bring to Me an offering that is wounded or weak or blind or sick or blemished.” And, look in verse 8—chapter 1, Malachi, verse 8—go back: *“And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?”*—and then, He throws a challenge to them—*“offer it now unto thy governor; will he...accept thy person?”* (Malachi 1:8–9). Now, if the governor were going to come, and you say, “Oh, Governor, we're so happy to have you in our city, in our home, in our synagogue, in our temple. Here's a gift for you,” and you bring out a sick cow; you bring out a scabby animal of some kind; you bring out something that is blind, and you say, “Here, this, governor, is for you.” God says, “Would you offer that to the governor? Would he accept it?” No, you would give your best, if the governor—the king, the prince, whoever it is—might visit.

Now, how does that relate to us? Do we give God less than we give to the government? I mean, do we treat God less? Suppose now when April the 15th comes around you just write the IRS and you say, “You know, I really should pay my income tax, but you know, I’ve kind of had a bad run of luck here lately. And, things are not just what they ought to be, so I’ve decided not to pay my taxes this year.” You know, have you ever heard anybody talk that way about that, making an offering to the Lord? “Well, you know, just, things have happened; and so, I’ve decided that I’m not going to tithe, you know, until I get better on my feet. I’m going to get back on my feet.” Try that on the IRS. All right, let’s try this—try this on your boss tomorrow morning: “No, I didn’t come into work. I had company that came.” Or, “You know, I’ve been going so hard, I just decided I’d sleep in today.” Try it on the boss. Try this on your wife: “I bought myself a 300-dollar suit, and I got you a 10-dollar dress in a rummage sale.” Try that on your wife.

No, listen. Why is it that we eat the cake and give God the crumbs? That’s what they were doing. They were not offering the best to Jesus. I’m telling you, folks, that God deserves the best, the best of what we have. Don’t give God that which is lame and sick and left over.

Let me give you another verse here—Malachi 1, verse 13: *“Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD”* (Malachi 1:13). God says, “You’re giving Me these castaway things; you’re giving Me things that you don’t really want anyway.”

Sometimes we have a mission house. We don’t do it here. Some churches, you know, have a mission house. And so, they take furniture that people don’t want. It’s broken, or bent, or scarred—or a settee with a hole in it, or something. They’ll say, “Hey, you know, let’s give that to the missionaries.” Why not let them have the best, and you have the settee with the hole on it? Taking up food—a food offering. What do we do? We look under the sink, and we find that box of oatmeal that the water’s dripped on, down there. We don’t want that. Take that out. And, you get those 13-year-old cans of tamales you’ve had back there. “Let’s get rid of these. Get these out. What else can we give that we don’t want? What else is scabbed and blind and scarred? Let’s give that to God.” I tell you, when the Love Offering comes, let’s give of our best to the Master. Let’s not just give Him something that we don’t want anyway.

That’s what He’s saying. God says, “Hey, try that on your governor. Would you do that for the governor?” (Malachi 1:8).

Listen. Let me give you a verse I’ve found. I was amazed when I found this verse—Exodus 22, verse 31. God says, *“And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field;”*—now, He says, “If you find, for example, a

deer that's been killed in the field, don't eat it—don't eat it." He says this. Listen to it—*"ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs"* (Exodus 22:31). "Don't you eat it. Cast it to the dogs." Now, He's talking about animals now that have been torn. "Don't eat it. Give it to the dogs." Do you know what some folks are doing? They're giving God dog food—giving God dog food. They're saying, "Here, it's not fit for us. We'll give it to God"—offering God that sort of a thing.

By the way, I heard of a woman who went into the grocery store and bought a case of dog food, and the grocer said, "What kind of dog do you have?" She said, "I don't have a dog." He said, "Well, you're buying this dog food. Is it for a cat?" She said, "I don't have a cat." He said, "Well, what are you going to do with it?" She said, "It's for my husband." "Oh," he said, "lady, no. You don't give your husband dog food, do you?" She said, "Well, look at the can here. See there. It's vitamin-enriched. It's clean. It's sanitary." And, she said, "It's kind of like corned beef hash. He likes it. I give it to him. It's very cheap. What's wrong with that? Why can't I give my husband this dog food?" He said, "Lady, I don't know what to tell you. I just don't think you ought to do it." But, week after week, she'd come in and buy a case of that canned dog food. One day, she stopped buying it. He said to her, "What's the matter? Your husband won't eat that dog food anymore?" She said, "No, my husband is dead." He said, "See, I told you." She said, "It's not what you think. He was hit chasing a car." God says, "Look. Take that stuff and give it to the dogs. Don't eat it yourself."

Now, what was happening was this. Why was their worship a weariness? Well, because they were offering to God half-hearted, unworthy sacrifices. Listen. When you bring your gift next Sunday, if it means little to you, it will mean little to Him. Let me say that again. If it means little to you, it will mean little to Him. Give of your best to the Master.

I was reading about David, when David wanted a place to put the Ark of the Covenant. And, in 2 Samuel 24—listen to this—he came to a man whose name was Araunah, and Araunah had a piece of property that David thought would be just a great place to put the Ark of the Lord. Later on, it became the Temple Mount that there's so much discussion about today, that I preached to you about three weeks ago. And now, David is the king, and here's what it says—2 Samuel chapter 24, verse 20: *"And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing floor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing*

*instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood. All these things did Araunah, as a king, giveth unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings” (2 Samuel 24:20–25).*

Now, Araunah was a good man. David said, “Look, I want to make a sacrifice to God. There’s a plague in the land, and I want the plague to be stayed.” And, by the way, there’s the plague in America today too. “I want the plague to be stopped.” And, Araunah said, “Oh, king, that’s wonderful. You just come. There—here’s my oxen. Sacrifice them. You need wood? Here are the instruments for plowing. Take that and burn it. It’s all yours.” David said, “Araunah, thank you very much, but I’m not going to let you give it to me. I want to make an offering to God. And, God forbid that I should offer to the Lord of that which doth cost me nothing.”

You know, some of our giving makes no difference at all in our lifestyle. “God forbid that I should offer to the Lord of that which doth cost me nothing.” God’s name can be defiled by our sacrifice, and God’s name can be defiled by our service. Begin now—go back, if you will and look in verse 11. Notice in verse 11, He says, *“For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it!”* (Malachi 1:11–13).

Now, God says, “You profane My name.” What do you think of when you think of profanity? Do you think of someone in a bar room using swear words? Do you know what profanity is? Profanity is when you use the name of God and don’t mean it; when you’re not enthused; when you stand in a church like this and sing, “Oh, How I Love Jesus,” and you’re not even thinking about what you’re singing; when you sing, as we sang this morning, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” and your mind is off somewhere in some business deal, or what you’re going to do, who you’re going to eat with after church. The worst profanity happens in the house of God. God says, “You have profaned My name.” How? By half-hearted worship—by half-hearted worship. Think what an insult that is to Almighty God. You say, “Huh, boy, when will this service ever be over?” And, the same people, you get excited when a ballgame goes into overtime. But, when souls are being saved and people are coming to Jesus, and we say, “Sing one more stanza”—and “Ahhhhhhhhh!” Friend, listen to me. We’re in business for the King, and we need to



keep the wonder in our worship. And, we cannot come and offer to God that which doth cost us nothing, and offer castaways to God, and then profane His name. His name is to be great. We're not to be clock-watchers.

You know, God's name is not to be defiled; it is to be declared. Look in verse 11. Here's what God wants done with His name. Look at it—and He says, *“For from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye have profaned it”* (Malachi 1:11–12). Now, let me tell you, the greatest name that I know is Jesus. Every attribute of God, every quality of God, is summed up and magnified in that name, Jesus. “Pastor, are you sure about that?” Absolutely, for the Bible says, *“God...hath...given him”*—Jesus—*“a name which is above every name”* (Philippians 2:9). There is no other name that takes precedent over that name, Jesus. And oh, how we ought to honor the name of Jesus Christ!

#### **A. There Is Salvation in That Name**

Friend, think of Jesus. There's salvation in that name. Acts chapter 4, verse 12: *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must saved”* (Acts 4:12).

#### **B. There Is Worship in That Name**

There's worship in that name, for Jesus said, in Matthew 18, verse 20: *“where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them”* (Matthew 18:20).

#### **C. There Is Authority in That Name**

There is authority in that name. In Colossians 3, verse 17: *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him”* (Colossians 3:17).

#### **D. There Is Prayer in That Name**

There is prayer in that name. John 15, verse 16: *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,”*—Jesus said—*“and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you”* (John 15:16).

Now, what we need to do, friend, is to remember the nature of God, and we need to honor the name of God. We need to just give reverence to the name of God.

### **III. Respect the Nobility of God**

Now, here's the third and final thing if you want to put wonder back in your worship.

Remember the nature of God. Reverence the name of God: offer a worthy sacrifice; use His name with a sense of awe and wonder. And then, the third and final thing: Respect the nobility of God. Look in verse 14: *“But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing:”*—that is, he has a worthy offering, but he makes a vow and a promise, and he offers some unworthy offering. God says, “A curse is upon him”—*“for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen”* (Malachi 1:14). That speaks of the nobility of God. God is a King—a King.

I’ve told you before about a preacher out in Arizona. He had some things he wanted done around the church, and the church was kind of getting run down, and so he told his people, “I have received word that the President of the United States wants to come to our church and worship”—this preacher friend of mine. Boy, a buzz went through the congregation. And, he said, “Now, we need to get some things done around here.” He said, “These carpets that are unraveling, they need to be bound up. And, we need these rugs shampooed. And, we want to have some beautiful flowers. And, choir, I want you to be at your very best,” and so forth. And, boy, they were all thinking, “Man, the President, the President, the President’s going to be here.” And, after a while, he told them all these things that he wanted done. And then, he said, “Now, folks, I want to be honest with you. The President’s not coming. All that was make believe. But, you were so excited about getting everything ready because the President may come to our services.” He said, “The King of kings will be here every Sunday.”

## Conclusion

Now, why should we get all excited about the presence of some man when Jesus is here? He is the King. And, when we—look, folks—when we remember His nature—He’s a Father, and we’re His sons: we’re to honor Him. He’s a Master; we’re His servants: we’re to fear Him—we need to reverence His name, not to profane His name. Just remember the name of Jesus every time we sing or praise or pray. Again, don’t profane His name. And then, finally, respect His nobility. He is the King, the absolute King. Now, in these verses that I’ve shared with you, here’s what God is: He is Father, He is Master, and He is King. As sons, God deserves our love. As servants, He deserves our labor. And, as subjects, He deserves our loyalty.

# Enjoying Covenant Blessings

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** February 5, 1989

**Main Scripture Text:** Malachi 2:1–9

*“My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.”*

MALACHI 2:5

## Outline

Introduction

- I. What Is a Covenant?
- II. The Story of David, Jonathan, and Mephibosheth
- III. The Application in Our Lives
  - A. Jonathan Represents the Lord Jesus Christ
  - B. Mephibosheth Represents the Sinner
    - 1. He Was Deformed
    - 2. He Was Dethroned
    - 3. He Was Doomed
    - 4. He Was Deceived
  - C. David Represents the Father
  - D. What Mephibosheth Received
    - 1. The King’s Forgiveness
    - 2. The King’s Fellowship
    - 3. The King’s Fortune

Conclusion

## Introduction

Take God’s Word now, and turn, if you will, please, to the Book of Malachi. That’s an easy book to find, because it’s the last book in the Old Testament. Now we’re speaking from the Book of Malachi, in a series called, “God’s Word for the End of an Age.” And the Book of Malachi is the last book in the Old Testament. It got the people ready for the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. But in many ways, it is God’s Word to get us ready for the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And it is still God’s Word for the end of an age. And there’s so much that we need to learn in this book.

Now you know, all around Christians are discouraged, because of the scandals that have been in the realm of television evangelism, and other things that have happened. And we’ve gone around with our heads almost between our knees, saying, “Dear, dear

Lord, if there's a word that would describe the whole situation, it would have to be *disgrace* and *reproach*." And Americans are losing—it seems—their confidence in all of the institutions. We've had Watergate, *Korea-gate*, now *Pearly-gate*, and everything else. And people are saying, "Oh, what is going to come next?"

Well, I want to encourage you, dear friend, and tell you that there have always been these kinds of situations. But thank God, God remains true; God remains faithful; God keeps His Word; and, God keeps His covenant. And that's what we're going to learn today in the Book of Malachi—as I'm speaking to you, today, on this subject: "How to Enjoy Covenant Blessings, No Matter What Happens."

Malachi chapter 2 says: "*And now O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings:*"—now, what that means is, every time a priest says, "I bless you," God said, "I'll turn it into a cursing," and these priests who have forgotten to give glory to God—"yea, *I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart*" (Malachi 2:1–2). That is, you don't listen to what I have to say: "*Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it*" (Malachi 2:3). God said, "I'm just going to smear the refuse of your offerings on your face." I'm going to make you a public example. And I would say, "Dear friend, that has happened to many, today, and God is the one who did it." Notice verse 4: "*And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.*" Underscore the word *covenant* right there, and then, verse 5: "*My covenant was with him of life and peace;*"—underscore the word *covenant* again; it's a covenant of life and peace—"and *I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts*" (Malachi 2:4–8).

Now this passage that I'm reading to you is really kind of hard to understand. And so I'm going to slow down, and just pick some truths out of it. And I hope to build a base for our life—for all that is to follow. There is a key word that keeps coming forth. Notice, in verse 4: "*my covenant*" (Malachi 2:4). Notice, in verse 5: "*my covenant*" (Malachi 2:5). Notice, in verse 8: "*the covenant*" (Malachi 2:8). Notice, in the last part of verse 10: "*profaning the covenant of your fathers*" (Malachi 2:10). And then, turn to chapter 3 and verse 1: "*the messenger of the covenant*" (Malachi 3:1) Over and over again, our Lord is saying there's a concept called the *covenant*—the *covenant*, the *covenant*, the

*covenant*.

Now my dear friend, all Bible truth is *covenant* truth. And all Bible blessings are *covenant* blessings. And if I could help you today to understand the covenant, you are going to be blessed, indeed. And you will understand why the prophet Malachi was so upset with these priests, who had profaned the covenant of the Lord. I want you to understand the covenant, because, dear friend, there is a tremendous and unexplainable blessing in the covenant. And I want you to understand it, as best as possible. But not only understand it, but to apply it and live by it.

## I. What Is a Covenant?

The Bible teaches again that all blessings are covenant blessings. Now what is a covenant? Well, the word that is translated *covenant* has the idea of cutting. And the word is sometimes translated “to cut.” And it has the idea of the shedding of blood. The *cutting*—that means, blood is shed. And sometimes the word *covenant* is translated “blood covenant.” The word herewith can be translated “blood covenant.”

Now what is the *covenant*? The *covenant* is a sacred agreement based on blood. It is more than an agreement. It is literally a union of two partners who are in covenant. Two people enter into a covenant. And that means that they are such partners that they mutually hold together all assets, talents, debts, and, liabilities—are shared by both partners. And this agreement is extended right on down to the offspring, and the children of those who are entered into the covenant.

Now let me bring you up to speed, and help explain this to you, because many of us know more about the covenant than we think we know.

When I was a boy, I used to go to the old cowboy movies—the Saturday matinee on Saturday morning—and I would see the cowboys and the Indians. Now I don’t know if you used to do that or not. We got in for a dime on Saturday morning, and we’d see the cowboys and the Indians. And the Indians and the cowboys would always be in these battles. And then, after a while, the good cowboy—the guy with the white hat—and the good Indian chief would meet up somewhere out there. They would be tired of all of that killing, and all of that fighting, and so forth. And they would decide that they were going to become blood brothers. And they would make a covenant. And the way that they would make a covenant would be to take a knife and cut their wrists. And each one would do that, and just enough to bleed. And then, they would put their wrists together, and mingle their blood together. Did you ever see that? Have you ever seen them do that? And the Indian would say, “We now brothers.” Do you remember that? And what they would do is, they’d put their hands together, and lift their hands, and the blood would be mingled there.

Now my dear friend, let me tell you: That didn’t just happen in cowboy movies. That

goes back to the most primitive of times, and it happened in Bible times. It was called a *blood covenant*. And when people would enter into this covenant, they would enter into a relationship that was closer than brothers in the flesh. They would be called *blood brothers*. And it meant that that there was a relationship, now, that would last for as long as they lived, and then, it would still go on. It would extend not only to them, but to their offspring. Their children could also enter into this covenant.

Now many times, when a covenant was made, they would symbolize it further, by one person taking a piece of his clothing, and giving it to the other person. They would exchange garments. And the exchange of garments—when one would take his coat off and give it to the other person—was a way of saying, “Everything that I have now belongs to you. You can call on it, if you need it. My possessions are your possessions.” And then, they would take a weapon—something like a bow and arrow, or something like a spear, or something like a sword—and they would give that to the person. And that was saying, “Not only do you have my possessions, but you have my protection. Not only are my possessions your possessions, but your enemies are my enemies. If there’s ever a fight, and you’re in that fight, I’m in that fight with you.” And it’s symbolized by the sharing of the weapons.

And so when they mingled the blood, that was the sharing of the persons. When they gave the coat, that was the sharing of the possessions. When they gave their weapons, that was the sharing of the protection. Person, possession, protection—all of it belongs to you. We are now sharing. We are blood brothers. And your life is like my life. We’re in it together.

When people would make this kind of a covenant, many times, they were so proud of it. They would take some soot, lampblack, or something like that, and rub it into the wound. So when there would be a scar, there would still be a black mark, right there. That black mark was called *the mark of the covenant*. These people who entered into covenant were called *friends*. We use the word *friend* very lightly. But they didn’t use the word *friend* lightly then. A *friend* was someone that you were in covenant with. We just call everybody *friend*. But in that time, a *friend* was a covenant person. Have you ever read in the Bible this verse—“*There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother*” (Proverbs 18:24)? That’s the friend we’re talking about, that person who is in covenant. That’s a friend that is closer than a brother.

Then, there was a relationship, the way that you would deal with people. And that relationship was called *lovingkindness*. *Lovingkindness* is a covenant word. It is it is the way that I act towards you, if I’m in covenant with you. I will show you *lovingkindness*. That means that, whatever I have, you may demand it, you may call upon it, and it is yours, if you need it. My wealth is your wealth. My friends are your friends. Your enemies are my enemies. My strength is your strength. Our sorrow is my sorrow. We

are blood brothers. A covenant is an agreement based on blood.

It's very important that you understand that, because, my dear friend, you are in a covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ. Did you know that all of the Bible is divided into two parts—the old covenant and the new covenant? That's what the word *testament* means: the old covenant. Everything is based on covenant. All of the blessings of the Bible are covenant blessings. And so you need to understand the terms of the covenant. I can tell you this much: If you will understand the terms of the covenant, if you will understand the truth of the covenant, you will not go around a slave to your feelings, and the devil will not intimidate you like he has been intimidating you; but you're going to quit living like a pauper, and you're going to begin to live like the spiritual prince and king that you are, because the Bible says, God has made us "*a kingdom of priests*" (Exodus 19:6).

Now I want you to understand this. And the best way to understand it is to give you an example. Years ago, when we preached through the life of David, I showed you something that I want to review with you, today. And I want you to go back, if you will, please, to 1 Samuel chapter 18. And the best way I know to teach you what the covenant is, in the Book of Malachi, is to illustrate it. So basically, our message, today, is going to be one great big illustration of what the covenant is. Because, Malachi was contending with these people, because they had forgotten, neglected, and corrupted the covenant of God.

## **II. The Story of David, Jonathan, and Mephibosheth**

Now in 1 Samuel chapter 18, here is the story of a covenant that two men made. One man's name was David, and the other man's name was Jonathan. Jonathan was the son of King Saul. King Saul was the first king of Israel, and Jonathan was his son, a prince. David, you know, later became the king of Israel, and, at this particular time, he was just sort of a young man. And that's the time when this episode takes place. David has just slain Goliath of Gath.

And I begin reading in 1 Samuel chapter 18, verse 1: "*And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul,*"—that is, David is finished talking to Saul—"*that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.*" That is, David and Jonathan now are very close. As we would say, they're very *tight*. David loved Jonathan, and Jonathan loved David, as his own soul. Now notice verse 2: "*And Saul took him that day,*"— that is, David—"*and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant,*"—do you see that? Now actually, remember that the word *covenant* here means, "to cut." It can be translated, "Then Jonathan and David *cut* a covenant"—"*because he loved him as his own soul.*" And I can see Jonathan and David, now, as they mingle the blood

there at their wrists. And there is a sharing of persons. Now watch it, in verse 4: “*And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David,*”—there is the sharing of possessions. Remember, now, that Jonathan is the prince, and he takes the robe off of him, and he puts it on David. It’s his way of saying, “David, now all that I have belongs to you.” Now watch it—“*and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle*” (1 Samuel 18:1–4).

The girdle was the thing they held the weapons on. And so what he’s saying now is, “I’m going to give you my bow, and I give you my sword, and I give you my girdle that I hold my weapons on.” He’s saying, “Not only now are we one in person, not only are we one in possession, but we are one in protection. Your enemies are my enemies.” And David and Jonathan have become blood brothers. They have entered into a blood covenant.

Now I want you to see what happens as a result of the blood covenant that Jonathan and David enter into. This has so much to do with you, and your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and the covenant that Malachi was talking about. Now at first, Saul was very proud of David, because David was such a handsome and young warrior. But after a while, the young maidens were saying, “Saul has slain his thousands, but David has slain his tens of thousands” (1 Samuel 18:7). All of the young maidens, and everything, were praising David. And Saul became insane with jealousy.

And now no longer does he love David; he fears David, and wants to kill David. And so he sends out a word that David is to be killed. Poor David, he was just a little boy; but now, this mighty king is after him. David has to flee for his life, and he’s hunted like a partridge on the mountains of Israel. And all of the desires of the kingdom and the ambition of the kingdom are brought into this focus: kill David, kill David, kill David. Now Jonathan doesn’t help to kill David. Even though he’s Saul’s son, he is David’s friend, and he is now closer to David than he is to his own father, King Saul. Jonathan helped protect David, and save David’s life.

Finally, both Jonathan and Saul are slain in battle, and David does become the king of Israel. Now when David became king of Israel, there was blind panic in the household of Saul, because there’s a change of rulership, there’s a new regime. And all of those who have been part of Saul’s kingdom say, “Oh, David is now king. David has that unlimited power. David is going to come, and he’s going to purge the kingdom. He’s going to put many of us to death, especially those who are relatives of Saul.”

There was a nurse who had this all figured out, and she said, “There’s a little child who is in great danger.” The little child had a funny name: Mephibosheth was his name. And the nurse said, “Little Mephibosheth is in danger, because Mephibosheth is Saul’s grandson, Jonathan’s son.” This nurse—not knowing anything about the blood covenant, just simply thinking that little Mephibosheth may be put to death by a vengeful



King David—runs into the royal nursery, she picks up this little baby, she hugs it to her bosom, and she begins to run to hide the little baby from David. As she runs out, she trips and falls. She's carrying that baby, and the weight of that heavy nurse falls on that little baby. His little legs get twisted beneath the weight of that body, and his legs are mangled. There's not an orthopedic surgeon anywhere like that. She doesn't have time, and she doesn't know anything about how to bandage or straighten the legs. She does the best she can, but she just takes the little baby and, blind panic, she runs.

That little baby is crippled the rest of his life, because of that accident, that fall. She takes that baby, and hides that baby in a place called *Lodebar*. And it's a Hebrew word, which simply means "the place of no pasture." That is, it was a dingy, dusty, dirty, hideout somewhere on the backside of nowhere. She goes out there, saying, "I've got to keep this little baby, this little grandson of Saul, out here. I've got to keep him, because, if I don't keep him out here, David will find him and kill him."

And that's where Mephibosheth grew up: in "a place of no pasture." Can you imagine, now? He is a grandson of a king. He is a prince. But he's living in exile. He's living in fear. If he were to ask his nurse, "Why are we out here?" she would say, "Because of your enemy, David. If David ever finds you, he's going to kill you." "Why am I crippled?" "You're crippled, because of David. You were fleeing from David. And you'd better hope that David never catches you. You'd better hope that David never finds out where you are." And so here's this poor little ole' boy Mephibosheth out there on the backside of nowhere. He is dragging his dead limbs behind him, drinking from a tin cup, breathing dust, eating dust, hating David, and fearing David. There's where he is.

Now you've got all of that in mind. Remember that David has a covenant with Jonathan, and Mephibosheth is Jonathan's son. So keep that in mind, and I want you to turn to another place in the Word of God. This time, I want you to turn with me to 2 Samuel chapter 9, and the story takes up there—begin in verse 1: "*And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul?*" (2 Samuel 9:1). Now when he said that, I imagine people said, "Yeah, it's wasted, the purge has started. David is going to track down every relative of the house of Saul, and David is going to do him in." "Is there anybody left of the house of Saul?" They weren't prepared for the next statement. Listen to it. "Is there any left of the house of Saul"—"*that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?*" (2 Samuel 9:1). What I said, *kindness* is a blood covenant word—"That I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" Oh, they weren't expecting that.

And verse 2: "*And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba*

*said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar. Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar.” Now the plot thickens: “Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father’s sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. And he”—Mephibosheth—“bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?” (2 Samuel 9:2–9).*

Now here’s the story. David says, “Well, there’s little Mephibosheth. I’m going to show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake” (2 Samuel 9:1). And he calls his servants and he says, “Go get Mephibosheth and bring him to me.” Now Mephibosheth knows that his cover is blown. He sees the king’s entourage come out in front. There are the king’s horses and the king’s guards. He says, “Oh no, they’ve found me, they’ve found me.” They throw open the door. “Mephibosheth!” “Yes.” “Come, Mephibosheth—David wants you.” And they pick him up, and drag him along. They put him in the carriage, and they carry him there to the royal palace.

He comes there to the palace, and there upon the throne is David. He falls on his face, and he’s quivering, trembling, like a bird in a trap. And he’s saying in his heart, “I’m certain. David, go ahead and let the blow fall. Get it with, David; go ahead and do it. I’ve been told that you hate me. I’ve been told that you want to kill me. Please, be merciful.” He’s not prepared for what David says. David says, “Mephibosheth, don’t be afraid. Fear not, Mephibosheth. I want to restore your fortune. I want you at my table. Mephibosheth, I want you to be like my very own son.”

Mephibosheth can’t take it in. He said, “I don’t understand this. That doesn’t make sense. Why should you treat me that way? I am a dead dog. I know what I deserve. I’ve been on the other side. I’ve been your enemy. Why should you show me this kind of respect, to a dead dog like me?” “Mephibosheth, I’m not doing this for you. I’m doing it for Jonathan. I am in a blood covenant with your father. And if you want to ratify the covenant, if you want to accept the terms of the covenant, then that’s up to you, because you may. And I’m offering you the same covenant that I had with Jonathan. How about it, Mephibosheth? Do you want to be part of the family?”

This moment, Mephibosheth has a decision he must make. He can choose the judgment that is due to him, or he can receive the mercy that’s offered to him. He must change his mind about David. He must see David no longer as the enemy, but he must see David as the friend. There must be a change of kings, and there must be a change of attitude. Mephibosheth says, “Well, since you explained it that way, I believe I’d rather have it your way, David. I just believe I’d rather be your friend. I’d rather have the

king's fortune, and the king's fellowship." And so David says, "All right, servants. Ziba, bring a robe, put it on him, take care of him, and give him everything. Till the land for him, serve him, feed him, bathe him, and take care of him."

Now dear friend, what a transformation has taken place in the life of this man, Mephibosheth! Yesterday, he was an outcast. He was a rebel, hating and fearing David. Today, he's in the palace. He is in, and he's treated as the king's son. He saw a transformation, and he can't believe it. Yesterday, he slept on an empty mat. Today, he awakens on silken sheets. Yesterday, he ate from a tin plate, and drank from a tin cup. Today, he sits at the king's table with the king's sons. He's awakened in the morning by servants. They say, "Good morning, my lord Mephibosheth. Is my lord Mephibosheth ready for his bath? Here's a robe for my lord Mephibosheth. My lord Mephibosheth, the king and his sons are waiting for you at breakfast."

And Mephibosheth comes down for breakfast. There he sits at the king's table. It's groaning with food. He puts those shriveled legs under that white linen tablecloth. They can't even be seen at all. He's sitting at the right hand of the king, having fellowship with David himself. He looks around. He's never seen anything like this all of his life. He's never known anything like this. It's very hard for him to explain, but even more hard for him to deny. And I imagine, as the food is passed, he looks down there on the wrist of David, and he sees that mark, the mark of the covenant. And he says, "I'm not worthy of this, but it makes no difference. It's not because of me. It is because of Jonathan, my father who made a covenant with David. And I'm not going to deny it; I'm going to enjoy it. Pass the biscuits." There he is, my dear friend, sitting at the table—not what he has done at all, but what God had offered him, because of a covenant that was made so long ago.

### **III. The Application in Our Lives**

Now my dear friend, I want to take that, and apply that to you. Many of you are way ahead of me. Many of you have already made the application. Many of you already understand what a blood covenant, therefore, means. Because, look again, if you will, in 2 Samuel 9, verse 1: "*And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?*" (2 Samuel 9:1). Now notice: "*kindness for Jonathan's sake.*" Now if you will, take that, my dear friend, and put by that verse a very wonderful verse in the Word of God that teaches, dear friend, that God has done the same thing for us. Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 32 says—the Bible says: "*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*" (Ephesians 4:32). Do you see that? "*That I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake*" (2 Samuel 9:1)—"*even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*" (Ephesians 4:32).

## A. **Jonathan Represents the Lord Jesus Christ**

Now friend, Jonathan represents the Lord Jesus Christ. Two thousand years ago, on the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ entered into a blood covenant with God the Father for the sons of men. That's the reason Jesus became a man: that He might make a blood covenant with God. A covenant is an agreement between two persons based on blood. When the Lord Jesus Christ shed his blood on the cross, he was mingling the blood of God and the blood of man. You say, "Well, God doesn't have blood." Yes He did, when Jesus was here on this earth.

The Bible teaches that that God Himself took human blood. Acts chapter 20, verse 28—Paul said to those Ephesian elders, "*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,*"—now listen to this—"*to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*" (Acts 20:28)—the church of God, which God purchased with His own blood.

Whose blood was shed on the cross? The blood of man? Yes, because Jesus was man. The blood of God? Yes, because, in the veins of Jesus Christ was the very blood of God—Acts chapter 20 and verse 28. And on that cross, the blood of man and the blood of God mingled. The Lord Jesus Christ was cutting a covenant between God and man—a blood covenant—that man might say, "Dear God, all that You have is now mine. Lord God, we are one—I in You, and You in me." That's wonderful, isn't it?

And then, dear friend, God takes his robe, and He puts it on us. We're dressed in His righteousness alone. And then, my dear friend, God takes not only His possessions, and gives it to us, but God gives us His mighty power and His protection. He gives us the sword of the Spirit, and the indwelling power of the Holy Ghost comes upon us: "*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you*" (Acts 1:8). And all that belongs to Heaven now belongs to you, because all that belongs to you now belongs to Him. And there's a covenant cut between God and man. When the Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, that last supper, the Lord Jesus took that cup, and he held it up, and this is what he said: "*This cup is the new [covenant] in my blood*" (Luke 22:20). The word *covenant* and the word *testament* are the same word. Jesus said, "I made a covenant with you." And Jonathan represents the Savior.

## B. **Mephibosheth Represents the Sinner**

Now Mephibosheth represents the sinner. My dear friend, you are like Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth pictures you. And how does Mephibosheth picture you?

### 1. **He Was Deformed**

Well, first of all, he was deformed, and so are we. He was crippled by the fall, and so are we. And so Mephibosheth was deformed. He couldn't come. He had to be brought. He did not want to come. He had to be sought. And that's the way we are. We are

spiritually and morally crippled by sin.

## **2. He Was Dethroned**

But not only, dear friend, was he deformed. Mephibosheth was dethroned. You see, he was a prince. But he was living in exile. Did you know that God made us to be kings and princes, but we've been living on the backside of nowhere, without the Lord Jesus Christ? Breathing dust, and dragging our dead limbs behind us, when we ought to be sitting enthroned with our Lord. But here was a prince, who had lost his kingdom. He was dethroned.

## **3. He Was Doomed**

And not only was he deformed and dethroned, but, friend, he was doomed. He knew he had the sentence of death on him. He knew that he was an enemy, and that he deserved no mercy. He said, "Why should you do this to such a dog as I am?" (2 Samuel 9:8). He realized that the sentence of death was his. And so should we. "*For the wages of sin is death*" (Romans 6:23). "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die*" (Ezekiel 18:20).

## **4. He Was Deceived**

That's what we were. We were deformed, dethroned, and doomed; and, I guess the worst thing, is deceived. All of this time, Mephibosheth was thinking David was his enemy, when David was his friend. Did you know that people feel that way about God? Did you know that God has to run us down in order to save us? Did you know that? We don't seek Him? We fear God. There's something—sin has put a negative attitude; the devil has done a trick on us. And the devil says, "God's out to get him; don't let him—don't let him save you." And you'll sit in a service like this, and be negative toward God like somehow you've got to become one of those old Christians.

Oh, my dear friend, all God wants to do is to bless you, love you, and to share the blessings of the blood covenant with you. And here's Mephibosheth, who's been told he's been deceived about David. He's been told that David was his enemy, when David was really his friend. What a picture of a lost sinner is Mephibosheth! Jonathan pictures, my friend, the Savior, who made a blood covenant with you. Mephibosheth pictures the sinner, who needs to enter into the blood covenant.

### **C. David Represents the Father**

And David pictures the Father, who offers the salvation.

### **D. What Mephibosheth Received**

Now I want to show you what Mephibosheth received. And what Mephibosheth received is what you will receive, if you enter into the blood covenant. And it's so very wonderful. There are four basic things that he received. And I want you to see them.

## 1. The King's Forgiveness

Second Samuel chapter 9—the very first thing he received is what I want to call the king's forgiveness. Look in verse 7: *"And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness "* (2 Samuel 9:7). Hallelujah! He deserved judgment, and he received kindness.

Friend, because of the covenant, you don't have to be afraid. Hallelujah! You don't. You deserve Hell, but you're not going to Hell, because of the blood covenant. And so he received the king's forgiveness.

## 2. The King's Fellowship

But not only did he receive the king's forgiveness; he received the king's fellowship. Four times it is mentioned that he is to eat with the king. Look, if you will, in verse 7: *"Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually"* (2 Samuel 9:7). Look, if you will, in verse 10: *"Thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table"* (2 Samuel 9:10). Look, if you will, at the last part of verse 11: *"He shall eat at my table"* (2 Samuel 9:11). Look, if you will, in verse 13: *"He did eat continually at the king's table"* (2 Samuel 9:13). Why does God say that? Because, my dear friend, a fellowship meal is the most intimate association that you can have.

Now if you were invited to meet with the President of the United States, that would be one thing. But friend, if you were invited to dine with the President of United States, that would be something else, wouldn't it? It's saying, "You're not just going to have a once-in-a-while meal; you're going to sit at my table continually." You see, salvation, my friend, is not a funeral; it's a feast. Do you understand that? Listen. I'm not inviting you to something bad; I'm inviting you to something wonderful. Jesus said, *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him,"*—and do what?—*"and will sup with him, and he with me"* (Revelation 3:20).

## 3. The King's Fortune

You see, there's the king's fellowship. But not only the king's forgiveness, and the king's fellowship; my dear friend, there's the king's fortune. And the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, *"I have given unto thy master's son all that pertaineth to Saul and to all his house"* (2 Samuel 9:9). Now who was Saul? Saul was the king. And he's saying, "Mephibosheth, enough; and, you don't understand enough; and, you are not worthy."

The devil will say that to you, dear friend. I'm going to tell you something. Don't you argue with him, because you'll lose the argument. You are not worthy. Just point him to the blood covenant, and step out of the argument. Now the argument's between him and God, and he's going to lose.

## **Conclusion**

Dear friend, it doesn't make any difference. God has done it for Jesus' sake, and on the cross, with his rich, red, royal blood, He made a covenant for you. And you can enter into that covenant of life and peace. And I pray God you'll not miss it.

Heads are bowed, and eyes are closed. God, I pray that You'll seal the truth of the blood covenant to our hearts. And help us, Lord, not to despise the covenant, and not to depart from it. In Jesus' precious name.

# The Problem of Throwaway Marriages

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** February 12, 1989

**Main Scripture Text:** Malachi 2:11–16

*“For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.”*

MALACHI 2:16

## Outline

Introduction

- I. The Travesty of an Unequal Yoke
  - A. The Problem of Spiritual Disagreement
  - B. The Problem of Spiritual Decay
  - C. The Problem of Spiritual Division
- II. The Treachery of an Unkept Vow
  - A. Divorce Disobeys the Word of God
    - 1. The Priority of Marriage
    - 2. The Permanence of Marriage
    - 3. The Product of Marriage
  - B. Divorce Diminishes the Worship of God
  - C. Divorce Destroys the Work of God
  - D. Divorce Distorts the Witness of God
- III. The Tragedy of an Unloved Wife
  - A. The Man Is to Love His Wife Passionately
  - B. The Man Is to Love His Wife Purifyingly
  - C. The Man Is to Love His Wife Protectively
  - D. The Man Is to Love His Wife Providingly

Conclusion

## Introduction

The subject: the problem of divorce. The title of the message: “The Problem of Throwaway Marriages.” Malachi chapter 2, verse 11: *“Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the*



*tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts. And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away:”—now the word putting away here means “divorce”—for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously” (Malachi 2:11–16).*

Now this series of messages is entitled, “God’s Word for the End of an Age.” Malachi lived at the end of his age. We live at the end of our age. And many of the problems that Malachi faced, we face. And one of the problems that Malachi faced was the problem of divorce, and men dealing treacherously with their wives. And he says, “*Let none deal treacherously*” (Malachi 2:16). God says, “*he hateth putting away*” (Malachi 2:16). Divorce has become an epidemic in this day and age in which we live. It has become a day and a time of throwaway marriages.

Now when people get married, they are looking for an ideal. And after a while, that ideal becomes an ordeal. And then, they are looking for a new deal. And so they get the idea, “Well, we’ll just divorce; and, if it doesn’t work out, we’ll just bail out.” Because, sometimes, the person we are married to now—we believe—has changed from the person that we first married.

I asked Joyce, “Are you going to love me, when I’m old and unattractive?” She said, “Of course I do.” Now seriously, that didn’t happen. I hope you know that. But she does love me, and I love her. And I am committed to her, and she is committed to me. But in so many homes, that is not true.

A recent edition of *Newsweek* magazine said this, and I quote: “The landscape is littered with victims of the divorce epidemic. Ex-wives, raising their children alone; former husbands trying to start new lives, and still be good fathers to kids they only see on specified days. And the children themselves are often torn between two warring parents. In a recent 10-year study of 60 divorced, middle-class families in Northern California, physiologist Judy Wallerstein found that only 10% of the ex-spouses said they had both succeeded in improving their own lives. Wallerstein said, ‘Divorce has been a wrenching experience for every family I have ever seen. Divorce produces broken humans. And broken humans produce more broken homes, that produce more broken humans, that produce more broken homes, that produce more broken humans.’”

It's a vicious cycle.”

We have young people today who really don't have a standard. They don't know what the Word of God teaches. They don't have guidance and help to make their families stay together.

Now I'm not trying to put somebody who's already been divorced on a guilt trip. I want you to understand that. And if you've been divorced, God can forgive. He does forgive. And *there are no second-class citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven*. Okay? Just remember that. Because some of you are liable to get the idea that I'm trying to make you feel bad, or I'm talking down to you, in this message. I am not. God knows my heart. But I want to be true to the Word of God. I want to help marriages stay together. And I want to help kids to get married right.

## I. The Travesty of an Unequal Yoke

Now listen. Malachi faced three problems that we face, and problem number one is what I want to call the travesty of an unequal yoke. Notice, if you will, in verse 11: *“Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel...”*—now, what is this treachery? What is this abomination that is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem? Here it is—*“...for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god”* (Malachi 2:11).

What he is talking about here is a mixed marriage between believers and unbelievers, that the Bible calls an unequal yoke. And the Bible emphatically, categorically, and without any stutter or stammer, forbids it. It is absolutely wrong for a believer to marry an unbeliever. It is a travesty on the holiness of God.

Now God is very clear about this, and God is very plain about this. The Bible says, in 2 Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 14, *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for...what concord hath Christ with Belial?”* (2 Corinthians 6:14–15). That is, what concord is there between the Spirit of Jesus that's in you, and the spirit of the world that's in the unbeliever? When a pagan and a Christian get married, there are all kinds of difficulties, and the Bible warns against them.

### A. The Problem of Spiritual Disagreement

What is the travesty? What is the travesty of an unequal yoke? Well, number one, there is the problem with spiritual disagreement. Now husbands and wives are to be in agreement in the most important factors of life. Now what is the most important factor of all? Your relationship to God, isn't it? Anything more important than that? And shouldn't husbands and wives be agreed on the basic issues, beginning with the relationship with God? Amos 3, verse 3, asks a question: *“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”* (Amos 3:3). Husbands and wives certainly ought to agree on the things of

God.

Now what happens when a Christian marries a non-Christian? The Christian says, “I want to go to the Lord’s house on Sunday.” The non-Christian says, “This is my day off. I want to sleep in.” The Christian says, “I want to take a tithe of our income, and bring it to the house of God for the work of God.” The non-Christian says, “No, we need that money, and there are other things that we can do with that money. We can’t afford to do it.” The Christian says, “It’s the Lord’s day. It’s a holy day.” The non-Christian says, “It’s the weekend. It’s a holiday.” The Christian says, “We have a problem in our home. Let’s pray and seek the face of God.” The non-Christian says, “Let’s work it out. We don’t need that superstition.” The child of God says, “I want our children to be raised in the fear and the nurture and the admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). The unbeliever says, “I want our children to succeed, and here’s the way I want them to do it.” There is a conflict, and there’s the problem of spiritual disagreement.

### **B. The Problem of Spiritual Decay**

And there is also the problem of spiritual decay. When a believer marries an unbeliever, so many times, the unbeliever pulls the believer down to his level, rather than vice versa. For example, the person that is married to a nonbeliever is generally never as faithful to church as he would be if both of them went together. Isn’t that true? Now for example, isn’t it hard even for two believers to get here on Sunday morning, if you have little children? Isn’t it hard? Why is it harder to get to church than it is to get to work? Figure that one out. I don’t know. Well, I guess for one reason, we don’t take the kiddies to work with us. We have to get the kids ready. When our children were little, and by the time we got to church on Sunday, we needed to be there, because we’d lost our religion. You know what I’m talking about? I mean, dear friend, you almost have to get started on Saturday morning to get there on Sunday morning. That’s right, to get good and ready. And yet, we want to come.

Now what about when one partner doesn’t even want to come at all? You’re going to find out, dear friend, that there’s the problem of spiritual decay—that the unbeliever will drag the believer down, in an unequal yoke.

There was a lady named Olivia. She fell in love with Samuel Clemens. We know Samuel Clemens as what? Mark Twain. He’s the one who wrote *Huckleberry Finn*, and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and these other things. Now Mark Twain was a very witty and humorous man, called a humorist. And I’m sure that he had a lot of good things going for him; but he was a skeptic. He did not believe the Bible to be the Word of God.

Olivia was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. She was saved. She was a Christian. She loved Samuel Clemens. She felt, if she married him, that she could be a good

influence on him. And in direct disobedience to the Word of God, she became unequally yoked with an unbeliever. For a while, they were very happy, and he let her practice her faith. But then, one day, when she was reading the Bible aloud in the home, Samuel Clemens said, “I can’t sit here and listen to you read that any longer. I don’t believe in that. I don’t believe in the Bible. And I don’t want to hear it in this house.” Her heart was wounded. She closed up spiritually. He went his own way. Their marriage managed to survive, but then deep sorrow came into the home. They didn’t know where to turn. Samuel Clemens said to his wife, “Olivia, if it helps you to lean on your Christian faith, go ahead.” She said, “Husband, I don’t have any more faith to lean on.” He had pulled her down to his level. The Bible says, *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”* (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Solomon, one of the wisest men who ever lived, married pagan wives and corrupted his life.

### C. **The Problem of Spiritual Division**

There is the problem, my dear friend, of spiritual disagreement; there is the problem of spiritual decay; and there is the problem of spiritual division. Your home, if you’re married to an unbeliever, is much more likely to be a home that is divided by divorce—three times more likely. When people marry outside their faith, when people who believe strongly one way marry people who believe strongly the other way, there is the problem of division.

And what Malachi deals with is something that we need to deal with in this day and this age, and it is the travesty, the travesty of an unequal yoke. I can’t think of a greater travesty than for a child of God, who says, “Jesus Christ means more to me than anything in this world, the most important part of my life,” and then they marry somebody who doesn’t say the same thing. It is a travesty, an absolute travesty. It is a contradiction to the Word of God.

And young people, you listen to me. Never date someone that you could not marry, if you fell in love with them. Only date a potential mate. Now you talk about in-law troubles. Listen. You marry an unsaved person, then you’re going to have in-law troubles, because he or she is a child of the devil. You’re going to get the devil for a daddy-in-law. That’s right. You’re going to get the devil for a father-in-law. That’s what’s going to happen to you. And your grandchildren are going to have the devil for a grandpappy.

What I’m trying to say to you is this, dear friend: you had better learn—you had better learn to marry in the Lord. That’s what Malachi is saying. You seek God’s will, and *the way to find the right person is to be the right person*. You walk in the Spirit, and you’re going to find them in the right place—a house of God—not in a singles bar

somewhere. You get right with God, and stay right. Stop looking around for a mate, and begin to look up, and say, “Dear God, you guide me, and help me to marry only in the Lord.” There is the travesty of an unequal yoke.

## **II. The Treachery of an Unkept Vow**

Second thing I want you to see there, my dear friend, is the treachery of an unkept vow. Go on and see what Malachi had to say here in this passage of Scripture: *“The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar,”*—that it makes no difference how smart you are, dear friend; you’re not smarter than God—*“out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts. And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand”* (Malachi 2:12-13). Here are these people blubbering, crying, weeping, worshipping, and offering. But God says, “That doesn’t move me. That doesn’t impress me.” *“Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one?”* (Malachi 2:14-15). That is, didn’t God take two people and make them one? *“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”* (Mark 10:9).

Now notice he goes on to say, in verse 16: *“For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away”* (Malachi 2:16). The word *putting away* here means “divorce.” So we’re talking here, now, about a greater problem even than the problem of an unequal yoke, and it is the treachery of an unkept vow. Let me tell you what God’s plan is, and it hasn’t changed. God’s plan from the very beginning is for one man to be married to one woman—in the Lord, till death do them part. God’s plan is for a believer to marry another believer for life.

### **A. Divorce Disobeys the Word of God**

Now what is the problem? What is the treachery? God calls it treachery. What is the treachery of unkept vows? Well, first of all, divorce disobeys the Word of God. Now verse 16 says, “God hates divorce.” The Bible is clear about divorce. You see, it disobeys the Word of God. Verse 15 says, *“And did not he make one?”* (Malachi 2:15). You see, God’s arithmetic is strange arithmetic: one plus one equals one. God made husband and wife one.

Where do we read about this in the Bible? Well, way back in the Book of Genesis chapter 2 and verse 24: *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh”* (Genesis 2:24).

### **1. The Priority of Marriage**

Now when God says that a man shall leave his father and his mother, in Genesis 2:24, He is talking about the priority of marriage. There is no higher priority on this earth than your priority to your wife. More a greater bonding should be between husband and wife than between parent and child. *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife”* (Genesis 2:24).

### **2. The Permanence of Marriage**

And then, he talks, dear friend, about the permanence of marriage: *“and shall cleave unto his wife”* (Genesis 2:24). He cleaves to her. The word *cleave* means, “to be welded, to be bonded” to his wife. There’s no other commitment—not your business, not your church, not your friends, not your reputation—no deeper commitment than the commitment to your wife.

### **3. The Product of Marriage**

There is a priority, there is permanence, and there is a product: *“And they two shall become one flesh”*—physically, psychologically, emotionally—“and they shall be one flesh.”

### **B. Divorce Diminishes the Worship of God**

Now dear friend, what happens is this: divorce disobeys the Word of God. Divorce diminishes the worship of God. Look, if you will, in verse 13—he says, “you cover the altar with your tears, your weeping; you bring your offerings” (Malachi 2:13). But God says, “I don’t accept it. I don’t accept it.” God does not accept worship from people who carelessly, flippantly disobey His laws, and go right on as if nothing had happened. They were wondering, “Why doesn’t God hear my tears, see my tears, hear my prayers, accept my offerings?” God says, “You’ve dealt treacherously. I’m a witness against you. I know what you’ve done.” And God says, “In spite of your scholarship, in spite of your offerings, in spite of your tears, I don’t hear it.” When divorce disobeys the Word of God, divorce diminishes the worship of God.

Now I want to say something here, very clearly: I am not saying that, if you’ve been divorced, you can’t worship God. That would be absurd. You read the Bible, and you find out that God is a God of grace, and a God of forgiveness. The Bible says, “What God has called clean let no man call unclean” (Acts 10:15). And the Bible speaks of those who have gotten into divorce, and gotten into other problems equally as bad. But God has forgiven and God has cleansed. But dear friend, until these things are dealt with—not as mistakes or failures, but as sins—we can never be right with God. We have to face it as God faces it. We have to face it in honest confession, honest repentance, and, wherever necessary, honest restitution. When we do that, then God will accept us. But we have a generation of people, who are just simply saying, “God

bless us, anyhow.” And He’s not going to do it.

### **C. Divorce Destroys the Work of God**

Listen. Divorce disobeys the Word of God; divorce diminishes the worship of God; and divorce destroys the work of God. Look, in verse 15: *“And did not he make one?”* (Malachi 2:15). Who is it that made husband and wife one? The Bible says, *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh”* (Genesis 2:24). Who does that? The preacher? No. Who does that? The judge? No. Who makes them one? The state? No! God made them one. And when there is a divorce, what you do is to destroy the work of God. You put asunder what God has put together. That is audacity to destroy the work of God.

Now we have a divorce epidemic. You know what we’re doing in America? Rather than building a wall and a bulwark against divorce, we’re making it easier for people to get divorces. Today, we have something called a *no-fault* divorce. Think about that: a *no-fault* divorce. Dear friend, there is no such thing as a *no-fault* divorce. Now sometimes, there is more problem on one side than there is on another. Sometimes, somebody is more at fault than somebody else. Now I’m going to tell you something else: I’ve never seen a divorce when there wasn’t fault on both sides. It’s a thin pancake that doesn’t have two sides. You listen to me, dear friend. Divorce destroys the work of God.

### **D. Divorce Distorts the Witness of God**

And then, let me tell you what else it does: divorce distorts the witness of God. Look, in verse 15: *“And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one?”* Why did God make husband and wife one? *“That he might seek a godly seed”* (Malachi 2:15). Do you see that? *“That he might seek a godly seed.”* Now what does that mean? Do you know why God wants you to have a godly home, a home that is not severed by divorce? That you might have godly children—that’s it.

What is your home? Why did God put husband and wife together? That they might be fruitful and multiply; that they might replenish the earth. And replenish the earth with what kind of people? Broken human beings? No! Children who love God! *“A godly seed.”* Why? To witness. The Bible says, *“As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth”* (Psalm 127:4). What are arrows for? To shoot at the enemy. God gave us children. God gave us children, as His weapons of witness and warfare in a sinful world. And every home ought to be an incubator of holiness for God. My greatest ministry is not here in this pulpit, but with my four children, that I can raise some arrows to be shot at the enemy. And I thank God that I have four children that love the Lord Jesus, who are soul winners, not ashamed of Christ, and who are serving the Lord.

This is why He made us one. My dear friend, the great tragedy in divorce is not primarily between husband and wife—it's the children who suffer; and, the witness of our great God that suffers in this world, a world that's crying out for an answer. *Every home ought to be an incubator where we're raising missionaries for the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Our Lord permitted divorce in the case of marital infidelity. Matthew chapter 5, verses 31 and 32: *"It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you"*—Jesus says unto you—*"that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery"* (Matthew 5:31-32). The one exception that our Lord gave was a case of a physical act of sexual immorality. And then he did not require divorce. He only permitted it. But even there, how much better would it be to forgive, restore, and to put that marriage back together, as Hosea did when he went after Gomer.

Now people give other excuses and other reasons for divorce, but they don't hold water. Somebody says, "The love has gone out of our marriage." Well, friend, that doesn't have anything to do with it, really. Listen to me. Love is primarily commitment, not primarily feeling. You understand that? Love is primarily commitment, not primarily feeling. It is not your love that sustains your marriage; it is your marriage that sustains your love. Did that sink in? It is your commitment that keeps that love going. And that commitment is a deeper love than our ordinary discussion of love.

You see, we talk about *being in love*, and then we talk about *love*; and the two are not necessarily the same. Some people say, you know, "I don't love you anymore; please release me, let me go." You know the song: "Please release me...I don't love you anymore." That's an emotional feeling.

Listen to what C. S. Lewis has to say. In *Mere Christianity*, he says this: "Being in love is a good thing, but it is not the best thing. There are many things below it, but there are also things above it. You cannot make it"—that is, being in love—"the basis of a whole life. It is a noble feeling, but it is still a feeling. Who could bear to live in that excitement for even five years?" That is, five years of romance—that kind. "But of course, ceasing to be *in love* need not mean ceasing to *love*. Love, in this second sense—*love*, as distinct from *being in love*—is not merely a feeling. It is a deep unity, maintained by the will, and deliberately strengthened by habit, reinforced by the grace, which both ask, and receive, from God. They can have this love for each other, even at those moments when they do not like each other." There ever been a time when your wife didn't like you? Be honest, man. Listen: "They can have this love for each other, even at those moments when they do not like each other." Listen to this: "As you love yourself, even when you do not like yourself, they can retain this love, even when each



would easily, if they allowed themselves, to *be in love* with someone else. *Being in love* first moved them to promise fidelity, but this quieter *love* enables them to keep the promise. It is on this *love* that the engine of marriage is run. *Being in love* was the explosion that only started it.”

You see, dear friend, there is a deeper commitment. The Bible doesn't say, “Husbands, feel loving towards your wives.” It says, “Husbands, love your wife.” That's a command, not a request. So don't say, “Oh well, we're not in love; therefore, we're going to get a divorce.”

Or what does somebody else say? Somebody else says, “Well, it will be better for the children, if we got a divorce; it would be better for us to get a divorce than for the children to hear us arguing all of the time, and for the children to be raised in the atmosphere of an unhappy home.” Well, before you say it's better for the children, you ought to do some statistical studies, and see what happens to the children in divorced families. And if you think it's better for the children to have to choose between mother and dad, why don't you ask the children, see if they think it's better for them.

The truth of the matter is, many times we want a divorce, and we act very noble, by saying, “We're doing it for the children,” but it's really very selfish. If you're really interested in the children, don't get a divorce. And stop the bickering, if you really love the children. Say, if you really care for the children, then, for their sake, stop that. But don't say, “We're getting a divorce for their sake.”

You say, “Well I owe it to myself to be happy.” You ever hear that? You say, “God wants me to be happy.” Well, I think God likes for you to be happy; but *God's far more interested in you being holy than He is in you being happy*. You see, let's find out. We're talking about owing it to yourself—“I owe it to me.” But when you got married, you made a vow. The Bible calls her the “wife of your covenant” (Malachi 2:14). You made a vow. You owe her something. And you owe God something, because you made that vow before God. Now you better keep what you owe to God, and what you owe to others, primary. Stop talking about what you owe to yourself. You have a debt to God.

You say, “Well, God told me to get a divorce.” Oh, He did? Well, dear friend, I want to say something here kindly: God didn't tell you any such thing. God gave one exception on where He permitted divorce. And other than if you've been hearing voices, it's been out of suggestion, or the devil or somebody else whispering in your ear. It wasn't God. It wasn't God. You show me two kids who consider divorce as an option when they get married, saying, “Well, if it doesn't work out, we'll bail out”; you show me two kids like that, and I'll show you two kids who have a great propensity for getting a divorce, who are more apt to get a divorce. But you show me two kids who don't even see divorce as an option, who have thrown away the parachute when they get on board that airplane, and I'll show you two kids who somehow will make it out, who will make it

work out.

Listen to me. People who get divorces, and people who don't get divorces, generally have the same kinds of problems. The difference is in commitment. Now don't even let that be an option. Take the word *divorce* and cut it out of your dictionary. Don't ever let it be in your vocabulary. *I told Joyce, "If you ever leave me, I'm going with you."* Dear friend, God's plan is for one man to be married to one woman, "till death do us part."

Now if your marriage is in trouble, your marriage is not going to be healed overnight. There's no magic that's going to just heal it overnight. But overnight, you can do this: you can turn it around, and start it in another direction. And it may take you a long time to get there; but, by decision, you can say, "We're going to begin to work on it." You can turn it around, and begin to work toward healing.

Don't get a divorce. Those problems are not that big. What a tragedy when 10% of the marriages are in trouble, and 90% go down the drain, because you don't work out those problems. *There's no problem too big to solve, just people too small to solve them.* You take the grace of God, and bring it into that thing. God says, "I hate putting away" (Malachi 1:16).

### **III. The Tragedy of an Unloved Wife**

Now dear friend, there is the travesty of an unequal yoke; there is the treachery of an unbroken vow; and, I want you to notice, finally, dear friend, the tragedy of an unloved wife. Notice, the last part of verse 14: "*Yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant*" (Malachi 2:14). Notice the end of verse 15: "*And let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth*" (Malachi 2:15). The tragedy of an unloved wife.

Why does God speak to the husband here about loving his wife, and not dealing treacherously against his wife? Why doesn't God speak to the wife? I'll tell you why: God holds the man responsible. God says that the man is to be the head of the home, as Christ is the head of the Church. God is looking for men who will say, as Joshua, "*But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD*" (Joshua 24:15). I would say, *as a general rule, if the home is wrong, it's because the husband is wrong.* The problem is not primarily with rebellious wives. The problem is primarily with quitter, shirker, and slacker husbands. Husbands who fail to be the man of God that they ought to be, and who fail to love their wives as Christ loves the Church.

#### **A. The Man Is to Love His Wife Passionately**

How are you to love your wife, mister? The Bible teaches you to love your wife passionately. "*Christ...loved the church,*" the Bible says, "*and gave himself for it*" (Ephesians 5:25). He loved it with such a passion that He died for it. *Most women don't mind being in submission to a man who loves her enough to die for her, and when he*

*shows it by the way he lives for her.*

### **B. The Man Is to Love His Wife Purifyingly**

Not only is he to love her passionately; he is to love her purifyingly. The Bible says that Christ loved the church “that he might wash it with water, by the Word, and present it to himself a pure church, without spot, or blemish, or any such thing...so ought men to love their wives as themselves” (Ephesians 5:26–28), in Ephesians chapter 5. Mister, you’re to be to your wife a pastor, priest, and prophet. You are to lead her to make her a radiantly beautiful Christian.

### **C. The Man Is to Love His Wife Protectively**

Not only that; you are to love her protectively. The Bible says, “*So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies*” (Ephesians 5:28). The Bible says, “*For no man ever yet hated his own flesh*” (Ephesians 5:29). If you hate your own flesh, you’re sick. A man that wounds and hurts his own body is sick. And a man that does not protect his own wife is sick. He has a sick marriage. She is the weaker vessel. That does not mean she is an inferior vessel. Silk is weaker than denim, not inferior. She’s more delicate.

And the Bible says that you are to love her as Christ also protects the Church, who watches over the Church. You are to love your wife as you love your own body. And you protect your body; so, you’re to protect her.

### **D. The Man Is to Love His Wife Providingly**

You’re to love her providingly. The Bible says, “*For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth...*” (Ephesians 5:29). You know what the word *nourish* means? He “feeds” it. You are to meet the need of your wife. And in meeting the need of your wife, you’re going to meet your own needs. Be good to yourself. Love your wife. Love your wife.

Oh, the tragedy of an unloved wife! Most all of the problems of America and American homes would be solved, if husbands would just simply begin to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. Just that. Think of how much money could be saved by going to marriage counselors, by just loving your wife as Christ loved the church.

## **Conclusion**

Now what Malachi had to say so long ago is not old; it’s up-to-date. There is the travesty of an unequal yoke. There is the treachery of an unkept vow. There’s the tragedy of an unloved wife. Again, I’m not trying to make people who have been divorced feel badly. God knows I’m not. Some of the greatest Christians I know have been people whose homes have been broken by divorce, some of the most wonderful friends I have. But I want to help our young people. I really do. If you’re not yet married, you marry a believer

in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are married, don't even consider the option of divorce. If you've been divorced or remarried, commit that to Jesus, and start from here, and serve Him. You can't unscramble eggs; give Him what you've got. He's a God of grace. He's a God of forgiveness. But friend, let's tell this young generation what the Word of God says, and let's raise up a godly seed. And let's break this vicious cycle of broken homes, producing broken humans that are producing more broken homes. Let's do it for Jesus' sake.

Heads are bowed, and eyes are closed. While we pray, would you just pray for the homes of America, the homes of this church, and for your home? Father God, I do pray, in the name of Jesus, that, Lord God, you would seal the message to every heart. In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

# How to Change the Superficial into the Supernatural

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** February 19, 1989

**Main Scripture Text:** Malachi 3:1–4

*“And 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

## Outline

Introduction

- I. Receive the Grace of God
- II. Recognize the Goal of God
- III. Rest in the Goodness of God
  - A. God Extracts Us
  - B. God Tests Us
  - C. God Breaks Us
  - D. God Purifies Us
    1. He Is Sovereign
    2. He Is Sympathetic
    3. He is Steadfast
- IV. Reflect the Glory of God

Conclusion

## Introduction

Turn with me to Malachi chapter 3. That’s the last book in the Old Testament. We’re preaching through the book of Malachi under the general heading, “God’s Word for the End of an Age.” Malachi preached at the close of the Old Testament, at the close of the dispensation, at the close of an age. We believe that we’re living at the close of the New Testament times, at the close of an age, and there is a remarkable similarity to what was happening in Malachi’s day and what is happening in our day. Now in Malachi’s day, the people had a form of religion, but they denied the power thereof. In Malachi’s day, they were very superficial.

And as you read the entire book of Malachi, you can find that out by the very silly questions that they asked, almost impudent questions, sometimes sarcastic questions

of God. They were completely unaware of their needs. And like New Testament Christians today, many Christians and many in this auditorium, their greatest need is to see their need. These people were quite unaware of the fact that they were worshipping God, but God was not accepting their worship. They were making gifts, but God was not receiving their gifts. It was all just superficial. They were playing at religion.

I heard of a woman who was driving her automobile, and the automobile just stopped, just stopped and it wouldn't go. She couldn't make the engine run. She didn't know anything about automobiles. She stopped a man and said, "Could you tell me, sir, what's wrong with my car?" He got in and checked a few things and said, "Well, lady, it's out of gas." "Oh," she said, "will it hurt to drive it home that way?"

Now, a lot of our churches are folks just plainly they've run out of gas and we wonder why they don't go. And we're so oblivious to the fact that we are devoid of the power of God. Now that is what happened in Malachi's day. And I want to talk to you about how to turn religion into reality, and the title of the message is, "How to Change the Superficial to the Supernatural." Begin reading Malachi chapter 3:1: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the *LORD* of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap." Fullers' soap is lye that burns and purges. "And 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. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the *LORD*, as in the days of old, and as in former years."

God says in verse 4, "Then I will accept your gift. Then I will accept your offering." Listen to me, friend. I don't care how big your offering is today or how even sacrificial you may think it is: it is not the offering that makes the worshipper acceptable; it is the worshipper that makes the offering acceptable. Okay? You can't buy God. You can't bribe God. And so, God has here a qualification. God says, "When you meet this, then your offering will be pleasant and your offering will be pleasing to me." Would you like to be a supernatural Christian? Would you like to have revival power in your life?

Then I want to give you four things that are necessary from this passage of Scripture. They're very wonderful truths that I pray God the Holy Spirit will write indelibly upon your heart and etch it, etch into your consciousness this morning.

## **I. Receive the Grace of God**

If you would be a supernatural Christian, number one, you must receive the grace of God. Just write that down. You must receive the grace of God. That's what verse 1 is

talking about. Look at it: “Behold, I will send my messenger,”—Who was he talking about? John the Baptist—“and he shall prepare the way before me,—who is the me that he’s talking about? The Lord Jesus—“and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple.”

Now in the Old Testament God had a temple for His people; in the New Testament He has a people for His temple. Paul said, “You are the temple of God.” And in 1 Corinthians 6:19 he says, “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which you have of God, and you’re not your own; for you are bought with a price.” Here our Lord is speaking. God is speaking about Jesus coming to His people. He’s coming to His temple. And notice: “Even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in...”

Now who is the messenger of the covenant? Jesus Christ. What is the covenant? You were here a while back when I talked to you about the blood covenant, but let me just share again with you what that covenant is. Turn with me to Jeremiah chapter 31, if you will, and let’s look again at the covenant that God has with His people—Jeremiah 31. And this verse needs to be underscored in your Bible—Jeremiah 31. Do you have it? Look in verse 31: “Behold, the days come, saith the *LORD*, I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel...”—do you know what the word *new covenant* means? New Testament. The word *covenant* and *testament* are the same. If you have in your Bible in your hand today a copy of the New Testament, you have a fulfillment of this verse—“I will make a new testament, a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.” Now remember that Jesus is the messenger of that covenant. He’s the one who brought that covenant. “Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt;”—that’s the Old Testament—“which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the *LORD*.” But now look at your new covenant. Look at it in verse 33. Here’s what the Lord Jesus came to bring. “And this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the *LORD*, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the *LORD*: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the *LORD*; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

What is the New Testament? What is the new covenant? Look in the last part of verse 34. God says, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Hallelujah. Praise God for that. First of all, it means that all of our sins are forgiven. Every stain, every blot, every blur, every blemish that ever came across a human soul is forgiven, and we need no longer be haunted by the ghost of guilt because those sins

are gone, buried in the grave of God's forgetfulness. Praise God! If you ask some people, "What is guilt?" they would tell you, "Oh, guilt is the feeling you get when you've done wrong." No, that's not guilt. That's a guilt feeling. You see, psychiatry and psychology is trying the deal with the guilt feelings. Only the blood of Jesus can deal with the guilt. The guilt is the transgression against Almighty God. But that is forgiven, never brought up against us anymore.

And then, thank God, look, if you will, in verse 33 what he says is in this covenant. And God says, "And I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts." When you enter into this new covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ, God puts His nature into you. God sends the Holy Spirit into you. And it's not just a bunch of rules and regulations. You have a burning desire to do the will of God. One of the ways that you can know that you're saved is that you delight in the law of God in your heart, and with all of your heart you want to serve God. I fail, and I fail every day. I sin, and God knows I'm ashamed of my sin. But I'm going to tell you one thing as I stand here. I don't want to sin. I hate sin. I'd rather eat dirt than to willingly sin, because God did something for me when He saved me. He put His law in my heart. And if you don't have a desire to live a holy life and a righteous life, and if the law of God is not burning in your heart, friend, I want to tell you as frankly as I can tell you, you'd better get saved, because you're going to hell. When God saves you, God saves you: He forgives your sin and He writes His law in your heart.

He goes on to say in verse 33, "And I will be their God and they shall be my people." What God is saying is, "When you enter into this covenant, all that belongs to me now belongs to you. I am your God. My provision, my protection is all yours. When they jump on you, they jump on me. I am your God to protect you, to love you, to provide for you." All I have needed thy grace has supplied.

And then, last of all, He says, He says, "And they will know me. They will know me." And He's talking here not about knowing about God, but knowing God intimately. We're not just praying at God, talking about God. "He walks with me and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own." There is that intimate knowledge of God that only the redeemed know.

Now, my dear friend, that's the very first step, and that is to receive the grace of God. Go back with me now to Malachi chapter 3 and look at it. The Lord Jesus Christ is the messenger of a blood covenant. Hallelujah! And that's the very first step. If you want to be a supernatural person, you must receive the grace of God. You must say, "Thank you, Lord Jesus. You have come into this temple of mine. The Lord, the messenger of the covenant, has appeared in my heart."



## II. Recognize the Goal of God

But number two—not only must you receive the grace of God—secondly, you must recognize the goal of God. God has a purpose in your life. God is aiming at something in your life. And when you receive His grace, He's not finished with you. Look now in verse 2: "But who may abide the day of his coming?" You see, when the Lord comes, what's going to happen to that old man you used to be? What is going to happen to that old nature? Do you think God's going to let that just stand? "Who is going to abide in the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth?" Obviously, this is talking about the Second Coming of the Lord in its prime reference, but it has a reference to the time when our Lord comes at any time. Who is going to be able to stand in His presence? No flesh shall stand in His presence, "for he is like a refiner's fire, and like the fullers' soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the *LORD* an offering in righteousness."

Now what our Lord is saying is this: that when Jesus Christ comes to save you, He also comes to purify you. Now our Lord has been called many things in the Bible. There are many names for Jesus. And we here at Bellevue have been enjoying the names of Jesus. In the Bible, He's prophet, priest, and king. He's wonderful counselor, mighty God, prince of peace, everlasting Father. In the New Testament, He's the physician. He's the vine. He's the good shepherd. But I'll tell you something else He is. He is the refiner. He is the one who wants to refine your life; that is, to take your life, like you would take gold ore, or silver ore, and burn out, take out, the dross and the impurities.

Now that's His goal. Do you know what God's goal for you is? To purify you. Do you know what God is interested in? Not primarily in making you happy. God's goal for you is to make you holy, to make you pure, to purge you, and to purify you. That's what God is doing in your life if you're saved. The moment you got saved, God began to work in you to purify you and to make you pure, to make you holy. God is not as interested in your automobile as you are. And if He has to wreck it, it's not going to bother Him. God is not as interested in your job as you are. If He wants to take it, it's not going to bother Him. God is not as interested in your health as you are. God will touch all of these things if it's necessary to purge you. You know, a lot of things that we think are important God doesn't think important. God has one goal, and that's to purify you—not necessarily to make you a successful yuppie, but to make you like the Lord Jesus Christ. That is His goal. He is a purifier.

You see, the Bible teaches this in many places. Jot these scriptures down. For example, Psalm 66:10: "For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried." Zechariah 13:9—God speaks of His people and He says, "I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will test them as gold is tested." Job 23:10—Job said, "And when

he hath tried me,”—that is, when He’s tested me, when He’s put me in the furnace—“I shall come forth as gold.”

You see, in my heart and in my life, there are many things that God wants to purge away. I told you that when God saved me He took away that basic desire to sin that I had before I got saved. But I want to tell you something else. There is in me a lot that needs to be purged out. Probably you, also. Are you free from these things: selfishness, impatience, pride, lust, jealousy, gossip, anger, criticism, unbelief? Do you have any difficulty with any of those things? I’m looking at you. Would you just gently nod your head. Yes? You say, “I do, pastor.” Are you saved? Nod your head. Yes, I am. But down there are all of these things. And when, my dear friend, you receive the grace of God, you need to recognize the goal of God, that God now has you as His silver ore and His gold ore, but He’s beginning now to work on you to purify you. Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” That is, God will be a reality to them. And the word *pure* here means a heart without mixture, without alloy, to be pure.

### **III. Rest in the Goodness of God**

All right now, the third thing. Now watch. First of all, you must receive the grace of God. Jesus Christ is the messenger of the covenant who wants to come to His temple. Secondly, you must recognize the goal of God. God is in the purpose of refining you, taking out the dross, the filth that’s in your life, even though you’re saved. Now the third thing, and this is very important. You must rest in the goodness of God, because when God begins to purify you, when God turns up the heat of His smelting furnace, when God puts you in His refining pot and God begins to let that ore begin to bubble and the scum rises to the top, you’re going to wonder if He loves you at all. I mean, you’re going to say, “God, where are you?”

Look, if you will, in verse 3: “He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.” And there are going to be times in your life when you’re going to say, “God, take this away. God, make this stop happening,” and He just sits there. He just sits there just watching the whole affair, and you’re going to wonder, *Does He really love me? Does He really care for me?* I’ll tell you it’s not fun to be refined. Do you know what happens?

Let me tell you what happens. There are four steps and none of them is a picnic.

#### **A. God Extracts Us**

First of all, the ore is extracted from the mine from the mountainside. He just takes the ore out. You see, that’s the very first thing God did when He saved us. What did He do? He took us out of this world, didn’t He? He took us out of this world. Wonderful! But He’s not finished yet. Now He’s got to take the world out of us. You see, that gold ore is there. That silver is there. And He takes it out. But what comes out with it? All of the rot, the dross, the filth, that all comes out with it, and that’s got to be separated. Just

because you're saved, just because you come out of the world, that doesn't mean the world has come out of you. So He's taken you out of the mine. He's taken you out of the mountainside. He has mined you. Now He has to refine you. He has brought you out.

## **B. God Tests Us**

Second thing that happens: After He brings you out, what's the next thing you do to purify silver or gold? You begin to crush it. You begin to break it. Do you like that? Do you like being crushed? Do you like being broken? It's necessary if you're going to be refined. We throw broken things away, but God never uses anything really till He breaks it. If you study the history, you're going to find out that when Gideon's pitcher was broken that's when the light shone and God gave the victory. You find out when the Lord took a little lad's lunch, what does the Bible say? The Bible says He blessed it and broke it and fed the multitudes. Mary had an alabaster box of ointment filled with perfume, but nobody smelled the perfume until, first of all, that alabaster box was what? Broken. And the perfume of that act still fills the world today with sweet fragrance. Jesus took those elements in His hand at what we call the Last Supper, and the Bible says He took the bread and broke it, and said, "This is my body which is broken for you."

You want a crop? The Bible says break up your fallow ground. Every farmer who knows that if he's going to have a crop must, first of all, put the plow in and break up the hard clogs. King David said, "A broken and a contrite spirit Thou will not despise." And the hammer of God's word and circumstances bring us into brokenness. Listen to me, dear friend. There is no blessedness without brokenness. There is no purging without pounding. God is going to bring that brokenness into your heart and into your life. He's brought it into mine, but He's not finished with me yet. I wish I could say, "That's over with."

## **C. God Breaks Us**

Now, what's next?" I still have to be broken, and you still have to be broken. That ore is extracted from the mine. Now it is broken. Third thing that's happened: It is melted. You're put in a furnace or in a what they call a fining pot, and the heat comes, and there's persecution and trials and affliction. There's no way that you can be refined without it. It doesn't mean that God doesn't love you. It doesn't mean that God has forsaken you. Put this verse in your margin—1 Peter 1:6-7. Peter had been talking about the things that really are a blessing to us, and he says, "In this you greatly rejoice..." —things like we've been hearing today. Love that will not let me go, How great Thou art, and all of these wonderful things that we have learned today in music. Yes, in those—"we greatly rejoice,"—and we ought to rejoice—"though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold trials."

Do you know what the word *manifold* means? It means variegated, many colored, all

different kinds of trials. We have all kinds of difficulties. Three categories of people here today: those who are in trouble, those who are getting out of trouble, and those who are just fixing to get into trouble. Manifold trials. Now Peter is talking to Christians. And if he were here, he would say the same thing to you. He says, “Thank God for the blessing, but here’s the heaviness. Here are the manifold trials.”

Now why do we have these trials? “That.” And that means with purpose to, “That the trial of your faith”—the testing of your faith—friend, listen. A faith that can’t be tested is a faith that can’t be trusted. Put it down. How do you know what you have is real if you haven’t been tested? How do you know it is real?—“that the trial”—the testing of your faith—“being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto the praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” God is putting you in the furnace to test your faith so that when Jesus Christ comes you’ll be pure before Him.

Well, you say, “I don’t want that. I don’t think I want to be a Christian.” All right then, don’t be a Christian. You’re going to have trials, too. Man that is born of woman is full of trouble. And I’ll tell you what. Yours won’t make any sense. Yours are not for a purpose. Ours are for a purpose. And our Lord knows exactly, precisely what He is doing. So the ore is taken out of the mountainside. Then it is crushed and broken. Then it is put in the fire and the fire is turned out, up.

#### **D. God Purifies Us**

And then it is purified. It is purified. Notice it says, “He shall sit as a refiner.” Look again in verse 3: “And 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.” And I said before we’ll say, “Lord, why don’t you do something? Why do you just sit there?”

##### **1. He Is Sovereign**

Well, let me tell you how He does sit there. Number one: He sits there as the sovereign. Do you know what the word *sit* means? It doesn’t mean sit like Bob Sorrell is sitting in that chair right now. It’s a technical word that means to sit on a throne. You see, the refiner is the ruler, the Redeemer. He’s the sovereign God. He knows exactly what He’s doing, okay? Okay.

##### **2. He Is Sympathetic**

In the middle of your trial right now I want you to know that God is sovereign. The sovereign God is there. But not only does it mean He’s the sovereign God; it also means, dear friend, that He’s the sympathetic God. He has His eye on you. He is watching. He’s not walking around somewhere else. The refiner sits right there because the gold, the silver is so precious to him. He’s sitting there. He’s watching you. Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, “God is never far from the mouth of the furnace when His gold

is there being refined.” He knows. He’s watching. He’s caring. He’s sympathetic.

### 3. He is Steadfast

You see, He’s sovereign. He’s sympathetic. And He’s steadfast. This word sit—“He shall sit”—it’s a Hebrew participle, which means continual action. I mean, He is continually doing this. He’s going to continue to do it until He is finished with us. When is He finished? Oh, I love this, and you’ve heard this before, but what a blessing! You see, as the heat is there, and He controls the heat, the impurities begin to bubble to the top, and the scum comes to the top, and He has His ladle, and He just keeps skimming off the scum and skimming off the scum. And then there comes an electrifying moment when suddenly it’s pure. Do you know how He knows when it is pure? When He’s refining silver, He can see His reflection. He sees His image in the silver and He knows it’s pure.

See, that’s what He’s doing, friend. That’s what He’s doing. He is reproducing in you the likeness, the image of Jesus Christ. There are things in your heart and in my heart at this moment that I am probably not aware of.

A while back, Joyce said something to me while we were at the house and it upset me. Well, I might as well be honest. It made me mad. It made me mad. Plain, old mad! And I said something back to her that was mean and hateful. What she said to me wasn’t mean and hateful. I think why it made me mad is because it was true. But she pushed a hot button down in here somewhere, and I said something. Oh, I didn’t cuss or anything like that, in case you’re worried about it, but I said something that wasn’t like Jesus and a long way from being like Jesus’ life. And when I said it, I was surprised at what I said. In fact, it was down in the murky recesses of my heart and just came up. It was there. She didn’t put it there. She only brought it out. It was already there. And I was surprised and ashamed at the pride and the arrogance and in insensitivity in my own heart. And I had a bad day that day, but it was a bad good day because I had to face some things and get alone with God and let God say, “Hot shot, you’re not quite like you think you are, are you? There are some things down in that old filthy heart of yours that need to be refined out.”

We don’t know that, friend, until the fire touches us. And then we see what’s down in the bottom of that refining pot. You see, our Lord knows how to keep us in the fire, and He knows what to do to bring us to that point. You see, my dear friend, we need to trust the goodness of God, rest in the goodness of God, because when it starts sometimes we’re going to think that God might be a thousand light years away, but He’s just sitting there. He shall sit with a sovereign purpose, with a sympathetic purpose, with a steadfast purpose as a refiner. That’s what He’s doing to take away the superficial and to give us the supernatural. *When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, my grace all sufficient shall be thy supply. The flame shall not hurt thee, I only design thy dross to*

*consume; thy gold to refine.* And so, dear friend, He's just working on me and He's working on you till He can see His face. That's it.

#### **IV. Reflect the Glory of God**

Now look. Receive the grace of God. Recognize the goal of God. Rest in the goodness of God when you're in the fire. And then you'll reflect the glory of God. That's the fourth thing. Reflect the glory of God. Do you know what the word *purify* literally means? It literally means to make bright, to make bright. You see, you may be silver, but you're tarnished. You may be gold, but you're impure. And what our Lord is doing is He wants to make you bright so you will reflect the glory of God. That's what I'm here for. God is here to give glory to His, Himself. And then he says that "they may offer"—verse 3—"unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. And then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the *LORD*."

#### **Conclusion**

Do you know what's happened today? I'll tell you what's happened. Some of you in this choir, if you're like the average choir, have sung, but it wasn't pleasant to God. Some of you have taught a Sunday school lesson today, but it wasn't pleasant to God. Some of you will put some money in the offering plate in a little bit, but God won't be pleased with it. Don't you want to please God? I mean, don't you want to say, "I want to do what I do as unto God. I want Him to be pleased." If we please God, it doesn't matter whom we displease. If we displease God, it doesn't matter whom we please.

We're so superficial. We're like they were in Malachi's day. We need reality. What's going to happen to all this silver and this gold that He refines? You ready for a blessing? Fast-forward to verse 17—Malachi 3:17: "And they shall be mine, saith the *LORD* of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels,"—the word here for jewels is not the word that describes rubies and diamonds, but gold and silver—"they're going to be mine," said the Lord.

Friend, you're going to be a part of His trophy. You're going to be a part of His diadem. You're going to be a part of His praise when He comes again because you're that gold, that silver, that He's refined. And one of these days soon He's coming to make up His jewels. *And when He shall come with trumpet sound, oh, may I then in Him be found; dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before His throne.*

Folks, listen to me. We're only so many more days that we have here on this earth, even if Jesus doesn't come again in our lifetime. But He may come today. Let's turn the superficial to the supernatural and let the Lord refine us and make us what He wants us to be.

Heads are bowed; eyes are closed. No one stirring. No one moving at all. I want you

to begin to pray for those who may not know the Lord Jesus Christ. Friend, I want to tell you again that Jesus Christ is the messenger of a covenant. The covenant is this: that with His blood He paid your sin debt. If you will repent of your sin and receive the Lord Jesus Christ, your sin will be forgiven as Jeremiah said. Not only you're your sin be forgiven, but God will write His law in your heart. He'll give you power and desire that you never knew before through His Holy Spirit. Thirdly, God will become your God and begin to meet your needs. And, fourthly, you will know God in an intimate way.

If you want that, you may pray like this: "Lord Jesus, I'm a sinner, and I'm lost, and I need to be saved. Jesus, You died to save me and you promised to save me if I would trust You. Right now I trust you with all of my heart. Once and for all, now and forever save me, Jesus." Pray a prayer like that and He'll save you, for the Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Father, I pray that many in this building today will say yes to Jesus Christ. Draw them, Lord Jesus, to yourself. Holy Spirit of God, convict of sin, save the lost. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# Opening the Windows of Heaven

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: April 5, 1992**

**Main Scripture Text: Malachi 3:7–12**

**Sponsored by: Sponsor**

*“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, 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

## Outline

Introduction

I. Who Is Interested in Your Finances?

- A. God Is Interested
- B. Satan Is Interested
- C. You Are Interested

II. Four Steps in Opening the Windows of Heaven

- A. Recognize Your Failure
  - 1. How to Recognize if You're in Financial Bondage
  - 2. How to Recognize if You're in Financial Bondage, Even if You Have Money
    - a. If You Try to Find Satisfaction in Your Riches
    - b. If You Spend Time Worrying over Your Wealth
    - c. If You Become a Slave to Your Money
    - d. If You're Not Rich Toward God
- B. Renew Your Fellowship
  - 1. If You Don't Tithe, You're Stealing From God
  - 2. If You Don't Tithe, You Rob the Church and the Needy
  - 3. If You Don't Tithe, You Rob Yourself
- C. Release Your Finances
  - 1. A Definite Proportion
  - 2. A Designated Place
  - 3. A Determined Purpose
- D. Restore Your Fruitfulness
  - 1. God Will Renew Your Faith
  - 2. God Will Rebuke Your Foes
  - 3. God Will Restore Your Fruitfulness

Conclusion



## Introduction

Be turning to Malachi the third chapter, would you, please. We've been in a wonderful series, talking about the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord of *a-double-I*—all. And we've been speaking these past Sundays about the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord of our work, and that, when you go to work on Monday morning, you're not going out into the secular world doing something mundane and monotonous that doesn't matter. The Bible says, there on your secular job, you serve the Lord Christ, and He's Lord of your work. Then, we've been talking about the fact that He is Lord of our wealth. And we've been saying that Jesus Christ is interested in how we secure our money, how we save our money, how we spend our money, and how we share our money. Next week, we're going to be talking about the fact that He is Lord of our worship, and we're going to have one of the most glorious Sundays, next Sunday, that we have ever known; it's Lordship Sunday. And then, we are going to continue to think about the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord of our worship. And we'll be having the Memphis Passion Play, and all of these other wonderful, wonderful events.

But right now, let's begin reading here, in Malachi chapter 3. And I begin reading in verse 7: *“Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?”* And then, God asks this question: *“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?”* God says: *“In tithes and offerings.”* And then, God says: *“Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.”* And then, God makes a commandment and a promise. Listen to it. Here's the commandment: *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts,”*—and, here's the promise—*“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. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all the nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts”* (Malachi 3:7–11).

God says, “If you will do thus and such, I will open to you the very windows of Heaven” (Malachi 3:10)—the floodgates of Heaven will be opened, and the blessings of God will be poured out upon His people. My dear friend, how would you like to have Heaven's windows opened over your head? How would you like for the God of Glory to open the windows of Heaven and begin to pour, upon your life, His blessings. I want to talk to you today about opening the windows of Heaven—opening the windows of Heaven. And the way to do that is to get right with God in our finances.

## **I. Who Is Interested in Your Finances?**

And may I tell you, this morning, that, when I'm talking about finances, I know that there are at least three that are interested.

### **A. God Is Interested**

God is interested. God is very, very much interested in your finances—not because God wants your money. God doesn't need your money. *"The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof"* (Psalm 24:1). God said, "If I were hungry, I wouldn't tell you" (Psalm 50:12). Don't get the idea, now, that, somehow, God is broke, or God is in financial difficulty. God is very solid; and yet, God is interested in your finances.

As a matter of fact, you just read the Bible, and you'll find out, very easily, that God is interested. In the parables that Jesus Christ told, 16 of those 38 parables dealt with man's use of finances: how he secures his money, saves his money, spends his money, or shares his money. As a matter of fact, one out of every ten verses in the Gospels deals with our financial resources. Over and over and over again, God is talking about this, because God knows, where our heart is, there will our treasure be; and, where our treasure is, there will our heart be (Matthew 6:21). And so He talks about our earthly treasures, our material goods. There are about 500 verses in the Bible about prayer. There are about 500 verses in the Bible about faith. And there are, my dear friend, some 2,000 verses in the Bible about our personal possessions. And so over and over again, God speaks to us about our possessions.

### **B. Satan Is Interested**

I'll tell you somebody else who is interested in your finances: It's the devil. Satan is interested in your finances, because he knows that, if he can get you into financial bondage, he can wreck and ruin your life. And my dear friend, he has done a good job in blasting the lives of so many, because they have not learned God's principles of finances. And Satan has wanted the windows of Heaven shut up, so that you will not be blessed.

### **C. You Are Interested**

I'll tell you a third one who is interested in your finances, and that is you. If you say you are not, I'm just going to think that, perhaps, you are not telling me the truth. You are interested, and you ought to be interested, because God expects you to be a good steward over that which He has placed in your hands.

## **II. Four Steps in Opening the Windows of Heaven**

Now are you interested in opening the windows of Heaven? May I give you four steps, right here, out of the Word of God? Now just take your Bibles—we're in Malachi 3—and

just look right down in the Word of God.

## **A. Recognize Your Failure**

Now first of all, step number one—and this is a painful step—but recognize your failure. Now you're not going to get right until you recognize where you are wrong. Now not everybody here is a failure, but many are; and we must recognize that. God says here that some people are cursed with a curse. Do you see that, in verse 9? "*Ye are cursed with a curse*" (Malachi 3:9). We're going to find out what that curse is: It is financial bondage.

### **1. How to Recognize if You're in Financial Bondage**

Let's see whether or not you're in financial bondage. May I give you a little checklist? Do you want to check? Want to find out? Will you be honest? All right, let me give you about 11 checks here to find out whether you're in financial bondage.

Number one: Do you find yourself charging daily expenditures because you don't have money to pay? If you do, you're in financial bondage.

Do you find yourself putting off paying a bill that is due because you don't have the money to pay it, and so, you put it off till next month?

Let me ask you another question: Do you borrow money to pay fixed expenses, such as taxes, insurance, rent? Do you?

Let me ask you another question—let me ask you another question: Does your long-term debt exceed over 20% of your income? Now most financial analysts tell us that when you get beyond 20% long-term debt, you're in danger. And you know, we Americans—we just believe that you're supposed to borrow it, for whatever it is. I mean that we've just been told that. Somebody has described a modern American as somebody who drives a bank-financed car over a bond-financed highway with gasoline he bought with a credit card on his way to open a charge account at the department store, so he can fill his savings-and-loan-financed home with installment-purchased furniture. Now that's just the way we are; but that's not the way we ought to be.

All right, next number: Do you find yourself unaware of just how much you do owe? Most of us won't balance the books and look at it honestly for the same reason we don't want to step on the scales and see how much we weigh. Are you just unaware of how much you owe?

Next question: Do you have creditors and bill collectors calling you or writing you about past-due bills?

Next question: Do you take from your savings to pay current bills?

Next question: Do you make new loans to pay off old ones?

Next question: Do you and your wife ever argue over finances?

Next question: Have you ever even thought about being dishonest about money?

Final question—here’s the big one: Do you find it difficult to return God’s tithe?

**2. How to Recognize if You’re in Financial Bondage, Even if You Have Money**  
“Well,” you say, “Pastor Rogers, I’m not worried about any of those things. I’m just doing fine. I’ve got more money than I know what to do with.” Well, you still might be in financial bondage. Did you know you can have a lot of money and be in financial bondage?

**a. If You Try to Find Satisfaction in Your Riches**

A rich person is in financial bondage when he tries to find satisfaction in his riches and can’t find it. The Bible says, *“He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver”* (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

**b. If You Spend Time Worrying over Your Wealth**

You can be in financial bondage when you spend your time worrying over your wealth. The Bible says, in Proverbs chapter 15 and verse 6: *“In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenue of the wicked is trouble”* (Proverbs 15:6). Maybe, maybe your revenue is high, but your trouble is also high.

**c. If You Become a Slave to Your Money**

You can be in financial bondage when you become a slave to your money. Proverbs 23, verse 4: *“Labour not to be rich”* (Proverbs 23:4). Maybe that’s your problem: Gold is your god.

**d. If You’re Not Rich Toward God**

Or, maybe...maybe you’re in financial bondage, because you have plenty in the bank, but you’re not rich toward Heaven—you’re not rich toward God. Here’s a verse that all of us ought to know by heart—Proverbs chapter 23, verse 5: *“Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven”* (Proverbs 23:5).

Now are you—are you—cursed with a curse, financially? Does it just seem that nothing really works out? All right, step number one: If you want the windows of Heaven open, just recognize your failure. Just go ahead and admit it—admit it before God. Say, “God, I am not what I ought to be in the financial realm; and I don’t believe I am what You want me to be.” All right, now, I’m not trying to say that, if you’re poor and can’t pay your bills, you’re not right with God. But I am saying—listen to me very carefully, listen to me very carefully—there may be some principles that you are transgressing, and God wants to teach you these principles, so He can bless you. Point number one: Recognize your failure.

**B. Renew Your Fellowship**

Point number two: Renew your fellowship. Now look at it here, in verse 7: *“Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept*

*them. Return unto me,*”—return unto me—*“and I will return unto you”* (Malachi 3:7). Now if you want financial freedom, and if you want the windows of Heaven open, first of all, you just return to God. And I want to remind you that it is not your money that God wants. Please hear me say that. It is you that God wants. God needs nothing. Put this verse down—Psalm 50, verse 12—God says, *“If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof”* (Psalm 50:12). God loves you for yourself. It is not what you have that God wants. God wants you. God says, *“Return unto me, and I will return unto you”* (Malachi 3:7). And if you give your money without giving yourself, remember that proverb: “The gift without the giver is bare.”

And if you think that we as a church are just simply here talking to you about finances to try to somehow wrest more money out of you, you are so wrong. And may I tell any guest who’s here today, I’m not talking to you—number one; I’m talking to our members. And may I say to our members that, what is not freely given, and what is not gladly given, God neither needs nor wants. Put it down: What you don’t freely give, and what you don’t gladly give, and lovingly give, God neither needs nor wants.

Here’s the way they gave in the Bible—2 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 5—the Bible says, *“They...first gave their own selves to the Lord”* (2 Corinthians 8:5). *“They...first gave their own selves to the Lord”* (2 Corinthians 8:5). There must, dear friend, there must be that renewal of fellowship, where you just say, “Here, Lord. You are Lord of all.” Or, 2 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 14—the Apostle Paul said, *“I seek not yours but you”* (2 Corinthians 12:14)—“It’s not your money I’m after; it is you I want.” And why did the Apostle Paul want the people? He wanted the people for God. Recognize your failure. Number two, my dear friend: Restore your fellowship. Just come back with and to God.

Now a lot of people are trying to get right with God, but they never get right financially, and that’s the reason they never get right. I want to say something, and I pray God the Holy Spirit will cause it to come right into your heart, and that you will not miss it. Listen. The kind of repentance and the kind of consecration that does not reach the purse, that does not reach the bank account, has never reached the heart. Now you can say all you want that you’re going to get right with God, but if you don’t get right with God in your finances, you are not right with God. Matthew chapter 6, verse 33, says: *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (Matthew 6:33). Now you put God first, and things second, and things will begin to happen in your life. But you put things first, and then, God second, and, my dear friend, you’ve just canceled it all out.

Now God says, *“Return unto me,”* and renew your fellowship” (Malachi 3:7). And the people said, “Well, how shall we return?” And look in verse 7: *“But ye said, Wherein shall we return?”* God answers—look in verse 8: *“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have*

*robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?*” And God’s answer is: *“In tithes and offerings”* (Malachi 3:7–8). Now my dear friend, the point of return is the point of departure. More people than we dare think get away from God in the financial realm. And if you’re going to come back to God, if you’re going to renew your fellowship, you’re going to have to begin with the tithe.

### **1. If You Don’t Tithe, You’re Stealing From God**

Now if you don’t tithe, you’re stealing from God. That’s pretty blunt, isn’t it? Now you say, “Pastor, I don’t agree with that.” Well, that’s all right, but don’t come to me after the service and argue with me about it. Just take your Bible—take Malachi 3, verse 8—and go argue with God somewhere. Don’t argue with me about it, because I’m not the one that said it. *“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me...Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings”* (Malachi 3:8).

Now dear friend, it would be wrong to rob a bank. Most of us will not get a gun and a mask, and go in and rob a bank. I heard about a man who did try to rob a bank. He shoved a note to the teller, and he said, “This is a robbery. I’ve got a gun on you. Put all of your money in a bag, and slide it over here to me.” She wrote him a note, and sent it back to him. And it said: “Straighten your tie; they’re taking your picture.” Now I want to tell you that God is taking your picture.

Now you can fool me. I don’t know what anybody in this church gives, except me. I don’t know what you give. I don’t know what they give. I don’t know what anybody gives. I have never made that any of my business—not any of my business whatsoever. As far as I’m concerned, everybody in here is a tither; I don’t know. I really don’t know. That’s none of my business. But I want to tell you something, my dear friend: God knows, and God is taking your picture.

### **2. If You Don’t Tithe, You Rob the Church and the Needy**

*“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me”* (Malachi 3:8). You know—listen, friend—think about it: I mean, when you fail to return the tithe, you do rob God. You do rob the Church. You do rob missions. You do rob the needy.

### **3. If You Don’t Tithe, You Rob Yourself**

But have you ever thought about the fact that you’ve robbed yourself? I mean, you are cursed with a curse. Now you know, the Bible says we’re to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and we’re to render unto God the things that are God’s (Matthew 22:21). April the 15<sup>th</sup>, you are going render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s. Boy, you are going to get down there, and you are going to pay that income tax. You would not think of not rendering to Caesar on April the 15<sup>th</sup>. Question: Do you fear Caesar more than you fear God? Do you love Caesar more than you love God?

“Well,” you say, “now, wait a minute, Pastor. What is the tithe, anyway? I mean, I’m

new at this thing. I don't even know what the tithe is." Well, the tithe is the first tenth of all of your income. Let me give you some Scripture here—Leviticus chapter 27 and verse 30: *"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD"* (Leviticus 27:30)—all of the tithe. And the word *tithe* simply means "a tenth." Jacob said, in Genesis chapter 28 and verse 22: *"Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee"* (Genesis 28:22).

And so here it is. Listen, folks. First of all, recognize your failure. Secondly, you need to renew your fellowship. Just say, "God, I'm coming back to You. And wherein will I return? I'm going to return unto You, Lord, with my tithes and with my offerings." That is the starting place. You cannot plow around it. You cannot say, "Well, I'll get right in every other area but this area." Get right in this area, or you will not be right with God. Tithing is God's way to bless you. It's always a blessing, when you give it; it's always a curse, when you steal it.

### **C. Release Your Finances**

Number three—now, watch it: recognize your failure; renew your fellowship; and then, here it is: release your finances—just release them. Look, in verse 10: *"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat"*—food, that means—*"in mine house, and prove me now herewith, 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). All right, how are we going to do this? When we release our finances to the Lord, what do we do? Well, God tells us exactly what steps to take, if we want the windows of Heaven—the floodgates of Glory—to be opened on us.

#### **1. A Definite Proportion**

First of all, there is a definite proportion that we're to bring. Look at it, again: *"Bring ye all the tithes"* (Malachi 3:10). I've told you that the word *tithe* means "tenth." One-tenth of all of our increase is to be set aside for God's use. And the other nine-tenths belong to God, and we are stewards of it. But one-tenth is to be set aside and consecrated for God's use. Again, Genesis chapter 28 and verse 22—Jacob said, *"Of all that thou shalt give me I will give the tenth unto thee"* (Genesis 28:22).

Now I know how the minds of many folks are working today. You are saying, "Now wait a minute, Pastor. That tithing business—that's all legalistic. And you know, we're under grace; we're not under the law." Well, friend, when Jacob said, *"Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee,"* that was before the Mosaic Law was ever even thought of (Genesis 28:22). As a matter of fact, Abraham, who was the brightest star in the Hebrew Heaven, 400 years before Moses and the Mosaic Law, gave tithes to Melchizedek, and Melchizedek was a picture and a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham tithed, before the law. Jacob tithed, before the law.

And then, after the law, in the New Testament, Jesus Christ talked about tithing. In Matthew chapter 23 and verse 23, He said to the scribes and the Pharisees, *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done,”*—that is, to pay tithe—*“and not to leave the other undone”* (Matthew 23:23). Tithing is not a substitute for justice, mercy, and faith. But we ought to tithe. Jesus Christ said so.

And if you really want to read something interesting, you just get your Bibles, and read Hebrews chapter 5, and Hebrews chapter 7, and you’re going to find out that, when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, it is a picture of the Church paying tithes to the Lord Jesus Christ. May I say this about the tithe? Listen to me, friend. Abraham commenced it. Jacob continued it. Moses commanded it. Jesus commended it. Who am I to cancel it? May I say that again? Abraham commenced it. Jacob continued it. Moses commanded it. Jesus commended it. Who am I to cancel it? Somebody says, “Oh, oh, I’m not under the law.” I’ve heard that so much. “I’m not under the law; I’m under grace.” So am I...under grace.

Did you know that there’s a law that says a man has to feed his children? And if you don’t feed your children, you can be arrested for child neglect. Is there anybody who feeds his children for that reason? Of course not. You feed your children, because you love them. But suppose you fail to live by love, but the law is still there. Suppose there’s a Christian who says, “I’m not going to live by grace.” The law is still there. Does grace make void the law? No, faith establishes the law. Listen to me, friend—listen to me. *Any—any—Christian who would let a Jew do more under law than he will do under grace is a disgrace to grace.* Let me say that again: Any Christian who would let a Jew, in the Old Testament, do more under the law than he himself would do under grace is a disgrace to grace.

Jesus never revised the law downward. Listen to Romans 3, verse 31: *“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law”* (Romans 3:31). You see, my dear friend, tithing is not just a part of the Old Testament ceremonial law; it was here before the Old Testament ceremonial law ever got here. But the truth of the Old Testament ceremonial law is established in the tithe through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **2. A Designated Place**

So here it is: If you’d release your finances, number one, there is a definite proportion; that is a starting place. Number two: There is a designated place. Look at it—He says here—look at it, in verse 10: *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse”* (Malachi 3:10). Now in the Old Testament, they had a temple, and in that temple there was a storehouse. And so they brought all the tithe into the storehouse in the temple. They



would bring their tithe, and it was put in the storehouse. You say, “Pastor, there is no temple today.” Well, friend, you’re wrong. There is a temple today. The Bible says, of the Church, “*Ye are the temple of God*” (1 Corinthians 3:16). In 1 Corinthians 3, and 1 Corinthians chapter 6, the Bible teaches that the Church is the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19). And so the Apostle Paul said, in 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and verse 2: “*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him*” (1 Corinthians 16:2). And the words *in store* are translated in the Septuagint, in the Old Testament, “storehouse.” *Storehouse*, in the Old Testament; *in store*, in the New Testament. What’s he saying? We just bring to the storehouse, to God’s temple, on God’s day, God’s tithe, that God’s work will be done in God’s way.

There’s a definite proportion: Bring all the tithe. And my dear friend, there is a designated place: You bring it to the storehouse. Your tithe is not to be used for other good things, not to be used to help your relatives who need help, not to be used for the work of Love Worth Finding, or the Billy Graham Evangelist Association, or something else. Thank God for these things! We ought to give to them, but we give, over and above, our tithe. My dear friend, *God’s tithe is to be brought to God’s house on God’s day, that God’s work will be done God’s way*. “*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him*” (1 Corinthians 16:2). “*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse*” (Malachi 3:10). That is what God’s Word says. And I believe it, my dear friend.

### **3. A Determined Purpose**

Now there is not only a definite proportion, and a designated place; but, my dear friend, there is a determined purpose. And what is the determined purpose? “*That there may be meat in mine house*” (Malachi 3:10). That is, that God’s work is going to have all that it will need to get done. There are other good projects; but, my dear friend, if God’s people today, in all of our churches—in all of our churches—would just do what the Bible says, they would be blessed, and the work of God would prosper. We would be able to reach the teeming millions without Christ, as God has commanded us to do.

It breaks my heart to say it, but I read a statistic the other day. I am telling you it just absolutely broke my heart to read it. It said this, and this is the statistic: It said that, if all of the church members in the average church were on welfare, and they tithed, the income of the average church would more than double. If all of the members were on welfare, and they tithed, the income of that church would more than double. Now that breaks my heart, because people are not being blessed, and there’s not the wherewithal in God’s house to get the work done. Now you can not only rob God in your tithe, but you can rob God with your offerings. You haven’t finished, when you tithe. As a matter of fact, when you tithe, you really are just paying the tithe; you’re returning the

tithe. The tithe is the Lord's.

#### D. **Restore Your Fruitfulness**

Now here's the fourth thing, and I want you to see the good part, now. Here's the good part. And here are the steps God says. First of all, you recognize your failure—you're cursed with a curse. Secondly, you renew your fellowship. God says, "Just return to Me. Just come back to Me." But remember, you can't plow around your stewardship in order to get to your fellowship. Recognize your failure. You renew your fellowship. And then, my dear friend, you release your finances. You bring all the tithe to the "*storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts*" (Malachi 3:10). And here's the last thing; here's the wonderful thing—what a blessing it is, my dear friend!—at that time, you restore your fruitfulness. That's the fourth thing. You just restore your fruitfulness. God says, "I am going to open up Heaven on you. I am going to pour you out a blessing; there will not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10).

And let me show you the three-fold blessing. Look at it. And oh, there's not a person here today who doesn't want this blessing. Oh, what a blessing this is going to be! First of all, look at what God promises to do. And may I tell you, dear friend, this is a promise of God. There was an old lady that used to read the Bible, and she would find certain promises; and, she would put a *t* and *p* by it—just *t* and *p*: that meant *tried and proven—tried and proven*. Now here, friend, here is a recipe for blessing that will restore your fruitfulness; it is tried and proven.

#### **1. God Will Renew Your Faith**

Look at it here—God says He's going to do this: "*I will...open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing*" (Malachi 3:10). Wait, wait, let me back up again. "*Bring...all the tithes into the storehouse*"—first—"*that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts*" (Malachi 3:10). I want to start right there. The very first thing He will do—listen—is, He will renew your faith. "*Prove me*"—"prove me" (Malachi 3:10). God is giving you a challenge, my dear friend. God is saying, "Put me to the test."

Many people say, "I just can't grow in my Christian life. I wonder why I'm not growing. I wonder why I don't have more faith. Why is it, when I pray, the heavens are like brass? Why is it I don't understand the Bible?" Well, get right with God in your finances. Do you remember the scripture we used last Sunday? Luke chapter 16 and verse 10—Jesus said: "*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.*" The *least* is the material things; the *much* is the spiritual things—if you'd go back and read Luke chapter 16. And then, Jesus said, in Luke 16, verse 11: "*If...ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous*

*mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?*”(Luke 16:10–11). May I explain that to you? Friend, if you can’t trust God with your finances, how is God going to trust you with true spiritual riches? God says, “Listen. If you will just prove Me, I will renew your faith. Your faith will begin to grow.”

I want to tell you that one of the things that has strengthened my faith down through the years has been God’s faithfulness to me in the matter of finances. And all since the time I was a teenager and gave my heart to Jesus, I have wanted to tithe, and go beyond the tithe. And Joyce and I have tithed, and gone beyond the tithe. We have; we do; by God’s grace, we will. And I can tell you that God has proven Himself faithful to me—faithful to me. And that just causes my faith to grow. And I believe that one of the reasons that God has allowed me to preach the Word of God with power, I believe that one of the reasons that God has put faith in my heart, I believe that one of the reasons that God has given me an understanding of the book that we call the Bible is that—and I’m not bragging on myself, but it is a testimony—I’ve tried to be faithful in that which is least, and God has made me a steward of that which is much. You see, God says—listen, listen—“If you’ll do this, I, first of all, will renew your faith. Prove me,” God says. “Prove me. Prove me. Put me to the test.”

## **2. God Will Rebuke Your Foes**

God will renew our faith, and I’ll tell you something else He’ll do: He’ll rebuke our foes. Look in verse 11: *“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts”* (Malachi 3:11). These were farmers. Maybe you’re not a farmer, but you still have foes: hospital bills, car repairs, your loss of job, recession, depression, all of these things. God says, “I will come to your side. I will rebuke these things that have been devouring your income.” You see, people say, “Oh, I can’t afford to tithe.” Friend, you can’t afford not to. *You’ll do far more with nine-tenths and God as a partner than you would ever do with ten-tenths by yourself.* God will renew your faith. “Prove me,” He says. And God will rebuke your foes.

## **3. God Will Restore Your Fruitfulness**

And my dear friend, God will restore your fruitfulness. Look, in verse 11—He goes on to say: *“And neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land”* (Malachi 3:11–12). God will just make you fruitful. “Well,” you say, “Pastor Rogers, I know somebody who’s poor. You wouldn’t expect a poor person to tithe, would you?” Of course. Of course. Who needs God’s help more than a poor person? You say, “You’re being unfair to the poor.” Oh, no. Oh, no! I want the poor man to have the power of God in his life. You say, “Well, I owe other people money. You don’t think I ought to

tithe if I owe, if I'm in debt." Well, friend, if you owe me money, don't rob God in order to pay me. As a matter of fact, if you'll get right with God, you will be paying me what you owe me.

Proverbs 3, verses 9 and 10: *"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:"*—the first fruits—*"so shall thy bonds be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine"* (Proverbs 3:9–10). Proverbs 11, verses 24 and 25: *"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;"*—that is, people who give away; and yet, they have more—*"and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself"* (Proverbs 11:24–25). Luke chapter 6, verse 38: *"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again"* (Luke 6:38). Dear friend, you hold the key in your own hand.

## Conclusion

Oh, I wish I could tell you this! I wish I could get this in your heart, dear friend: God wants to bless you. God wants to open the windows of Heaven upon you. Here it is—listen—recognize your failure; restore your fellowship; release your finances; receive your fruitfulness. God—God—will open the windows of Heaven and bless you.

Now if you're here today, and you don't know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, don't do this: Don't go away, and say, "Well, I went down there to that church, and all that man talked about was money." May I tell you this, friend, and our members will tell you this: They're always saying to me, "Pastor, you know, you just don't preach enough about tithing." And really, my deacons say, "You don't preach enough about it."

But you know, somebody may be here today, the last time you were here, maybe a year ago, I preached a message on tithing. The devil arranged it so you were here last year, and then, this year, the same Sunday. And you say, "Yep, same thing. That's what he was preaching last time I came here." Friend, let me tell you something: If you're here without Jesus Christ today, don't you think for a skinny minute that we are getting you in this place to try to extort something from you, or to try to twist your arm about giving. God perish the thought! We want you to know Jesus. We want you to be saved. We want you to say, "Hallelujah! I'm going to be in Heaven by knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior." I'm talking to God's people. And when I'm talking to God's people, I'm not talking to God's people about how to be unhappy or to be unfruitful; I'm talking to God's people about how to have the windows of Heaven open, and God just pour out a blessing upon God's people.

Do you know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? Are you saved? Friend, if I

weren't saved... I tell you, I would not go 24 hours without Jesus Christ for one million dollars—10 million, you name it. I might die in that 24 hours. And besides that, dear friend, every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before. Being saved is not some punishment in order to go to Heaven. I'd be a Christian if there were no Heaven, if there were no Hell. There is both. Just to know Jesus in this life, to truly know Him—oh, what a joy! Oh, when we see Him, what a day that will be!

Would you like to receive Christ? Would you like to be saved? Would you like to be a child of God, with peace in your heart, and Heaven for your home? The Bible says, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”* (Acts 16:31). And that word *believe* doesn't mean mere intellectual belief; it means, “commitment” and “trust.” If you would, pray like this—“O God, I'm a sinner, and I'm lost; and, I am going to Hell, unless I get saved. I need to be saved. Jesus, I believe You're the Son of God. I believe You died on the cross to pay for my sins. I believe that God raised You from the dead. I believe that You will save me, if I trust You; and I do trust You”—friend, He will save you. You say, “Pastor, I can't remember all those words.” You don't have to remember all those words. You can just put it in a short sentence. You can say, “Lord, save me,” and include all of that in your heart. Just trust Him to save you, and He will save you.

# Faithful in Stewardship

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** February 5, 1995

**Main Scripture Text:** Malachi 3:7–12

*“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, 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

## Outline

Introduction

- I. Who Is Interested in Your Money?
  - A. God Is Interested
  - B. Satan Is Interested
  - C. You Are Interested
- II. How Are You Going to Obtain Financial Freedom?
  - A. You Must Personally Return to God
  - B. There Is a Financial Release
    1. The Tithe Has a Definite Proportion
    2. The Tithe Has a Designated Place
    3. The Tithe Has a Definite Purpose
  - C. There Will be a Spiritual Renewal
    1. God Will Renew Your Faith
    2. God Will Rebuke Your Foes
    3. God Will Restore Your Fruitfulness

Conclusion

## Introduction

Be finding Malachi chapter 3, if you would. That’s the last book in the Old Testament—Malachi chapter 3. There may be a Bible there, in the pew rack; get it. Or, maybe your neighbor has one, if you did not bring one, this morning. If you do have one, keep it open in your hand, because I want you to see that the message, today, is coming right from the pages of God’s wonderful Word. We’re talking about factors of faithfulness, today, and “How to Obtain Financial Freedom through Stewardship”—“How to Obtain Financial Freedom.”

You know, about the only thing worth watching on television anymore are the ads. Some of them are really wonderful. And I like the Corn Flakes ad: “Taste them again, for the first time.” Now many of us were raised on Corn Flakes, and what they’re trying to

say is you need to discover Corn Flakes again. You remember. How many of you have seen that ad—“Taste them again, for the first time.”

Now the scripture that I’m going to bring to you, today, is one that you’ve heard. If you’ve gone to church at any time, you’ve heard the scripture that I’m going to share with you. And many of you are just going to kind of mentally check yourself out, because you say, “Oh, I know that. Oh, I’ve heard that.” Well, I want you to hear it again, like you’ve never heard it before. Hear it again, for the first time. It’s one of the most incredible promises in the Word of God.

And so listen, as we read here, beginning in verse 7: *“Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me...”*—would you underscore that?—*“Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said,”*—“All right, LORD”—*“Wherein shall we return?”* God answers an honest question: *“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?”* God answers: *“In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.”* Hey, would you like to have a curse lifted off of you? Well, pay attention: *“Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.”* Now here’s the command, and the promise: *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now...”*—that is, “Put me to the test.” God has thrown a challenge in your lap, this morning—*“prove me now herewith, 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. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts”* (Malachi 3:7–12).

## **I. Who Is Interested in Your Money?**

Now we’re going to talk, today, about stewardship. And stewardship is really how we obtain money, how we save money, how we invest money, how we spend money, and how we give money. And when I do that, I want to say that there are at least three that are very interested in what I have to say today.

### **A. God Is Interested**

Number one: God is interested. Do you know God, over and over and over again, in the Bible, talks about stewardship? Now why does God talk about stewardship? Come up here close, and I want to tell you something: God does not need your money, okay? God is God. He owns everything. God is not interested in what you have. God is interested in who you are, and God wants you. And God wants to bless you. God wants

to give to you.

And over and over again, in the Bible, we see God dealing with the matter of our finances or our resources. Of the 38 parables that Jesus taught, 16 of them deal with stewardship. As a matter of fact, about one out of every ten verses in the New Testament deals with this matter of stewardship. You take the verses in the New Testament that deal with faith—there are about 500 of them. Take the verses in the New Testament that deal with prayer—there are about 500 of them. Take the verses that deal with stewardship—there are over 2,000 of them. God is interested in our stewardship: how we acquire and use our money. As a matter of fact, one of the great tests of your spirituality, and how much you love God, and how much you believe the Word of God, is stewardship.

### B. **Satan Is Interested**

Now I'll tell you someone else who's interested in your stewardship: not only is God, but Satan is very interested, because Satan knows if he can defeat you in this way, if he can keep you in bondage, if he can keep you under a curse, he has you right where he wants you. I'm talking, today, about freedom. God has come to set you free. Many of you will see me, today, as trying to put you into some kind of a straitjacket. I'm trying to do just the opposite: to set you free—and not by my ideas, but by the Word of God.

Now what if you are cursed with a curse? What if you are in bondage? As a matter of fact, some economists have given us about eleven ways that we can know whether or not we're in financial bondage. You want to take the test? All right, listen. And just check these off mentally. Now don't do it where your neighbor can see it, but just mentally.

Do you charge daily expenditures because you don't have enough money to pay for them?

Number two: Do you put off paying a bill when it is due?

Number three: Do you borrow to pay fixed expenses like taxes and insurance?

Next, does your debt requirement—the money that you owe long-term—exceed 20% of your income?

Next, are you unaware of how much you owe?

Next, do you have creditors, people, calling you about past-due bills?

Next, do you borrow from savings to pay current bills?

Next, are you making new loans to pay off old ones?

Next, do you and your wife, or you and your husband, ever argue about money? Do you ever argue about this?

*Theirs was a perfect marriage, but for one feminine flaw:  
He was quick on the deposit, but she was faster on the draw.*



—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Next, do you ever even think about being dishonest with money?

And here's the final one: Do you have difficulty bringing your tithe to God's house on God's day?

So many Americans today are up to here in debt. And somebody has described the average American as a person who drives a bank-financed car over a bond-financed highway, with gasoline that he bought with a credit card. He's on his way to open a charge account at a department store, so he can fill his house, that he owes the Savings and Loan for, with installment-purchased furniture. That's an American for you. We're buying things we don't need, with money we don't have, to impress people we don't like. That's Americans for you. We're in financial bondage, so many of us.

You say, "Well, I'm not in financial bondage. I've got plenty. I've got it salted away. I've got it stacked in a bank account somewhere. Man, if you could just see what I've got." You may have plenty, and be in financial bondage. Rich people are in financial bondage, when they try to find satisfaction in their money, and can't do it. The Bible says, "*He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver*" (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

Someone asked J. D. Rockefeller, "How much was enough?" He said, "Just a little more."

You're in financial bondage, if your money increases your worries. Proverbs 15, verse 6: "*In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble*" (Proverbs 15:6). You're in financial bondage, when you're a slave to your money, when your chief aim in life is to make money. You labor to be rich—then, you're in difficulty, because Proverbs 23, verse 4 says: "*Labor not to be rich.*" I can tell you this: If your goal in life is to be rich, you are a miserable person. "*Labor not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom*" (Proverbs 23:4).

Now the Bible never condemns riches. The Bible says, "It's the *LORD* thy God that giveth thee power to get gain" (Deuteronomy 8:18). The Bible is not against that. But when that is your goal, you are a miserable person, because when you make it your goal to get money, money is going to get you.

Have you ever seen, in the old time...? I can remember when I was a little boy, they used to have a thing called flypaper. Now I don't know whether they still sell that or not. You know about Corn Flakes. Do they still sell flypaper? It was a thing of sticky paper that came in a... You stuck it on the ceiling somewhere, and it just kind of swirled down like that. And it had something that flies really liked—just an aroma that would attract flies, but it was real sticky. And the fly would light on it, and he couldn't get loose. And you know, that old fly would buzz around that thing, and he'd be saying, "My paper, my paper, my paper." But then, he'd light on it, and the paper would say, "My fly, my fly, my fly." That's the way these people are going to get rich. First of all, they want to get the

money, and then the money gets them.

You are in financial bondage, if you have plenty in the bank, but no treasure in Heaven. Proverbs 23, verse 5: *“Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven”* (Proverbs 23:5). Money talks: it says *goodbye*. It flies away.

Now suppose you have plenty in the bank, but you don’t know God. Suppose you have plenty in the bank, and you’re a miserly person, and a miserable person. You have to feel sorry for a person like that. Jesus told about a man who had plenty in his barns, and he died. He said he had much goods laid up for many years. And God said, *“Thou fool, this night thy soul will be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God”* (Luke 12:20–21).

### C. **You Are Interested**

Now God is interested in your finances. Satan is interested in your finances, because he wants to keep you in bondage. I’ll tell you who else is interested: you are. Now don’t tell me you’re not—you are. I’m not talking, today, about how many angels can dance around on a head of a pin; I’m talking to you about something very vital, because it takes money and finances to live, and it’s a part of our normal life. And God knows it, okay?

## II. **How Are You Going to Obtain Financial Freedom?**

Now how are you going to obtain financial freedom? We’re going to look in the Bible. Right out of the Bible, I’m going to give you three principles, and I want you to see them.

### A. **You Must Personally Return to God**

First of all, you must personally return to God. Look, again, in verse 7: *“Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances,”*—that is, “my laws”—*“and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?”* (Malachi 3:7). Now look up, again, and let me tell you this: God doesn’t want your money; God wants you! Did you hear that? He is saying to you, “Come to me. Return unto me.” God loves us for ourselves. God wants our fellowship. God does not need our money. And *the gift without the Giver is bare*. What you do not joyfully, lovingly, freely give God He neither needs nor wants. Got it? You’re not doing God a wild favor. I mean, listen. God says, in Psalm 50, verse 12: *“If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine and the fullness thereof”* (Psalm 50:12). You’re not about to bail God out of bankruptcy. God loves us for ourselves. He says, “Return to me.” Second Corinthians 12 and verse 14—the Apostle Paul says, *“For I seek not yours but you”* (2 Corinthians 12:14).

You know what the devil does? I said, the devil's interested in your finances. The devil has some guy who's not saved, and he just engineers that man to come about twice a year when Adrian preaches on tithing. And he'll get up; and he'll go out; and he'll begin to grouse and complain; and he'll say, "Money, money, money—that's all they ever talk about down there." That is a lie, and he knows it. And he says, "Well, he's just interested in my money." That is a lie! God loves you! *"I seek not yours but you"* (2 Corinthians 12:14). That's what the Apostle Paul said. God is saying, "Return unto me." Before you give your money, you've got to give yourself. Second Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 5: *"[They] first gave their own selves to the LORD"* (2 Corinthians 8:5).

I've often used the story of a farmer who made his boys work in the cornfields a little harder than the other boys had to work. And sometimes, the other boys would be playing baseball, or down in the old swimming hole, and these boys would be out there, in the cornfields. Someone said to the farmer—he said, "You're working those boys too hard. Why don't you lighten up? You don't need all that corn." He said, "Mister, I'm not raising corn; I'm raising boys."

You see, God is not raising money; God is growing Christians. God wants us to grow in grace and knowledge and to love Him. So first of all, there must be a personal return. And many of us say, "Well LORD, if You want me to return, where shall I return?" "Well," God says, "I'm glad you've asked." They say in verse 7: *"Wherein shall we return?"* Well, God says: *"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?"* And God's answer: *"In tithes and offerings"* (Malachi 3:7–8).

One of the greatest signs that you have returned to God is not the songs you sing; it's in your finances—when you stop robbing God. *The repentance that does not reach the pocketbook has really not reached the heart.* You see, why are many people in financial bondage? And why are many people away from God? Because, they've tried to put things first, and God second! It never works that way—never works that way. One of the greatest promises in the New Testament is Matthew chapter 6 and verse 33—it says, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and"*—what?—*"all these things will be added unto you"* (Matthew 6:33). Well, you say, "Well, I'll seek things first, and then, if I have time, I'll seek God." But that's backward. That's backward. *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God"* (Matthew 6:33). *"Return unto me"* (Malachi 3:7). Come to God. *"Return unto me."*

Now God wants you, not yours (2 Corinthians 12:14). And no gift and no tithing can please God, if it does not come from a loving and a surrendered heart. And the point of return is always the point of departure. And for many, it's been in the matter of stewardship. When we fail in stewardship, we rob God. But not only do we rob God—we rob the Church. Not only do we rob the church—we rob missions. Not only do we rob missions—we rob the needy. You rob you! Tithing is not God's way to impoverish you;

it's God's way to enrich you. Why don't we just return to God, and do it God's way?

You know what Jesus said? "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Luke 20:25). Now you know what's coming real soon? April 15th. Right? April 15th is coming real soon. And Caesar says, "Fill out that form. How much did you make? How much you got left? Send it." "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's"—now, most of you are going to be very careful to do that. Also, the Bible says, "Render unto God the things that are God's" (Luke 20:25).

I want to ask you a question: Do you fear Caesar more than you fear God? I mean, are you more careful with Caesar than you are with God? You see, we don't really give the tithe; we return it. It's already the Lord's. Put this in your margin: Leviticus chapter 27 and verse 30: "*All the tithe of the land, whether it be of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD*" (Leviticus 27:30). It would be better to rob a bank, in my estimation, than to rob God. Tithing is God's way to bless. Look up here. There's always a blessing when we give it, and always a curse when we steal it—always a blessing when we give it, and always a curse when we steal it. "*Will a man rob God?*" (Malachi 3:8). When he robs God, he robs himself. So here's the first point—I want the Holy Spirit to rivet it in your heart: There must be a personal return to the *LORD*. Again, God is not seeking your money; He is seeking you.

## **B. There Is a Financial Release**

Now when there is a personal return, there is a financial release. Look, if you will, in verse 10: "*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat*"—that literally means "food"—"*in mine house, and prove me now herewith, 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). Now there are a lot of ways that people can talk about financial freedom, but you'll never jump over this: You begin by tithing. You begin to tithe.

### **1. The Tithe Has a Definite Proportion**

Now first of all, what is the tithe? Well, it is a definite proportion. The word *tithe* literally means "tenth." Genesis 28, verse 22—Jacob said, "*And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee*" (Genesis 28:22). Now I know that I know that I know what's happening in the minds of many of you right out there. You're saying, "Wait a minute, Pastor. You're trying to put me back in the Old Testament. You're trying to put me under the Old Testament law. Pastor, don't you understand that tithing is legalistic?" Let me tell you something, now: Tithing began far before the Mosaic Law.

The Bible tells of Abraham giving tithes to Melchizedek. And Melchizedek is a type, a picture, of the *LORD* Jesus Christ. Abraham came centuries before Moses saw the

light of day. And then, Jacob, a descendant of Abraham, is the one that I just read to you about, out there, in the wilderness, seeking God, who made a covenant with God, way before the Mosaic Law, to tithe—Genesis 28 and verse 22. And after the Mosaic Law, in the New Testament, Jesus said, in Matthew 23, verse 23, to the scribes and the Pharisees, *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done,”*—to tithe—*“and not to leave the other undone”* (Matthew 23:23). There’s no competition between tithing and the New Testament. You ought to tithe, but don’t leave off judgment, mercy, and faith. You see friend, Abraham commenced it; Jacob continued it; Moses commanded it; and Jesus commended it. Who am I to cancel it?

Well, you say, “But that’s a part of the law. They were commanded under the law to tithe. They were also commanded under the law not to kill. They were also commanded under the law not to commit adultery. Now since that’s Old Testament law, do you think you’re free to kill? Do you think you’re free to commit adultery? Listen—listen. Romans 3, verse 31—put this in your Bible: *“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law”* (Romans 3:31). Hello! Listen. Romans 3, verse 31: *“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”* You say, “I don’t understand what that means.”

Well, I have raised four wonderful children, and it’s been my joy to feed them and care for them. Do you think I fed my children because the law said I had to? No! Because I’d get arrested for child abuse and neglect, if I didn’t feed my children? Of course not! Why do I feed my children? Why did I clothe my children? Because I love them. But now, suppose I decide, “Well, I’m not going to do it.” Standing in the wings is the law. You understand what I mean? We don’t do it because we’re under law.

I have said this so many times, and see if you don’t agree with me: Jesus never revised the law backward, downward, and said, “Now you do less than they did.” He never did that. *Any Christian who would let a Jew do more under law than he would do under grace is a disgrace to grace!* I’m not trying to put you in bondage; I’m trying to get you out of bondage. We don’t make void the law; we establish the law. There’s a definite proportion.

## **2. The Tithe Has a Designated Place**

And not only is there a definite proposition; there’s a designated place. What do you do with your tithe? Well, according to this verse—look at it—in verse 10: *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house”* (Malachi 3:10). Well, you say, “Well, what does that mean?” Well, when this verse was written, it was a place in the temple. They had a place in the temple called the *storehouse* and there, the people brought their tithes, that there would be the necessities to make the sacrifices,

and so forth, in the Old Testament. Well, you say, “We don’t have a temple today.” Wrong again. We do have a temple today. First Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 17—God said to the church at Corinth, “Ye are the temple of God” (1 Corinthians 3:17)—Ye are the temple of God.” And then, He said, in 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and verse 2: *“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him”* (1 Corinthians 16:2). And the words *in store* are the same words that are translated “storehouse” in the *Septuagint*, or the Greek translation of the Old Testament. There was a definite proportion, and a designated place. *God’s tithe is to be brought to God’s house on God’s day, that God’s work will be done in God’s way.*

### **3. The Tithe Has a Definite Purpose**

A definite proportion, a designated place, and a definite purpose: *“That there may be meat in mine house”* (Malachi 3:10). The work of the temple was to be carried out through the tithe.

Now you can give offerings to other good projects, and I do, and I know that you do—to many other projects. And Joyce and I give to help feed Russian orphans. We help support some little children in Brazil. We have adopted and are sending a girl through school in Romania. And we give to Billy Graham. And we give to Josh McDowell. And we give to other things—Focus, and so forth. But we bring our tithe to Bellevue every Sunday, here. And we’ve done that since we’ve been married, and did it before I was married. Of every dime—since I learned about tithing—I made, I returned it to God. And I’m so glad I did!

I believe in the local church. I believe the Bible says, *“Unto him be glory in the church”* (Ephesians 3:21). We’re to be faithful to God’s family. *Bring the tithe to God’s house on God’s day, that God’s work will be done in God’s way.* Now you give offerings to other projects; bring your tithe to the church. And then, bring your love gifts to the church, also. Do you know what? Somebody came up with these statistics: that if every member of the average church were on welfare, and tithed, the offerings in that church would double. Don’t you think that’s a disgrace? If every member in the average church were on welfare, and they all tithed, the income of those churches would double. We need to be faithful in our finances.

### **C. There Will Be a Spiritual Renewal**

Now here’s a third thing, and I must be very quick about this: There must be a personal return; there must be a financial release; and then, there will be a spiritual renewal. Look again, if you will, in verse 10, and see what God says. Here’s the promise: *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, 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. And I will*

*rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed”* (Malachi 3:10–12).

### **1. God Will Renew Your Faith**

Here’s the three-fold blessing. God will Renew Your Faith. Number one: God will renew your faith. God says, “Prove Me. Put Me to the test.” Your faith will begin to grow. You say, “Well, Pastor, I want faith.” Do you want faith? Would you like for God to be real to you? God says, “All right, you put Me to the test. Prove Me.” Let me give you one of the most insightful scriptures in all of the Bible. Put this in the margin: Luke 16, verses 10 and 11. Listen: *“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”* It doesn’t say he could be; he already is. But then, He says, in Luke 16, verse 11: *“If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon...”*—that’s just money; that’s another word for money—*“If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”* (Luke 16:10–11).

What are the true riches? Not money. Faith, love, spiritual power, knowledge. I mean, if God can’t trust you with ten cents out of a dollar, what makes you think He can trust you with Holy Spirit power? I mean, if you haven’t been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will give to you, as a steward, the true riches?

### **2. God Will Rebuke Your Foes**

Number one: God will renew your faith. “Prove me,” He says. Number two: God will rebuke your foes. Look, if you will, in verse 11: *“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes”* (Malachi 3:11). We all have foes. Many of us have foes, and we need God to rebuke them. In this day, they were farmers. And so he said, *“And he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts”* (Malachi 3:11). “Your crops are not going to wither in the field.” “Well,” you say, “I’m not a farmer.” Yeah, but you’ve got foes: hospital bills, car repairs, the loss of job, recession, depression; all of these things—they are your enemies. And God says, “I’ll come against those enemies with you. I will renew your faith. I will rebuke your foes.”

### **3. God Will Restore Your Fruitfulness**

“And I will restore your fruitfulness.” Look, again, in verse 11. And he says, *“Neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land”* (Malachi 3:10–11). You say, “Pastor, you mean to tell me if I start tithing, I’ll get rich?” No, I don’t mean to tell you that, and I never will tell you that. It may not be God’s plan for you to be rich. But I’ll tell you this—and I believe it with all of my heart: *When you tithe, you’ll do more with nine-*

*tenths and God as a partner than you will ever do with ten-tenths by yourself*—that I believe; that I believe. God will restore your fruitfulness. You say, “But Pastor, I’m poor. I know you’re talking to the wealthy people, but you’re not talking to the poor people, today. Would you tell a little widow on a pension that she ought to tithe?” Of course! You say, “Well, you’re so hard-hearted.” No, I’m not! I’m sweet. If there’s anybody who needs the blessing of God, it’s that little widow on a pension, isn’t that right? God doesn’t want her money; He wants her. He wants to bless her. He says, “Come now and trust Me. Prove Me.”

Listen. Tithing is a key. It unlocks the windows of Heaven. Offerings are seed; they bring a crop. You sow bountifully; you’ll reap bountifully. You see, put them together. You rob God in tithes and offerings. You pay the tithe; you give the offering. The tithe is the key; the offering is the seed. And learn to do it God’s way. You’re not going to out-give God. You’re not going to get God in debt to you. Oh, I’ve got to quit, but I wish I had more time to tell you all of these wonderful, wonderful things.

## Conclusion

I have visited Pompeii. If you ever go to Naples, you need to go to Pompeii, and see the ruins of that magnificent civilization. And it was buried under volcanic ash, when Mount Vesuvius erupted so many years ago, back in the biblical times. And there, in Pompeii, you can see the body of a man that had been encased in ashes. He’s on the floor of a magnificent home. And just out of his fingertips is a bag—it was a bag of gold. And he’s reaching for that bag. The ashes are falling all around him. And in seeking to gain that gold, he lost his life.

Jesus said, “*What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*” (Mark 8:36). Are you saved? I want to say one more thing to you, and please listen to me. If you think I wanted you here this morning so I could twist your arm into giving, you missed it by light years. I want you to know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and *LORD*. And once you know Him, I want you to trust Him in such a way that He can open the windows of Heaven on your head, and bless you.

Bow your heads in prayer. While heads are bowed and eyes are closed, if you don’t know the *LORD* Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and *LORD*—no one stirring, no one moving, everyone praying—if you don’t know Jesus Christ as your personal *LORD* and Savior, I want to invite you to pray a prayer like this, right now: “Dear God...”—just speak to Him—“Dear God, I know that You love me, and I know that You want to save me; and, I need to be saved. My sins deserve judgment. I need forgiveness. I need cleansing. I want a place in Heaven. I want power in my life. Jesus, thank You for dying for my sins on the cross. Thank You for paying my sin debt. I now trust You as my *LORD* and Savior. Come into my heart, into my life, now. Receive me, *LORD*. Save me, *LORD*.”



Just pray that: “Save me, *LORD* Jesus.” The Bible says, “*Whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved*” (Acts 2:21). Pray it; say it; and mean it: “Save me, *LORD* Jesus. Save me.”

Did you ask Him? Then, by faith, pray this way: “Thank You for saving me. I receive it by faith, and that settles it. You’re now my *LORD*, my Savior, my God, and my friend. And *LORD* Jesus, if You’ll just give me the strength, today, I’ll make it public. I’ll not be ashamed of You. You died for me. I’ll confess You as my *LORD* and Savior. Just give me the strength, *LORD* Jesus, to do it. In Your name I pray. Amen.

# How to Obtain Financial Freedom

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: March 12, 1989**

**Main Scripture Text: Malachi 3:7–12**

*“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, 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

## Outline

Introduction

- I. Eleven Marks of Financial Bondage
- II. Three Steps to Financial Freedom
  - A. There Must Be a Personal Return to God
  - B. There Must Be a Material Release
    - 1. There Is a Definite Proportion
    - 2. There Is a Definite Place
    - 3. There Is a Definite Purpose
  - C. There Will Be a Spiritual Renewal
    - 1. God Will Renew Your Faith
    - 2. God Will Rebuke Your Foes
    - 3. God Will Restore Your Fruitfulness

Conclusion

## Introduction

I want to tell you something today. What I have to say to you today is intensely practical and for your welfare. I would say it would be fine if you would get out a pen with some paper, and make some notes, because I'm going to tell you, today, from the Word of God, how to obtain financial freedom. Many of God's people are in bondage financially, and it is not God's plan for them. God wants them to be financially free. And God tells us in His Word how we can obtain financial freedom.

Now when I talk to you about finances, I can tell you there are at least three who are really interested in your finances. First of all, you're interested in your finances. If you tell me you're not, I'm going to tell you that you're probably not telling the truth. As a matter of fact, there's probably somebody here today who is not a regular church attender. And

maybe the last time you were here—months or years ago—you heard a sermon on finances. And now you just show up today, and you're going to hear another one. And you're liable to go away saying, “Money, money, money—that's all they ever talk about down there is money.” Well, number one, these people know that's not true. But number two, if that is your case, I just imagine God brought you here, because you need to hear it. You're probably the guy who didn't hear it the last time, and God brought you here to hear this.

Yes, you're interested in your money, and you ought to be, because you need it. And also, God wants to make you a steward. But I'll tell you who else is interested in your money. God is interested in your money. And He's very interested. Now pay attention. God is not interested in your money because He's trying to get for Himself. Hey folks, God doesn't need it. Now I want you to learn this: God does not need it. He said, in the Psalms, “If I were hungry, would I ask you?” (Psalm 50:12) Do you think you're going to help poor ole' God out? God doesn't need your money, but God does want to bless you. And God knows that *the consecration that doesn't reach the pocketbook doesn't reach the heart*. God knows that.

And the scripture that I'm going to read to you in a moment is going to tell God's formula for opening the windows of Heaven, and pouring out a blessing upon you. Now if you're smart, dear friend, you're going to pull up the shade, and unlock the window. God wants to bless you. That's the reason the Bible has so much to say about finances. Did you know, of the 38 parables that the *LORD* Jesus Christ gave, 16 of them dealt with our relationship to things—our material goods—what we would call stewardship? Did you know that? Did you know, dear friend, that, in the Bible, there are about 500 verses on faith, and about 500 verses on prayer, and about 2,000 verses on stewardship, and our relationship to our physical, material things? God is interested, not because He's trying to get something from you, but, primarily, because He wants to bless you.

And I'll tell you who else is interested. Not only are you interested, and not only is God interested, but the devil is interested, because the devil doesn't want for you to hear what I'm about to say to you. The devil wants to keep you in financial bondage. If he can keep you in bondage of any kind, he has you right where he wants you.

So dear friend, I want you to pay attention to God's Word—what He has to say here when the Bible tells us how to obtain financial freedom. Now look in verse 7. Here's what God says to those people so long ago, but what He says to us today: “*Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?*” (Malachi 3:7).

Now this was an insolent answer they gave to God. It was a silly question. How shall we return? Do you see their self-righteousness there? God is about to pull the rug out

from beneath their self-righteousness, in verse 8. *“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?”* God's answer: *“In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse:”*—now, friend, if you're going to be cursed with anything, you don't want to be cursed with a curse. You are cursed with a curse—*“for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation”* (Malachi 3:8–9).

Now friend, it'd be better to rob a bank than to rob God. I heard about a man who was pulling a hold-up, and he wrote a note, and gave it to the teller. It said, *“Put all your money in this bag. This is a hold-up.”* She scribbled a note, sent it back to him, and said, *“Straighten your tie. They're taking your picture.”*

Now God knows, dear friend, if you're robbing Him, and He says here, *“You are cursed with a curse, because you have robbed me, even this whole nation.”* (Malachi 2:9). And then, He says, *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, 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. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts”* (Malachi 9:10–12).

## I. Eleven Marks of Financial Bondage

Now God wants to deliver you from financial bondage. Financial bondage is being *“cursed with a curse.”* Let me give you 11 marks of financial bondage. Let's just see if you are in financial bondage, today.

First of all, have you ever found yourself charging daily expenditures? I'm talking about the daily things that you need: gasoline, food, and groceries. You charge those things because you don't have the money to pay for them. Do you put off paying a bill that is due till next month?

Do you ever borrow money to pay fixed expenses like taxes and insurance?

Are you aware of how much money you owe?

Do you have creditors calling you, and hounding you for overdue bills?

Do you have to take from your savings, sometimes, just to pay your current bills?

Do you take out new loans to pay off old loans? Take all your little loans, and put them in a great big, backbreaking loan?

Do you and your wife ever argue about money? I can hear the grass growing outside.

*Theirs was a perfect marriage, but for one feminine flaw. He was fast on the deposit, but she was quicker on the draw.*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

I think in some wedding ceremonies we ought to say, “till debt do us part.” Do you and your wife—you and your husband—ever argue about this?

Hey, let me ask you a question: Have you ever thought about being dishonest in money? Maybe, cheating on your taxes, cutting a corner on a business deal, or whatever? My friend, you're in financial bondage. Are you a tither? If not, you are in financial bondage.

I want to say that it is not just simply the poor who are in financial bondage. I suppose the worse kind of financial bondage is to be rich, and still be in financial bondage. Let me tell you how you can be rich and be in financial bondage. When you try to find your satisfaction in money—you have money, and you're still not satisfied—you're in bondage. You know, the Bible says, *“He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver”* (Ecclesiastes 5:10). I'll tell you another way you can be rich, and still be in bondage: when your money increases your worries. The more you get, the more you worry. You know, the Bible says, in Proverbs 15, verse 6, *“In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble”* (Proverbs 15:6). There are some people who can sleep better than the wealthy people can sleep, because the wealthy man is always worrying about his money. He spends the first half of his life, trying to get everything he can from everybody else, and the last half of his life, trying to keep everybody from getting it back. He's miserable in both halves of his life.

You're in financial bondage, if you have a desire to get rich quick. You know, we tell young people to make all the money you can, just as long as you make it honestly. Hey, that's bad advice. A man who's making all the money he can is going to be making money, when he ought to be praying, soul-winning, witnessing, or going fishing. He's in bondage. He's in bondage. And you know, the Bible says, in Proverbs 23, verse 4, *“Labour not to be rich”* (Proverbs 23:4). Feel sorry for the man whose goal is to be rich.

There are some in this congregation, and that's your goal. And you, my dear friend, are in bondage. You ought to labor to be godly. The Bible says, in Matthew chapter 6, verse 33: *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness”* (Matthew 6:33). If wealth is what motivates you—I hate to tell you this—but you're in financial bondage. You're in financial bondage, if you don't have treasure in Heaven. The Bible says, *“Riches certainly make themselves wings”* (Proverbs 23:5). You know, somebody said, “Money talks—it says good-bye.” And that's true. Yeah, I don't care how much you've got.

I was reading this week about Donald Trump. Do you know who Donald Trump is? The self-made billionaire, he is the entrepreneur's entrepreneur. This guy's got everything. He's got billions of dollars. He has spectacular property all over. Donald Trump has three indescribable houses. He flies around on a Boeing 727, his own airplane, just to take him where he needs to go. He's got a yacht, a pleasure yacht, 14

million dollars. He goes from place to place in his helicopter. He doesn't have to catch a cab. He's handsome. He's intelligent. He's powerful. The article I read said, "If money can buy it, and he wants it, he can have it." And I said, "Yeah, what about what money can't buy?" You see, that's the thing, dear friend: If a man has it all, then he doesn't have anything.

You see, listen—listen. I thought about this man, and I thought about a man that Jesus told about in the 12th chapter of Luke, who said, "*Soul...take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry*" (Luke 12:19), for you have much goods laid up for many years. "*But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be*" (Luke 12:20).

You call it your house and your car, though those things—listen—50 years from now—most of us—somebody else will hold possession to it. Isn't that true? I mean, friend, we just have them for a little while, and we're stewards. There are so many people who are in financial bondage.

A man was seen driving down the highway in a red Ferrari. And on the back of that Ferrari was a bumper sticker. This is what it said: "He who has the most toys when he dies wins." That's wrong, friend; because, you see, if you want to know really how wealthy you are, then you add up everything you have that money can't buy and death can't take away, and then, you're going to know how wealthy you are. Or, put it another way: Are the things you're living for worth Christ dying for? Think about it. It's not wrong to have possessions. As a matter of fact, God wants you to have possessions. God gives you possessions to make you a steward over them. But you can be financially in bondage as a poor person. You can be financially in bondage as a wealthy person.

Somebody has described a modern American as a person who drives a bank-financed car over a bond-financed highway on gasoline he's just bought with a credit card. He is on his way to open a charge account at a department store so he can fill his savings-and-loan-financed home with installment-purchased furniture.

Now friend, it's about time we stopped buying things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't like. It's about time we learn what God had to say about how to make money, how to use money, how to spend money, how to save money, and how to give money. God wants to open the windows of Heaven and pour out a blessing on you. Yes, a spiritual blessing. And yes a financial blessing.

## **II. Three Steps to Financial Freedom**

And here, in the passage that I've read to you from the Book of Malachi, there are three steps to financial freedom.

## A. There Must Be a Personal Return to God

Number one, there must be a personal return to God. Look, in verse 7: *“Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?”* (Malachi 3:7).

Now dear friend, the point of return has to be at the point of departure. So God answers this: *“Wherein shall we return?”* He says, *“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings”* (Malachi 3:7–8).

Now my dear friend, we must return to God in this matter of stewardship. Again, I want to tell you—I cannot say it enough—God is not out to impoverish you; God is out to enrich you. God is not trying to get from you; God is trying to give to you. But He has to do it His way. Psalm 50, verse 12, says, *“If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof”* (Psalm 50:12). God says, “You’re not going to help poor God out. God loves you for yourself.” The Bible says that it’s not our money; it’s you that He wants. In 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 5, the Bible says, of those people, who gave such great gifts that, first of all, they “gave themselves to the LORD” (2 Corinthians 8:5). In 2 Corinthians 12, verse 14, God says, *“I seek not yours but you”* (2 Corinthians 12:14). It is you that God wants. *Tithing is not God’s way to raise money. He owns everything. Tithing is God’s way to grow Christians.*

I heard about a farmer who was a corn farmer, and he had two boys. And while the other boys were off fishing and hunting and running around, this farmer’s sons were working in the cornfields. Somebody said to that farmer, “Why do you work those boys so diligently? You don’t need all that corn.” He said, “I’m not raising corn; I’m raising boys.” Now you think about it. God is not just simply raising money. What God is doing is growing Christians.

Now my dear friend, one of the greatest signs that you’re getting right with God is that you trust God with your finances. I want to say this. You listen. You can sing all you want about how you love Jesus, and all of that. You can have crocodile tears in your eyes. But *the consecration that doesn’t reach your purse has not reached your heart.* Can you say “amen” to that? That sure was weak. Listen. The consecration that doesn’t reach your pocketbook has not reached your heart. It’s just idle talk.

I saw a bumper sticker the other day, and I really liked it. It says, *“Tithe if you love Jesus. Anybody can blow their horn.”* You think about it.

Dear friend, God wants your heart. And so that’s the reason He asks us to give, because, *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Matthew 6:21). And so the LORD knows what He’s up to. He just wants you to put Him first. That’s the

reason He says, in Matthew chapter 6, verse 33, “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*” (Matthew 6:33).

Two boys were talking. One of them had just milked the cow, and come back into the house. And the other one said, “How much did she give?” He said, “She didn't give anything,” said, “I had to take every drop from her.”

And you know—listen, friend—God does not want that kind of gift. I want to say it with all of my heart. What is not liberally, cheerfully, and willingly given God neither needs nor wants. He doesn't need it. He doesn't want it, if it is not liberally and cheerfully given.

And God says, “You want to return to me? You just stop robbing me. You just stop stealing from me.” The point of return is always the point of departure. Do you know what's coming soon? April the 15th. Do you know what that is? Yeah. And you know what you're going to do? Oh, you're going to sit down, and you're going to figure it all out, and you're going to total it up, refigure it, and try to figure it out. Do you know why? Because, if you don't, Caesar's going to come after you. The Bible says, “*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's*” (Mark 12:17).

Now the tithe is the *LORD's* (Leviticus 27:30), the Bible says. Why is it that some Baptists will pay their income tax, but they don't tithe? Why is that? I'll tell you why. Why do they render to Caesar that which is Caesar's, but they don't give to God that which is God's? Do you want me to tell you very frankly? They fear Caesar more than they fear God. That's right. They just fear Caesar more than they fear God. Somehow, they say, “Well, it's all right to rob God. But it's not all right to rob Caesar.”

Now my dear friend, I want to tell you very plainly and very frankly, you'll never know financial freedom, in my estimation—no matter how wealthy you are—if you don't tithe. If you don't tithe, you'll never know financial freedom. That is not the last step to financial freedom; but, dear friend, you'll never go around that one. Start with the tithe. Return to God. There must be a personal return.

## **B. There Must Be a Material Release**

And that personal return, secondly, will show up in a material release. You're going to begin to release those things that that are in your hand. That's the second step to financial freedom. Look at it, in verse 10: “*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house*” (Malachi 3:10). There has to be that personal and material release.

Now that verse tells us several things.

### **1. There Is a Definite Proportion**

First of all, what are we to bring? There is a definite proportion. The Bible calls it *the*



*tithe*. Now if you're not familiar with Bible language—if you're watching by television, and not a student of the Bible—the word *tithe* means, “tenth”. Jacob said, in Genesis 28, verse 2: *“Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee”* (Genesis 28:22).

Now there are some people who say, “Well, you know, Pastor, tithing is legalistic. That's the reason I don't tithe. Tithing was for Jews in the Old Testament. Tithing was for Jews under the law. But I'm a Christian. I don't live in the Old Testament times. I live in New Testament times. And tithing is legalistic, and we are free from the law.”

My dear friend, tithing is not a part of God's Old Testament ceremonial law alone. It is a part of God's eternal law. And tithing was taught and practiced 400 years before the Mosaic Law. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. Jacob tithed years before the Old Testament law. Tithing was taught before the Old Testament law. Tithing was taught during the Old Testament law. Tithing is taught after the Old Testament law. The Old Testament and the New Testament teach tithing. In Matthew chapter 23 and verse 23—put this in your margin there; Jesus is talking to the Scribes and the Pharisees—He said, *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone”* (Matthew 23:23). You see, there's no competition between tithing and judgment, mercy and faith. They're all a part of what our *LORD* wants us to do.

Did you know that the Bible teaches clearly that we're to give our tithes to Jesus Christ? Did you know that? Let me show you something very interesting here. Turn to Hebrews chapter 5, now. Now put a bookmark in Malachi, then turn to Hebrews chapter 5, and read with me verses 5 and 6: *“So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest;—that is, Jesus did not just set Himself up to be a high priest—“but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee”* (Hebrews 5:5). That is, Jesus was not a high priest by his own decision, but by God the Father. *“As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec”* (Hebrews 5:6). Those two verses tell us that Christ is a high priest. Now He's not a high priest after the order of Aaron, but a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Well, you say, “Pastor, that's just so much religious lingo to me. I don't even know who Melchizedek was. I'm not even real sure I know who Aaron was. And Christ is what?” He's a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, yes. All right now, just keep that in your mind. Christ is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Just forget, for a moment, who Melchizedek is, and just get it in your mind that Christ is high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Got that?

All right now, let's move on. Look, in chapter 7. Let's find out who Melchizedek is. Hebrews 7—you know that's good, if it's 7, don't you? All right: *“For this Melchisedec,*

*king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;*”—one day, Abraham (now this was centuries before the law) had gone out to a battle, and he had overcome some kings. And when he came back, he met Melchizedek. Melchizedek was a priest of the most high God, and Melchizedek blessed Abraham. Now what did Abraham do?—*“to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all;”*—that is, Abraham tithed to him—*“first being by interpretation King of righteousness,”*—now, that’s one thing Melchizedek was, a king of righteousness—*“and after that also King of Salem,”*—do you know what the word Salem means? It means, “peace”—*“which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually”* (Hebrews 7:1–3).

Who is Melchizedek? Whoever he is, he’s a priest of the most high God. Whoever Melchizedek is, he has a name, which means, number one, “King of righteousness.” And not only does his name mean, “King of righteousness,” but it also means, “King of peace.” And not only that, but as you search the Bible, you can’t ever find out where he began, or where he ended. He doesn’t have any earthly father or mother. He is without beginning of days, or end of days. He just appeared, and he’s like he’s lived for all eternity. He’s a mysterious king. No beginning, no ending; no father, no mother; King of peace, King of righteousness; and priest of the most high God forever.

Who does he sound like to you? Well, look in verse 4: *“Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils”* (Hebrews 7:4). Who was this? Friend, it was Jesus. Abraham met Jesus, and gave Him a tithe. You say, “Do you believe it was literally Jesus?” I personally believe it was literally Jesus, who appeared in a pre-incarnate form, called *King of peace* and *King of righteousness*, and met Abraham. You know, Jesus said, “Abraham saw my day and was glad” (John 8:56). But whether or not it was literally Jesus, or somebody who prefigured Jesus, the point is still the same.

The writer of Hebrews says, “Consider how great a man this was to whom Abraham gave the tithe of all” (Hebrews 7:4). And I want to remind you that Abraham existed before the Mosaic Law was ever heard of. Don’t you tell me, dear friend, that you don’t want to tithe because it’s legalistic. *Anybody who would let a Jew do more under law than he would do under grace is a disgrace to grace.* Say “amen.” Anybody who would let a Jew do more under law than he would do under grace is a disgrace to grace. Jesus never revised the law downward.

Jesus never said, “The Old Testament said, ‘Don’t steal’; but, I’ll tell you, you can steal a little bit. It’s all right.” No. Jesus said, *“Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 5:20). Let me tell you this about the law—Romans

chapter 3, verse 31: *“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law”* (Romans 3:31). Even if tithing is just a part of the law, do you think we’re going to do less under grace than we do under the law?

Why do you feed your children? Because the law says you have to feed your children? No, because you love them. That’s why we feed our children. Why do we raise our children, clothe them, house them, feed them, and educate them? Because we love them.

But suppose there’s a father, mother, or somebody, who says, “Well, I’m not going to feed my child.” Then, the law takes over. Child neglect is a crime, right? You see, what I’m trying to say, dear friend, is you can’t just simply say, “Well, I’m just going to be a law unto myself.” The law is there. If you don’t want to live up here, the law is still there to get you. You see? If you don’t live by grace, then you’ll be judged by the law. You cannot, my dear friend, just simply say that I am not going to do what God wants me to do. We don’t make void the law. We establish the law.

Now tithing was taught before the law, during the law. Tithing, Abraham commenced it, Jacob continued it, Malachi commanded it, and Jesus commended it. Who are you to cancel it? Who are you?

## **2. There Is a Definite Place**

No, listen, dear friend. There is a principle that we are to give. And so there must be a definite proportion. And then not only a definite proportion, but there’s a definite place: *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house”* (Malachi 3:10). Now there he talked about the temple. And in the temple there was a depository called the storehouse. And they brought the tithe to the storehouse. They didn’t just spend the tithe for whatever they wanted, or to whomever they wanted. They didn’t use that to take care of some sick aunt or uncle, or to send kids through school. No, they brought the tithe to the storehouse.

Now the storehouse was in the temple. The church—wherever she meets today—is the temple of God. Paul says, in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?”* (1 Corinthians 3:16). That’s the reason he went on to say, in 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and verse 2—listen to it, and put it in your margin—1 Corinthians chapter 16, verse 2, says, *“Upon the first day of the week...”* (1 Corinthians 16:2). What day is that? Sunday, right? Sunday is not the weekend. It’s the first day of the week, not the weekend. And it sure wasn’t made for Michelob.

All right now, listen. It’s the first day of the week. *“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you...”* How many does that include? If it includes you, then lift your hand. Yeah, *“let every one of you...”* All right, *“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you...”*—everyone of you, on Sunday—*“lay by him in store...”* You see the word *in*

store? *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse”* (Malachi 3:10). 1 Corinthians 16:2 says, *“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store...”* (1 Corinthians 16:2). Now that word *in store* is in the Greek the same word that you'll find in the Hebrew in Malachi 3:10. As a matter of fact, when they put the Hebrew scriptures into Greek they went over here, and got 1 Corinthians 16:2, and took the word that's translated, “in store,” and translated it here, “storehouse.” It's the same word. In Greek, it's *store*. In Hebrew, it's *storehouse*. *Upon the first day of the week, you bring God's tithe to God's house, that God's work will be done God's way.* That's the way to do it. Friend, you're not going to do it any better than that. That is the way that God says: *“...that there be no gatherings when I come”* (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Paul said, “We're not going to need any emergency offerings. Everything is going to be taken care of, if God's people will just do what I've told them to do.” Friend, we'd have enough to build buildings, send missionaries, expand our program, reach this city, and reach this world for Christ, if God's people would only get themselves in a place where God could bless them. I mean, just, that God could bless them. You don't give because there's a need. You give because it's right. But when you give because it's right, you do meet a need.

### **3. There Is a Definite Purpose**

You see, look—there's a proper proportion: “all the tithe”; there's a proper place: “the storehouse”; and, there's a proper purpose: *“that there may be meat in my house...saith the LORD”* (Malachi 3:10). That's the definite purpose: *“that there may be meat in my house.”* That is, there will be enough to do what needs to be done.

I was reading the other day where a statistician said somebody had figured it out. He said, “In the average church, if every member was on welfare, and they all tithed, the income of that church would more than double.” That's pathetic, isn't it? If everybody was on welfare, and they all tithed, the income of that church would double. Now the purpose is, God said, *“that there may be meat in my house”* (Malachi 3:10).

Now I don't mean to say that, if you tithe, you're going to be wealthy. I'll talk about that in a moment. I don't mean to say, if you tithe, that's all you need to do. I am simply saying, friend, that is the starting place. You want to return to God? If you don't return to God with your material goods, then you haven't really returned. That's what God says here.

### **C. There Will Be a Spiritual Renewal**

Now there has to be a personal return, there has to be a material release, and then—my dear friend—there will be a spiritual renewal. That's when revival begins in your heart and in your life. Continue to read: *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, 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. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed” (Malachi 3:10–12).*

### **1. God Will Renew Your Faith**

Now let me very quickly just run down this. First of all, He’s going to renew your faith. He says, “Here’s what I’m going to do.” He says, “You can prove me. Put me to the test, if I will not open up the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing.” Now it’s a spiritual blessing. You’ll say—listen—“God really does live. He really is real. He does keep His word. I have put Him to the test.”

When Joyce and I got married—after our wedding, and so forth—we had about 50 or 60 dollars. Seems to me it was less than 100. We took our honeymoon on that. Now we didn’t have anything. But we had each other, and we had Jesus. We started out—I was just a young boy—our first year in college. We went to school seven years. I worked my way through school in all manner of jobs. I packed fruit, sold automobiles, did construction work, worked as a butcher, worked in a department store, sold shoes, and sold clothes. I did all of these things to work my way through school. But friend, when I got out of school, I was out of debt. My wife didn’t work. I thought she ought to stay home. She did. Joyce didn’t tithe. We gave beyond the tithe. We wanted to give more than the tithe. And I can tell you that, through these years, we’ve tithed. And friend, through these years, we’ve proven this verse to be true. And God enabled us to give away amounts of money that I thought we’d never be able to give away. God has enabled us to do that. Why? Because He, dear friend, has proven to us that it is true.

“Prove me, prove me,” God says. “Put me to the test. See whether or not it’s true”: the only place I know of in the Bible where He challenges us to prove Him.

### **2. God Will Rebuke Your Foes**

Number one: He will renew our faith. Number two: He’ll rebuke our foes. Look, if you will, in verse 11. *“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field”* (Malachi 3:11). We all have foes. Now if you’re a farmer, it might be the boll weevil, the drought, or whatever. But He’s not just simply talking about that. He’s talking to the doctor, the lawyer, the mechanic, the physician, and it doesn’t make any difference. What God is saying is, your clothes will wear better, your cars will drive better, and you’ll be healthier.

Now I’m not saying, if you tithe, you’re going to be a millionaire. Most of us have about all that God can trust us with. And not everybody’s going to have the same amount of money whether you tithe or whether you don’t. Some are more gifted. Some

inherit more. Some are just in a position where they get more. And then others... Right? But what I am saying is this, and I believe this with all of my heart. *You'll always do more with nine tenths and God as a partner, than you'd do with ten tenths by yourself.* That's it. You will always so more with nine-tenths and God as a partner.

Now some people—I don't care whether they tithe or not—they're not going to be wealthy, because that's just their situation. That's their giftedness, and others. But I'll tell you—whoever you are—you'll always do more with God as a partner. You know, sometimes people, when you talk about tithing, they say, "Well, Pastor, you don't expect that little widow to tithe her pension, do you?" Sure. You say, "You hard-hearted man." I'd be hard-hearted, if I didn't teach her to tithe. I want her to be blessed. I mean, if there's anybody that needs to depend upon God, it's that kind of person.

You're not smarter than God. Don't you know that God knows what that little lady needs? You say, "You're trying to get it, for that church doesn't need it." No, nope, God doesn't need it. God doesn't have to have it. God wants to bless us, but God wants us to get in the place of blessing.

### **3. God Will Restore Your Fruitfulness**

Where God says, "Prove me; I'll renew your faith; I'll rebuke your foes," then, God says, "I'll restore your fruitfulness. Your fruit's not going to fall to the ground ahead of time. I'll make you fruitful." Not just fruitful, dear friend, in farming, but fruitful in all that we do. It's time we began to trust the *LORD*. Don't get so wrapped up in these material things. Friend, you're going to leave them before long.

## **Conclusion**

Let me just tell you this, and I'm finished. Some years ago—not too long ago—I went to Italy. And I went to Naples, Italy, and out from Naples, Italy is a place called Pompeii. And there's a great mountain there, a volcano called Vesuvius. And you can visit Pompeii, and you can see the ruins of Pompeii, and another city, right by it, that they're just excavating, Herculaneum. What a thing to go through! You can see the splendor and the lavishness in which these people lived, because volcanic ash just kind of fell in and filled up everything. It's soft enough, and they can scrape it back, and they see the houses, and the tile, and all of that, just like it was—some of the bodies of the people there. In Pompeii, there's a man—the skeleton of a man—who in his hand is clasping some gold coins. In his other hand is a bag, his bag of gold. And evidently, when the volcano started, and the ashes started to fall, this man went back for his bag of gold, and he's reaching out for it. The gold has spilled to the floor, and he's reaching out for that gold, when the gas and fumes have overcome him; and, there he is, embalmed for all time, just grasping that gold.

Reminds me of what Jesus said: *"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the*

*whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Mark 8:36–37). Friend, the wisest thing—the best thing—that anybody can do is to give his heart to Jesus Christ. God doesn’t need you. You need God. God’s not trying to get your money. God is trying to bless you. He wants to open the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing. There’s only one reason that anybody wouldn’t tithe. They just don’t believe it. Anybody who believes that will do it.

# It Pays to Serve Jesus

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** March 19, 1989

**Main Scripture Text:** Malachi 3:13–16

*“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.”*

MALACHI 3:16

## Outline

Introduction

- I. Our Lord Remembers His Own
  - A. God Writes Down Your Character
  - B. God Writes Down Your Contemplation
  - C. God Writes Down Your Conversation
- II. Our Lord Rejoices over His Own
- III. Our Lord Is Going to Return for His Own

## Introduction

I want you to take God’s Word and I want you to open it please to Malachi chapter 3— Malachi chapter 3. We’re continuing in this series, “God’s Word for the End of an Age.” And I’m going to begin reading now in Malachi 3 and verse 13: “Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.”

Now what is happening here? The people were speaking against God, and God remonstrated with them and said, “Your words have been stout against me.” And what were they saying? I’ll tell you what they were saying. They were saying, “It doesn’t pay to serve the Lord.” What they were saying is this: that worship, what we’re doing this morning, is a colossal waste of time. Worship is a waste. It does no good to serve God. What profit is it? They said, “We’ve been looking around. The best crowd to be in is those in the fast lane, the shakers, the movers, the proud, the self-sufficient and the self-serving. What good does it do to serve the Lord?” That’s what they’ve been asking. “It really doesn’t pay,” they were saying.



Well, the title of our message today is this: “It Pays to Serve Jesus.” It pays to serve Jesus. It pays every day. It pays every step of the way. Though the pathway to glory may sometimes seem dreary, it pays to serve Jesus each day. Now they challenged the Lord, and they said, “It doesn’t pay.” And Malachi answered and he gave three thoughts, three wonderful truths, three wonderful principles that I pray God the Holy Spirit will emblazon upon your consciousness, will engrave upon your hearts, three things in case sometimes when you look around and it seems like everybody is having a big time and that you’re left out, and that if you wonder sometime, *are you really doing the right thing when you love and give and sacrifice and pray and serve the Lord Jesus*, whether you wonder, *is it really worth it*, then I want you to keep these three things in mind. Three basic reasons that Malachi gave to show that it truly pays to serve Jesus.

## **I. Our Lord Remembers His Own**

Reason number one: Our Lord remembers His own. Look in verse 16: “Then they that feared the LORD.” Now they that feared the LORD are in contradistinction to these who don’t fear the LORD; these who are saying, “It doesn’t do any good to serve God, “Then they that feared the LORD.” No matter how bad it gets and how dark it gets, God always has His people, doesn’t He? God always has His crowd. Sometimes we call them the Master’s minority. Sometimes we call them the faithful few. Sometimes we call them the little flock. You know what they’re called today? Four F’s: freaks, fools, fanatics, and fundamentalists. That’s what they call us today. But God always has His people. God always has His crowd. “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance,”— underscore that phrase—“a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.”

### **A. God Writes Down Your Character**

Now God’s angel is inscribing certain things about you, those of you who serve the Lord. And let me tell you what he is writing down. First of all, he’s writing in that book your character. Now your character is found in this phrase, “They that feared the LORD.” Did you know there’s no greater mark of character than to fear God? And no greater mark of a bad character in that you don’t fear God if you don’t fear God. In Romans 3, when God was describing the ungodly, He used this phrase, “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” If you don’t fear God, you have no character. My dear friend, the Bible says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” I mean, that’s kindergarten. That’s the beginning. That’s the ABC’s. You can’t go beyond that if you don’t fear God.

Now, what does the fear of the Lord mean? It doesn’t mean cringing dread. We don’t

dread God. We love to be in His presence. But it means awe and reverence and respect for the glory, the majesty of His name. Let me tell you what the fear of the Lord is. The fear of the Lord is love on its knees. That's what the fear of the Lord is. The one who fears God the most loves Him the best. And there's no contradiction between the fear of the Lord and the love of God. "Then they that feared His name..."

## B. **God Writes Down Your Contemplation**

Oh, I'm afraid for our age and our generation because there is no fear of God before their eyes. There's no reverence for the Almighty. And even God Himself and the holy things of God are made the butt of jokes in entertainment today. But not only did God write down and does God write down your character, but He also writes down your contemplation. Notice the last part of verse 16. It mentions those who thought upon His name. You see, God is recording not only your deeds, but God is recording your thoughts. And that's what we've come to do today. We've come today to think upon His name. Now some translations give it, "To those who esteem His name." That is, not only do they think about His name, but they think about His name as being worthy, His name as being weighty, His name is worth thinking about.

That's the reason we have the banner ministry. That's the reason we bring these banners in with the names of our God to help you to think about His name. You say, "What is so important in thinking about His name?" Let me give you a verse of Scripture—Psalm 9:10. Put it in the margin. "They that know thy name shall put their trust in thee." You see, because when you know His name, you know His character. And then, when you know His character, you want to trust Him.

For example, His name is Jehovah Jireh. That's the way He revealed Himself to Abraham as God who will provide. Well, if you have a need and you know His name, then you can trust Him to provide. Or, for example, His name is Jehovah Tsidkenu, and that means the Lord our righteousness. Today, if you feel grimy and filthy and you feel like you've sinned and failed, well, dear friend, confess that sin and let Jesus be your righteousness, and let the righteousness of God bathe you and clothe you. Trust Him to forgive you. His name is Jehovah Shalom. The word shalom means peace. Are you worried, distraught? Have you got a problem? "They that know thy name shall trust in thee. Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee because he trusteth in thee." His name is Jehovah Nissi, which means the Lord our banner. Do you have a battle to fight? Oh, my dear friend, you can march forth under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel. The Lord our banner, mighty in battle. The Lord is a banner lifted up high over His people. "They that know thy name shall put their trust in thee."

The Lord Shammah means the Lord who is present. Do you know that name? Oh,

do you feel lonely? I spoke to one of our widows last night. Her husband stepped on over to glory. She said, “Pastor, it’s all right, and God is giving the victory, but,” she said, “at evening time when it gets dark, I’m alone in that house. Thank God for Jehovah Shammah, the Lord who is present, the Lord who said, “I am a husband to the widow.” Oh, my dear friend, “They that know thy name shall put their trust in thee.” Isn’t it amazing to think that God knows our thoughts—God knows our thoughts?

May I suggest that you do this: that you memorize the names of God and that you think upon His name, because when you think upon His name God writes it in a book. I was in a restaurant the other day eating, and about two or three tables away from me I heard something that got my attention. People were talking, and this is what they said: “Adrian Rogers.” I laid down my knife and fork. You see, listen. God hearkens, the Bible says, and heard. They feared His name. You see, do you want to get God’s attention? Curse His name and you’ll get His attention, for the Lord says He will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. Do you want to get God’s attention? Praise His name, for the Bible says God occupies the praises of His people.

Now we have so much foolish conversation around today. But, dear friend, think about His name. Mention His name. Proverbs 18:10—I was thinking about this morning. It’s a wonderful, wonderful verse. Put it in your margin. Proverbs 18:10: “The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous run into it and they are safe.” Think of that name. Think of it as a strong tower, a place of refuge.

And do you know what that strong tower is? First of all, it’s a place of power. The name of the Lord is a strong tower. If you want to war, you get your tower to fight from. It’s a strong tower. And not only is there power there, there’s protection there. The righteous run into it and they are safe. And not only is there power and protection, there’s prospective. You can get up in that tower and you can see all around. Friend, you’ll see things from the name of the Lord. You’ll see life from a completely different perspective. “The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous run into it and they our, are safe.”

### C. **God Writes Down Your Conversation**

But not only is God going to write down your character, and not only is God going to write down your contemplation, but I’ll tell you what else God writes down in His book: God writes down your conversation. Notice in verse 16: “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another.” And, you know, God hears what you say. Sometimes I love to be a preacher anonymous; that is, I don’t let people know that I’m a preacher. And I sit and listen to conversations. Oh, my friend, I guess you listen to them, too, don’t you? It’s amazing how the conversation changes when somebody calls me “Reverend.” But the vapid, vain conversation of people who don’t know the Lord, but the Lord hearkens

to our conversation as we talk about Him.

Now, my dear friend, if there are those who are talking against Him in verse 13, “Your words have been stout against me,” then I think in verse 16 we ought to be talking for the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me give you another great verse—Psalm 66:16. I’ve been meditating on this one, and I’ll tell you it is tremendous. Here’s what the psalmist said: “Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.” That’s what we ought to be doing every Lord’s Day when we meet today. Say, “Come and hear all you that fear God. I’ll declare what He hath done for my soul.” “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another.”

And so, what does the Lord write in that book? Well, the Lord writes our character. We fear the Lord. Our, the Lord writes our contemplations. We reverence. We think about His name. The Lord records our conversation. They spake one to another.

And then I’ll tell you what else He writes in there. He writes our company in that book, our company, because it says, “they spoke one to another.” You see, the Bible says we’re “not to forsake the assembling our ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching.” God’s people need to get together where they can speak one to another. And did you know all over the world people are doing what we’re doing today? People are coming together. And all over this property in Sunday school classes right now while we’re in this auditorium there are little enclaves of Christians, and they’re speaking one to another. They have gathered together to give Him honor.

Oh, what a privilege to be a part of the family of God! Have you ever thought about it? Have you ever thought about this fact, dear friend, that you would not have known most of the people in this building had it not been for Jesus and the name of Jesus? Bob, had it not been Jesus, I never would have known you. I never would have known you, Bull Moose, if it hadn’t of been for Jesus. I never would have known you, Jim, if it hadn’t of been for the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen, friend. It’s Jesus that brings us together. There’s a fellowship of the redeemed. “They that feared the LORD spoke often one to another.” There’s something that draws God’s people together in a company, a fellowship.

We love to talk about Jesus. I remember the first time I went to the Holy Land. I wanted to see the empty tomb. And I finally got to that spot. And they let you go in that empty tomb. I went in there, and there were some black people in there, some white people in there, some Asian people in there. There were people from all over the world in different languages, about twelve of us at one time. One person was so overcome with emotion, he said out loud, “I love Him.” And somebody else said, “And I love Him, too.” And somebody else said, “And I love Him.” And somebody else said, “I love Him.” And there we were together, strangers—no, brothers and sisters in Christ! “They that

feared the LORD spoke often one to another.” And God looks down and He says, “Recording angel, write down their character. They fear me. Write down their contemplation. They think about my name. Write down their conversation. They speak one to another. Write down their company. They gather together to give Him praise. Write it in a book of remembrance!”

Friend, God has three books in His library. God has His book of revelation, the Bible. God has His book of redemption, the Lamb’s Book of Life. And then, my dear friend, God has His book of remembrance. God is writing things in His book. He’s writing about you. Let me give you a wonderful thought. He’s not writing your sins down in that book. Your sins are blotted out, thank God. But do you know what He is writing down? He’s writing down perhaps little things that other people overlook, little things that other people might not even think about He knows. Did you know that Jesus said you can even give a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple and lose your reward? Little things. Those tears when you prayed that prayer of intercession, God said, “I’ve got your tears in a bottle.” He knows those tears that you’ve wept for the lost; my dear friend, those prayers that you’ve said at midnight. That little girl who lives in an ungodly home, when she gives a timid testimony for Jesus, God wrote it down in His book. God is keeping a record, dear friend. God has a book—a book of remembrance.

Not long ago, an airplane took off from Honolulu. And as it was flying, there seemed to be an explosion, and a cargo door came off, and a great section of that airplane came off just a few days ago, and nine people were just sucked out into the air into destruction. And they said that most likely the reason for that was that somebody had failed to properly latch the cargo door. Now when we get on an airplane, generally what we say is, “You know, I hope we’ve got a good, well-trained pilot. I hope this pilot knows how to fly this thing.” But have you ever thought that your hand may be in the life of somebody who just latches the cargo door? We don’t think about that. We come to church and we say, “Well, I hope we have a good preacher. I hope we’re going to hear good music.”

Let me tell you something, folks. I got down here early this morning because we knew we’d been having the pageant, and I knew the building might be in disarray, and I wanted to walk and make certain that everything was in shape before this service. All over this building there were technicians moving things, straightening things up. All last night people were down here working, getting everything in ready. You don’t know about those people. You don’t know their name. You know the preacher. You don’t know who latches the cargo door, do you? But, thank God, God knows. Over there in the nursery right now somebody’s changes a diaper right now, and somebody is giving a little child a drink of water right now, and that person will in no wise lose their reward.

And you ask yourself this question: Does it pay to serve Jesus? When that book is

opened, you'll know. When that book is opened, you'll know. When that book of remembrance is opened, you'll say, "It pays to serve Jesus. It pays every day. It pays every step of the way."

## II. Our Lord Rejoices over His Own

I'll give you another reason it pays to serve Jesus. Not only because our Lord remembers His own; but, secondly, because our Lord rejoices over His own. Look, if you will, in verse 17: "And they..."—that is, those who fear the Lord—"And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Now the Lord has many names for His children. Sometimes we're called saints. Sometimes sons. Sometimes servants. Sometimes stewards. Sometimes witnesses. Sometimes friends. Sometimes ambassadors. But none more beautiful than this name in the King James: jewels. Now some translations give it "my peculiar treasure." Peculiar treasure. The old translators of the King James, I think, rightly chose the word jewel because that's what He's talking about: a peculiar treasure. "They are my jewels." And what does a person do with his jewels? He rejoices over them.

Joyce and I have been in love for a long time. I can't remember when I didn't love Joyce. I met her in the fourth grade. We were grade school sweethearts. She's the only girl I ever dated. In high school, I knew that I loved her with a genuine love. We went away to college, and I was working my way through college. My dad was not able to pay my way through college, and I had to work and study at the same time. I've done all kinds of jobs. But I knew I wanted to get married. I wanted to marry Joyce. I was just a 19-year-old lad, but I wanted to get married. And we went down there in Deland, Florida to the main street to Duvall's Jewelers there to buy an engagement ring. I was only 19, but I knew you were supposed to do that. And we went into that store.

Now, friend, I just had three or four dollars—that's all, just a little money. That man began to bring out those great big diamonds, and then he brought out the price tag. Oh, my heart sank. Then he kept putting those back, and I asked for something else and something else. And, finally, he brought out a diamond. It wasn't very big. But I thought that perhaps I could pay for it. And he said, "Son, it's got a flaw in the center of it." But he said, "You can't see it unless you know what you're looking for." Joyce was there. She said, "Adrian, I think it's beautiful." So I said, "Mister, I want it." I gave him a few dollars. He said, "All right, I'll hold it for you. You come in and you buy it and it'll be yours." And trying to pay for my tuition and my other expenses, I'd get a few dollars and I'd go by and I'd give that man a few dollars and a few dollars. And I remember when I walked in there and gave him that last dollar, and picked up that ring and put it in my pocket, one of the happiest days of my life. And I walked back with that ring.

I kept looking at it, thinking about what it stood for. I was smart, though. I gave it to her on Christmas Eve. Killed two birds with one stone. It wasn't a very big stone, but it killed two birds. And I gave it to her on Christmas Eve. And then we made official what we'd known in our hearts that we were going to get married. It's not much of a diamond. And after a while, I said to her after many years, "Honey, I want to buy you another engagement ring. I want to buy you a big one without a flaw in it." She said, "No, siree. You're not about to buy me another engagement ring." She knew the price that was paid. She knew the love that was there. I may buy her something else, and I do, but I'll never buy her another engagement ring because that, my friend, is her peculiar treasure.

Now that's what God is saying we are to Him. He's saying, "You are my peculiar treasure." That's what the King James calls, "You're my jewels. You're my jewels." My dear friend, I want you to think about that. We are possessed by Him. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord." We are perfected by Him. He says, "When I make up my jewels." That is, "When I put them in their proper setting." There's an old song we used to sing, "When He cometh, when He cometh to make up His jewels; all His jewels, precious jewels, His loved and His own. Like the stars of the morning, His bright crown adorning; They shall shine in their beauty, bright gems for His crown." Possessed by Him. Perfected by Him. Precious to Him. And preserved by Him. God says, "I will spare him, as a man spares his own son that serves him."

Now, friend, let me tell you something. When Jesus comes to make up His jewels, and you become a setting for His crown to give Him glory, you'll know what I'm talking about when I say it pays to serve Jesus. It pays to serve Jesus. It pays every day. It pays every step of the way. It's not vain to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **III. Our Lord Is Going to Return for His Own**

I'll give you a third reason. Not only does the Lord remember His own, and not only does the Lord rejoice over His own; but you listen to me, dear friend. One day soon He's going to return for His own. He's going to return for His own. Look, if you will, in verse 18 now. "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." Between those who say, "It doesn't pay to serve the Lord," and between those who say, "It pays to serve Jesus."

And now, dear friend, there's coming a great separation day. Jesus Christ is coming soon. Malachi prophesied it, but the apostle Paul filled in the details. First Thessalonians 4:13–18. Put that note in your margin. Let me share that verse with you. Paul said, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep"—that is, those who are dead—"that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also

which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent”—that literally means shall not precede them—“them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead I Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Now, dear friend, if you think it doesn't pay to serve Jesus, let me tell you it's not over yet. It's not over yet. Jesus Christ is coming again. And the incarnation without the coronation is only half of the story. It's like having depth without height, east without west. The same Jesus who was here, who walked on water, who fed the 5,000; the same Jesus who stilled the storm; the same Jesus who was born of a virgin, who died on the cross is coming back actually, literally, visibly, bodily. “Then shall ye return,” Malachi said. Listen. The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven. And what's going to happen? There's going to be a resurrection when Jesus Christ comes. There'll be a shout on His lips, for the Bible says, “He shall come with a shout.” He's the Lord of the dead as well as the Lord of the living, and His voice will reverberate through the tombs of those who know Him, and they're going to hear Him. Multiplied millions will hear Him say, “Come forth!” And as Lazarus came forth, they will come forth. And the voice of the Savior will echo down the length and the breadth of Satan's empire of death, and it will crumble as the King of life says, “Come forth!” And then there's going to be a rapture. “We which remain and are alive shall be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air.” It's going to happen instantaneously, momentarily, in the twinkling of an eye. But only the saved are going to be caught up.

When I was a boy, about four or five blocks from our house there was a great scrap yard. I used to go over there and play and watch. There was a great electromagnet that they would move that steel around with. That magnet was on a crane. And I would watch, and I would see as it would swing over. It could pick up the whole body of an automobile and move it from this place to that place by that power, that attraction. But I noticed sometimes on the ground there would be bits of metal that would not be stirred. There would be aluminum and other alloys that would not be picked up. Only the steel and the iron would be picked up. Sometimes the power would be so powerful that bits of metal that were under the dirt would leap up through the dirt and go up and be wed and married to that magnet. Do you know why? The magnet had an attraction and an affinity and a power over that which had the same nature.

Who's going up in the rapture? My dear friend, the heaven-born are going to be the heaven-bound. That's whose going up. Those that share the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. And you could put, dear friend, precious metal on the ground, but if it didn't have



the nature of that magnet, it's not going up.

You see, the Lord is going to come. My friend, there's a return. There's a resurrection. There's a rapture. And there is a reunion, because He says we're going to be caught up together. Can you imagine? Can you imagine what it's going to be like for all of the saints of all of the ages to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air? We'll sing and shout and dance about. The Lamb will dry our tears. We'll have a grand homecoming week the first ten thousand years. Meeting your momma, your daddy, your brother, your sister, the saints of the ages, the apostle Paul, Simon Peter, James and John—we'll be there. And you know what we'll be doing there? We'll still be talking about His name. That's what we're going to be doing. We'll be singing, "All hail the power of Jesus' name, let angels prostrate fall. Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all!"

And, my dear friend, when He discerns between the righteous and the wicked, when the saved are taken to heaven and the unsaved are left to go through the great tribulation and into the fires of hell, then you answer the question, does it pay to serve Jesus? My friend, it pays to serve Jesus. It pays every day. It pays every step of the way. But I'll tell you, I believe when it'll pay the most and when we'll know that we've done the right thing. I already know it. But, oh, when He comes, to look upon His face. It will be worth it all when we see Christ. Amen and amen.

Let's pray. Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. There were some who were saying, "It doesn't pay to serve the Lord; that worship is worthless." I hope that thought will perish in your mind today and that you'll give yourself to serving Him as you never have before. The Lord remembers His own. The Lord rejoices over His own. The Lord will return to receive His own. Father, I pray that you'll burn the message into our souls, etch it upon our consciousness, engrave it upon our hearts. And, Lord, help us every day to know it pays to serve Jesus. In His name we pray. Amen.

# Some Golden Daybreak

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: April 2, 1989**

**Main Scripture Text: Malachi 4:1–3**

*“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.”*

MALACHI 4:2

## Outline

Introduction

- I. It Will Be A Day of Retribution
  - A. It Is a Future Day
  - B. It Is a Fiery Day
  - C. It Is a Final Day
- II. It Will Be A Day of Restoration
  - A. He Will Turn Darkness to Light
  - B. He Will Turn Sickness to Health
  - C. He Will Turn Coldness to Warmth
- III. It Will Be a Day of Release
  - A. There Will Be Liberty for the Children of God
  - B. There Will Be Maturity for the Children of God
  - C. There Will Be Victory for the Children of God

Conclusion

## Introduction

Malachi chapter 4, and I begin reading in verse 1: “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 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. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I do this, saith the LORD of hosts.”

What a wonderful passage of Scripture, and the key is in verse 2: “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise.” Some golden daybreak Jesus will come. And His coming is going to be like the sunrise for your soul and the sunrise for this world and for the universe, and the entire world is waiting for the sunrise, whether they know it or whether they don't. But in the meanwhile, may I tell you that we're living

in a dark hour. It is a dark hour domestically, internationally, nationally, spiritually, morally. We are living at midnight.

As a matter of fact, I want to share with you some words from David Wilkerson. He said this: "In 1940, just one generation ago, in our public schools classes opened with prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. God's blessing was asked upon the school, on the lessons, on the students, on the nation. It was one nation under God, and He was honored every day in the classroom. In that year, the top seven disciplinary problems were these: talking in class, chewing gum, making noises, running in the halls, cutting in line, improper clothing, and not disposing of garbage." I suppose, out of those seven I'm guilty of at least six. But now listen to what he went on to say. "Today, recent surveys are frightening. The top seven disciplinary problems are rape, robbery, assault, burglary, arson, bombing, murder." That's in the schools. And then he went on to say, "Almost all are related to drug abuse." He says, "Our youth are not just saying no." He went on to say that drug-pushing students in New York City parade the halls wearing gold chains and carrying wads of one-hundred-dollar bills. He says that the restrooms have become shooting galleries and smoking dens.

What's happened in America? You know, we've taken the Ten Commandments off the walls and we've put policemen in the halls. What has happened in America? We talk about a sexual revolution. Well, we've had a revolution, and, my dear friend, it is revolting. I mean, the harvest is in. The liberal press and the liberal theologians have told us that we have needed to throw off all this old puritanical restraint and we need to be liberated, and anything is all right if it takes place between two consenting adults. And so we have been flooded with books and films and video cassettes, talk shows, glorifying perversion, glorifying group sex, wife swapping, all the talk about open marriages and living together without the benefit of marriage. Young people today think that is normal and natural, but now suddenly it's payday and the death angel has come to say the party is over.

And we're faced with the spectrum of AIDS and diseases and crime, the breakup of the home, incurable diseases. Did you know that in our major cities now that one half of all births are called illegitimate? One half. That's fifty percent. By the way, there are no illegitimate children, just illegitimate parents. Every child has a right to be born. One half in our cities. One fourth of all pregnancies ends in abortion. More than twenty million. And so many of these homes are saturated with divorce.

But on top of all of this, I think the saddest thing: all of these things are terrible and horrible and indescribably horrible, but I think the saddest thing now, the final result, is the child pornography and child abuse. Who would have ever thought a nation, founded by such godly men on such godly principles, and with a Constitution like ours, would have come to the time when we have become such beasts that we turn on little children.

Child pornography. Child abuse, it's rampant in America.

It's a dark night. But I've got good news. This is not a negative message. I've got good news. The day is about to break. Some golden daybreak Jesus will come. Some golden daybreak battles all won. He'll shout the victory, break through the blue. Some golden daybreak for me, for you.

Now Malachi tells us about that day when the Sun of righteousness is going to come. He's saying there's a new day coming. Look in verse 1: "Behold, the day cometh..." Look, if you will, in verse 3: "But unto you that"—verse 2—"shall the Sun of righteousness arise." Look, if you will, in verse 3 of this same passage. He speaks about the day, and he says, "in the day that I shall do this"—the last part of verse 3. And then look, if you will, in verse 5: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD." The day He's coming he's talking about. There is a new day coming.

And this morning I want to have an exceedingly simple outline, and I want you to learn with me three things about that day when the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.

## **I. It Will Be A Day of Retribution**

The first thing I want you to see is this: It will be a day of retribution. It will be a day of retribution. Verse 1 tells us about that. "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch." The Bible says that day is going to be a day of retribution. It's a day that's going to burn as an oven.

### **A. It Is a Future Day**

And three things I want you to notice about that retribution, that day that's coming. First of all, it's a future day. It's a future day. The Bible says, "The day cometh." That is, it's not here yet. Don't get the idea that God is now judging sin—not like He's going to. Oh, there's a built-in judgment. But what people are suffering today is not primarily the judgment of God upon sin. They're suffering the consequences of sin. Do you see the difference? I mean, is AIDS a judgment of God? It is the consequence of breaking God's law: that's what it is. The Bible says, "They receive in their body the consequence of doing that which is not natural." You read Romans chapter 1. It's just the consequence of sin. Corrosion of the liver, is that the judgment of God? It's the consequence of pickling your liver with alcohol. Venereal disease is the consequence of sin. A crime is the consequence of sin. A broken home is a consequence of sin.

But, my dear friend, many times there are those who sin and they don't see the

consequences. And many times there are those who suffer who have not sinned. For example, the little child in the drunkard's home, right? You see, everything is not made right yet. This is not the judgment of God. If you think what is happening today is the judgment of God, you're going to get everything all confused because you're going to say, "Why did this one suffer and why didn't that one suffer?" Oh, there's the consequences of sin, and they're black and terrible and horrible, but you listen. The judgment of sin is yet coming. "The day cometh." It's future. It's future. Not one half of one sin will go unpunished. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

You see, Romans 2:5 speaks of sinners and this is what it says: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath." Wrath against the day of wrath. You're just putting wrath in the bank, as it were. "The day cometh."

### B. It Is a Fiery Day

Friend, the first thing I want you to see about this day of retribution, it is a future day. The second thing I want you to see, not only is it a future retribution; it is a fiery retribution. Notice again, the Bible says, "The day cometh that shall burn as an oven"—burn as an oven. The apostle Paul said that when Jesus comes He's coming in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God and who obey not the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is coming in flaming fire. That day is going to burn like an oven.

Now when you speak of the fiery judgment of God, there are some people who don't like that. They want to tell you, "Now don't you know, pastor, that God is love?" Yes, I know that God is love. He's infinite love. He so loved that He gave His only begotten Son. But He's also holy. He's also holy. He's also a God of judgment. You see, we have preached the love of God so much until we have become love sick. We have sort of a saccharin gospel. But He's also a God of judgment. Now I don't diminish the love of God, but that's only part of the truth. And if you take part of the truth and make part of the truth all of the truth, that part of the truth becomes an untruth. He is love, but He's also justice. And the day comes, the Bible says, that will burn as an oven. He is coming in flaming fire, taking vengeance. And if there's somebody who has done you wrong or somebody who is doing wrong, don't you worry about it. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Wrong will not always be on the throne. Right will not always be on the scaffold. He is coming. It is a future day. It is a fiery day.

Now, again, there are people who say, "I just don't believe in a religion built on fear." Well, friend, that's part of it. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Noah was moved with fear when he built an ark. Unto those who fear His name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings. Do you know, *I have an idea that if the*

*Supreme Court of America could vote on it, they would outlaw hell. They would. They would say that is cruel and unusual punishment*, that God has no right to do that.

Friend, I want to tell you there is a Bible doctrine called retribution. There is a Bible doctrine that says that sin will be judged.

### **C. It Is a Final Day**

The day comes. It is a future day. It is a fiery day. It is a final day. Listen: a final retribution. The Bible goes on to say here in verse 1, "It shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts; it shall leave them neither root nor branch." When the Bible says it will not leave them root, it means no past. When it says it will not leave them branch, it means no future. That is, here is a hopeless eternity. There is nothing that they can carry with them. There's no root. All of your treasures and trinkets, all of your finances, your family, your fun, that's all gone. There's no fun and games in a Christless grave. That's all gone, cut off, no root, no branch. That is, no future, no hope. The demon choir of the damned will sing in the caverns of hell as they moan forever and ever and ever and ever and ever. That's the day of retribution. That's what Malachi chapter 4 and verse 1 tells us that the coming of the LORD is going to be. It's a day of retribution.

## **II. It Will Be A Day of Restoration**

But I want not to end there. Thank God, we don't have to end there because let's look at verse 2. Not only is it a day of retribution, but it's a day of restoration. Look in verse 2: "But unto you that fear my name..." I hope that's you. Do you fear His name? Do you love Him? Do you know what I told you that the fear of the Lord is? It's love on its knees. He who fears God the most loves Him the best. There's no contradiction between the two. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings..."

Now the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, is compared to the sun that shines in the sky. He Himself made that comparison when He was here. He said in the gospel of John, "I am the light of the world." That is, I am to the spiritual world what the physical sun that hangs there in space 93 million miles away, is to the physical world; I am that to the spiritual world. I am the light of the world. And you think of the comparisons between that sun that hangs in the sky and the Son of God who lives in our hearts, the Lord Jesus Christ.

For example, the sun is inherent light. That is, it has light within itself. Now the moon is only reflected light. You see, we reflect the light of the Lord Jesus, but He is light. He doesn't just point the way to light. He's not just the way sure. He is the way. He's not just the truth teller. He is the truth. You see, He says, "I am the light." He has light in Himself. In Him there's no variableness or shadow of turning because He's inherent light. He is perfect light.

Have you ever tried to buy a suit of clothes or something and weren't certain about the color, and so you walked out into the sunlight to see what color it was? You see, all artificial light is just something a little off about it. I don't care how good it is. There's nothing like sunlight. His light is pure light. And, again, it tells us of the Lord Jesus Christ. You can trust the Lord Jesus. All that He says is yea and amen in the Lord Jesus. He's the light of the world.

But I want to say something else. That light that comes from the Lord Jesus Christ is life-giving light. The apostle John says, "In Him was life and the life was the light." The life was the light! You see, life and light are together. When I was about in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and I always loved natural science. I wanted to study everything I could study about natural science. And one of the things that intrigued me when I was a little boy was a process called photosynthesis. Did you remember studying about that? Photosynthesis. And they told me that it was made of two words. Photosynthesis was one of the biggest words I'd ever heard at that time. But photo, meaning "light," and synthesis, meaning "to put together," they told me that life is just put together with light, that things take place in the green growing things, a process of where food is manufactured by a process called photosynthesis and things are put together with light.

You see, that's the way the spiritual world is. It's the light of God that gives life. If, in the physical world, the sun were to cease to shine for 24 hours, all life here would just cease. I mean, all human life would be gone. But, my dear friend, you think if there were no Jesus, where would you be spiritually, you see? See, He doesn't have to take your life. All He has to do is stop giving it. The Bible says, "In Him we live and move and have our being." You see, He is life-giving light. Thank God for that. But all of these figures are there, but here's the one that Malachi uses. He is re-appearing light. When the sun goes down, you always expect it to come up, isn't that right?

You see, the Lord Jesus has gone from this earth, and we're living in a dark night; but, friend, I'm waiting for the sunrise. Did you hear about the little boy who sat up one night all night wondering where the sun went? Finally, it dawned on him. You see, listen—listen. When the sun goes down, you know, you know, you know that the sun is going to come up again. But His second coming is more sure than that sunrise that came over the horizon a little while ago. You see, "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Some golden daybreak Jesus will come. He will come. He will come. I say, He will come. He is coming. Oh, as surely as I'm standing here, the sunrise is about to dawn, about the break on this earth. "To you who fear my name shall the Sun or righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

And what happens when the sun comes up? What is going to happen when the Sun of righteousness arises? Well, there are three things that are going to happen.

## A. He Will Turn Darkness to Light

First of all, He's going to darkness to light. Isn't that wonderful? That's what the sunrise does. It turns darkness to light. We stumble in darkness. And even those of us who know the Word of God have so many questions. We ask ourselves why. We'll understand it better by and by. My friend, by and by, when the morning comes, when the saints of God are gathered home, then we'll understand, then we'll know. He's going to turn our darkness to light.

If you wanted to get rid of darkness in a room, how would you do it? Would you curse the darkness, or would you take a broomstick and try to beat the darkness out of the room? Would you take a shovel and shovel it out? Would you take a vacuum cleaner and suck it out? How are you going to get the darkness out of a room? There's no way except one. Turn on the light, isn't that right? Just turn on the light. The darkness cannot stand the light. You see, when Jesus comes, that darkness is going to go. It has to go. It has to go. And when it goes, everything that loves it will go with it.

Do you know what comes out at night? The toads come out at night. The roaches come out at night. The owls come out at night. The bats come out at night. Those are the things that come out at night. When the light comes, they scurry away and the birds begin to sing. What a day it'll be when Jesus comes and all of the wicked and vile and filthy things in the, in the spiritual world flee when the light comes, and we'll understand.

Years ago, I heard of a father who lost the wife of his youth. They were still young. He had a little girl about six years of age whose mother had stepped over to the other side. They'd been to the funeral home. They'd been to the graveside. Friends had offered to come and stay or take the little girl. The dad said, "No, I think it would be better that we spend this night together. We've got to get used to it." The dad went in and prayed with the little girl and put her to bed and then he went and got in his bed. She was there at the door. She said, "Daddy, I don't want to sleep in my room tonight. Can I sleep with you?" He said, "Sure, darling." She got up in bed with him and they prayed again and he turned out the light. It was just one of those nights when it's so dark. You know those? Just not a glimmer of light anywhere. And she said, "Daddy, it's dark in here." He said, "Yes, sweetheart, it's dark." She said, "Daddy, I don't believe I've ever seen it so dark before." He said, "Darling, I don't believe I ever had ever." She said, "Darling." She said, "Daddy, I can't see you." Well, he said, "I know, darling, but I'm here." She said, "Daddy, is your face toward me?" He said, "Yes, sweetheart, my face is toward you." She said, "Thank you, Daddy, and good night," and she went off to sleep.

But he didn't go to sleep. He got out of bed and got down on his knees and he said, "God, it's so dark. I don't believe I've ever seen it so dark." He said, "God, I can't see you. God, is your face toward me?" And God whispered out of heaven, "My child, my face is toward you." He said, "Good night, Lord," and he, too, went to sleep.



Some of you are going through deep darkness, but God loves you. But I'm telling you, my dear friend, one of these days He's going to pull back the shade of night and pin it with a star and open the door of the morning and flood your world with sunlight. I'm going to tell you something, friend. You listen to me. When the sun comes up, the darkness flees, and all that goes with it flees. "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." He's going to turn, dear friend, He's going to turn your darkness to light.

### **B. He Will Turn Sickness to Health**

I'll tell you what else He's going to do. He's going to turn your sickness to health. Oh, there's healing in the second coming of Jesus. See how the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings. Is there healing in the atonement? Yes, there is, but not yet. We're waiting the redemption of the body. We are waiting when Jesus comes and we're going to made like Him, and all sickness and all pain and all infirmity and all distortion and all of the things that come with this sin-cursed world will go when the beaming rays of His love shine upon us. He is the great physician.

And, my dear friend, what a day that will be! You've been to the doctor and he'll tell you, "You'll never be your old self again." That's not so bad, because one day, friend, you'll be made like Him and you'll never want to be your old self again—never want to be your old self again. The psalmist said, "I'll be satisfied when I awaken in thy likeness." When the sun comes up, you're going to turn from darkness to light. You're going to turn from sickness to health.

### **C. He Will Turn Coldness to Warmth**

And I'll tell you something else happens when the sun comes up. You go from coldness to warmth. Oh, the warmth of His presence—the warmth of His presence. I was reading over there this morning in Matthew 24 about verse 12 where it says this: "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold." Do you know everybody's cold today? I mean, somebody comes and knocks on your door at 10:00 at night and says, "Our car is broken down. Can we come in and use your telephone?" what do you do? You say, "O God, should I show kindness to this person and let them in, or is this somebody trying to come in here and rob us or kill us?"

Isn't that a terrible way to feel? It used to be in the evening you'd just walk out at nighttime and stroll in the neighborhood. Now you don't. Used to be when I went to school, you know what my dad told me? My dad said to me, "Son, you obey any adult. Anything an adult tells you to do, you do." And we took care of one another's kids and, brother, I want to tell you, I had neighbors you'd just tell me what to do and what not to do and report to my dad, and my dad would reinforce it. Today, we tell our kids what? Don't talk to strangers. Don't talk to strangers. And don't you do anything that some

stranger tells you to do. Isn't that strange? Why? Because iniquity abounds. We have just closed ourselves in, and the love of many has waxed cold. But, friend, when the sun comes up, oh, the warmth of His love. It's one thing to know His love, but, dear friend, can you imagine to look upon His face? It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

What's going to happen? Listen. Darkness to light, sickness to health, and coldness to warmth when the Sun or righteousness arises with healing in his wings.

### **III. It Will Be a Day of Release**

And so, what is going to be that day? It's going to be a day of retribution. It's going to be a day of restoration. And then it's going to be a day of release. Look at it again. It's so beautiful. It says this in the last part of verse 2: "And you shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet." Now there he's talking about a day of release.

#### **A. There Will Be Liberty for the Children of God**

You see, what he's saying is, first of all, there is going to be liberty for the children of God, liberty. You'll go forth like calves from the stall. Here's the picture. A little calf has been locked up in the barn maybe all winter long. And then we have a beautiful spring day like today. And the farmer says it's time for that calf to be let out of the stall. And so he lets down the barn and here comes this calf. This calf's so full of energy. He's been in that dark, smelly barn barred up and being fed with that stuff that's been hauled to him, and he comes out into the sunlight. He just stands there and just blinks his eyes. He just looks around. He can hardly take it in. There is the green grass. There are the meadows, the blue sky, the flowers, the sunrise, and he goes leaping and dancing and prancing over the meadow.

That is a figure of speech. God says that's what you're going to be like when Jesus comes. You're going to be like a young calf just let out of a stall. You won't be able to take it in as you go prancing over the meadows of glory praising your God. The release, the liberty, that will come to you! Oh, no more inhibitions! No more of the fear of sin! No more being closed in and closed up! Oh, there's going to be liberty for the children of God!

#### **B. There Will Be Maturity for the Children of God**

But not only liberty for the children of God; there's going to be maturity for the children of God. The Bible says, "You shall grow up like a calf." You see, what does a calf grow up to be? An ox. And what is an ox for? It's a beast of service and sacrifice. That is—listen—you are going to be able to serve Jesus like never before when He comes again. You know, don't get the idea, friend, in heaven that we're going to sit around on a fluffy cloud wearing a wooly robe and a rusty halo plucking a harp. That is not heaven. Listen,

friend. You get that idea somewhere, but you didn't get it from the Bible. The Bible says, "His servants shall serve Him."

And when Jesus comes, here's the thing. We're going to be made like Him—like Him. Now, Bobby thinks he's a pretty good choir director, but you ought to see me when I get to heaven. I'm going to be far better than him because the last will be first, you see. And I am going to serve the Lord Jesus in ways that I can't serve Him here. God didn't just save us to sit. He saved us to serve. And when Christ comes, we will grow up. Ephesians says we're going to come to the fullness of the stature of Christ. How wonderful that will be!

### **C. There Will Be Victory for the Children of God**

His coming is a day of liberty. His coming is a day of maturity. And His coming is a day of victory—a day of victory. Look at it. Look again, if you will, in verse 3. He says here, "And you will tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day I do this, saith the LORD of hosts." God says you are going to be the victorious ones. You're not going to be the ones that are walked on, the ones that are despised. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Put in the margin of your Bible Romans 16:20 and listen to what it says. It says, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

Isn't that beautiful? He's going to bruise Satan under your feet. Can you imagine this great malevolent one, this sinister minister of evil, this one we call the devil being bruised under your feet? The devil hopes you'll never learn this truth. But, my dear friend, I want you to get it down in your heart, when Jesus comes, when Jesus comes, we're going to see the final victory over Satan. And Satan is going to be dehorned. He's going to be so debilitated, so ultimately rendered helpless, that you will be able to put your foot on the head of Satan and crush his head. He's the one who has bruised your Savior's heel, but now you with your Savior will bruise and crush his head.

### **Conclusion**

I'm looking forward to that day. I'm a part of the body of Christ. And, dear friend, one of the days Jesus is going to put His foot just where Genesis 3:15 prophesied it would be put a long time ago. Think about it. Now just think. Think. You're saying, "Well, why is everything so messed up? Why do these people get away with all of this?" They haven't gotten away with it. There's coming a day of retribution. Do you believe that? I hope you believe it. They haven't gotten away with it. They have not gotten away with it. The day comes He's going to burn like an oven. It's a future day. It's a day of restoration.

You say, "Has God forgotten me?" Oh, no, my dear friend, God has not forgotten you. He's going to turn your darkness to light. He's going to turn your sickness to health.

And He is going to turn, my dear friend, your coldness to warmth when the sun comes up. And, friend, I want to tell you it's a day of release. You are going to have liberty, maturity, and victory when Jesus comes.

When I was a younger man—notice I said younger—when I was a younger man, I had a radio program every morning. Right after I got out of seminary I had a radio program. I called it “Daybreak.” Sometimes I taped it. Many days I went down to the radio station and I did that program live. I called it “Daybreak,” and I had this for a theme song the singer would sing. I didn't sing it, but the singer would, and here's what it said:

*Some glorious morning sorrow will cease.  
Some glorious morning all will be peace.  
Heartaches all ended, school days all done;  
Heaven will open, Jesus will come.  
Sad hearts will gladden; all shall be bright.  
Goodbye forever to all earth's dark night.  
Changed in a moment, like Him to be,  
Oh, glorious daybreak, Jesus I'll see.  
Oh, what a meeting there in the skies,  
No tears nor crying shall dim our eyes.  
Loved ones united eternally.  
Oh, what a daybreak that morn shall be.*

And then the theme, the chorus:

*Some golden daybreak Jesus will come.  
Some golden daybreak, battles all won,  
He'll shout the victory, break through the blue,  
Some golden daybreak, for me, for you.*

—C.A. BLACKMORE AND CARL BLACKMORE

“Unto you who fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” What a day that will be! You say, “But, pastor, it's so dark.” Friend, it's always darkest just before the dawn, amen? Always darkness just before the dawn. And who knows but today the night of sin will end and the Sun of righteousness will come over the horizon. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Let's pray. Heads are bowed. Eyes are closed. If you don't know the Lord Jesus, let me help you to invite Him into your heart today. Let me help you right now to receive Him. I invite you to pray a prayer like this out of your heart: “Dear God, I know that you love me, and I know that you want to save me.” Just pray that prayer. “God, I know that you love me. I know that you want to save me. Jesus, you died to save me. You promised to save me if I would trust you. I do trust you, Jesus.” Pray that prayer. “I do

trust you, Jesus, with all of my heart. I receive you now as my Lord and Savior. Come into my heart. Forgive my sin. Save me, Jesus.” Pray that. Say it and mean it. “Save me, Lord Jesus.” And then pray this: “Lord Jesus, I’m so weak, but you’re strong. Begin now to make me the person you want me to be, and help me never to be ashamed of you. In your name I pray. Amen.