**Sermon Text – Malachi 1:5 & 11**

**04/14/24**

**God Glorified**

**Introduction ~**

A Russian parable is told of a hunter and a bear. The hunter wanted a fur coat, and the bear wanted a full stomach. As the hunter raised his rifle the bear spoke up, “Isn’t it better to talk than to shoot? What is it that you want? Let’s try to negotiate a compromise.”

Lowering his rifle, the hunter stated, “I want a fur coat!’ The bear replied, “Good, good, now we have a negotiable question. I only want a full stomach.” They sat down and began to negotiate, and after a period of time the bear got up and walked away alone.

The negotiations had been successful. The bear had a full stomach, and the hunter was inside a fur coat.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Compromise is not always bad, but some things simply cannot be compromised on, and as we will see in our passages today, our relationship with God is one of those things.

**Context ~**

We have two passages we’ll be exploring as we meld them together, the first is Malachi 1:5 ~

5 Your eyes shall see,

And you shall say,

‘The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.’[[2]](#footnote-2)

The second is found in Malachi 1:11 ~

11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down,

My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles;

In every place incense *shall be* offered to My name,

And a pure offering;

For My name shall be great among the nations,”

Says the Lord of hosts.[[3]](#footnote-3)

This passage, verse 11, is one of the most difficult passages in the Hebrew Scriptures to interpret.[[4]](#footnote-4) The sentence structure is unusual and confusing, conjunctions seem to be out of place, and how it relates to the previous material is unclear.[[5]](#footnote-5) Probably the best interpretation is that Malachi had in mind the eminent coming of the kingdom of God.[[6]](#footnote-6)

As we prepare to interpret and apply the passages, remember that most of the Book of Malachi is structured around a series of discourses using the repeated pattern of statement-question-motivation.[[7]](#footnote-7) Both of our passages are embedded in verses following this patter. Both verses are addressing a relational problem that God was having with the descendants of Abraham.

As promised God had delivered His people from exile in foreign lands; Jeremiah 29:10 ~

10 For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Even so, things hadn’t been easy for the Jews when they got home. They were surrounded by enemies without, and there was unfaithfulness and greed and abuse within. They were still under foreign rule. And to make things harder, they were surrounded by foreigners that the Babylonians had imported into the land. But… over time their situation had improved. Now, the danger wasn’t hardship, now the danger was comfort. They’d gotten comfortable, and then complacent, and then they began to make moral compromises.

**God’s Love ~**

The message of God delivered through Malachi to the Jews opens with a reminder of God’s loves for His people, Israel.[[9]](#footnote-9) Malachi 1:2a ~

2s “I have loved you,” says the Lord.[[10]](#footnote-10)

This word, “I have loved you” is (אָהַ֤בְתִּי) [[11]](#footnote-11) [’ā hǎḇʹ tî], and comes from the root word, “to love” (אהב) [[12]](#footnote-12) [’hǎḇ].[[13]](#footnote-13) In the context of this passage God’s decision “to love” (אהב) [[14]](#footnote-14) [’hǎḇ] is expressed through strong overtones of God’s covenant with Israel as well as the idea of divine election.[[15]](#footnote-15) That is, God chose the nation of Israel;[[16]](#footnote-16) Deuteronomy 7:6-7 ~

6“For you *are* a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. 7The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;…[[17]](#footnote-17)

God, reminding the Jews of their election, may have served to emphasize God’s freedom to choose or reject.[[18]](#footnote-18) For their part, the Jews looked at their history, their captivity in foreign lands, and their continuing to be under foreign governance, and they are asking how it is that God can say He loves them. God responds by reminding them that He chose them, and that when they come to realize this they will see that God will be magnified beyond the borders of their own land.

**Complacent ~**

Money cannot buy happiness, but it can make the quest a bit more comfortable. The danger is when we settle for money and forget about happiness.[[19]](#footnote-19)

The thing we so easily forget, if we ever knew it, is that true happiness comes from being in relationship with our living God. The Jews seemed to have forgotten this. Instead of honoring the Lord with all of their hearts the Jews began to cut corners, and God calls them out for it; Malachi 1:8 ~

8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice,

*Is it* not evil?

And when you offer the lame and sick,

*Is it* not evil?

Offer it then to your governor!

Would he be pleased with you?

Would he accept you favorably?”

Says the Lord of hosts.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Then, in verse 11, God responds to the Jews’ unacceptable offerings. They aren’t showing their God the same reverence, honor, and fear that they showed to their human governor. Because of their complacency and compromise Malachi takes up the theme of an appropriate “fear” of God.[[21]](#footnote-21) He’ll have a lot to say about this, and some form of the word “fear/reverence” (מוֹרָאִ֜י) [[22]](#footnote-22) [mȏ rā îʹ] occurs seven times in Malachi.[[23]](#footnote-23) This “fear” should be understood as being synonymous with “to honor,” and/or “to respect.”

This kind of fear should then be demonstrated through acceptable sacrifices.[[24]](#footnote-24) It should be demonstrated through whole hearted devotion to God. This was not happening, so God says that the day is coming when the Gentiles will offer acceptable offerings to Him; Malachi 1:11 ~

11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down,

My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles;

In every place incense *shall be* offered to My name,

And a pure offering;

For My name shall be great among the nations,”

Says the Lord of hosts.[[25]](#footnote-25)

**The Sovereign God ~**

The people of Israel, that is, all of Israel, are being addressed.[[26]](#footnote-26) They knew their history, they knew the prophets’ writings. They should have observed that the Lord had been at work through human history, both in the nation of Israel and in the nations around them.[[27]](#footnote-27) They should have been deeply convinced of the reality that He was governing them with grace and patience.[[28]](#footnote-28) Instead, they were treating Him as an afterthought.

So, at verse 11, Malachi makes a significant statement, he tells the Jews that the Lord will be honored, and if they will not do it then it will happen from among the nations outside of Israel.[[29]](#footnote-29) Jesus spoke of this taking place[[30]](#footnote-30) in John 4:23-24 ~

23But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”[[31]](#footnote-31)

From our perspective the hour is still coming, but we also know that it has, in fact, already arrived.[[32]](#footnote-32) Right sacrifices are being offered from the heart, and these are being made from every corner of the planet.[[33]](#footnote-33) We, you and me, are now the fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy, assuming our lives are truly being offered to God as living sacrifices; 1 Peter 2:4-5 ~

4Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, 5you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.[[34]](#footnote-34)

**Extoling ~**

A particular church in the Midwest would have a brief children’s message before the children were dismissed to go to Sunday School. The pastor gathered the children around him, and noticed one little girl who was wearing a beautiful new dress. The pastor complimented her on the dress and asked if it was new.

The little girl, just a little bit shy, leaned toward the pastor and whispered her answer. Unfortunately, when she leaned in she was also speaking directly into the pastor’s lapel-mic. Her response; “Yes, pastor, this is my brand new dress. Mommy says it’s even harder to iron this dress than it is to listen to your sermons.”[[35]](#footnote-35)

Ouch! And yet, our calling is to tell the truth, but especially the truth about God. God will receive the honor and praise, thus He has said and thus it will be. It started with the people of Israel; Malachi 1:5 ~

5 Your eyes shall see,

And you shall say,

‘The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.’[[36]](#footnote-36)

The point here is that someday a repentant Israel will see God’s judgment and will praise Him for His greatness and faithfulness.[[37]](#footnote-37) But this magnifying of God will quickly expand to include all peoples; Malachi 1:11 ~

11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down,

My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles;

In every place incense *shall be* offered to My name,

And a pure offering;

For My name shall be great among the nations,”

Says the Lord of hosts.[[38]](#footnote-38)

God is not just the God of the Jews, nor is He merely “our God”; He is the God of all creation, the God that everyone needs to take into consideration.[[39]](#footnote-39) Israel’s duty was to acknowledge the reality of God’s love for His people.[[40]](#footnote-40) They were called upon to honor the covenant that God had made with them, and it was supposed to happen from the heart.

They failed to do this, and now we find that this glory will not be limited to the Temple or to the Jews.[[41]](#footnote-41) God will be glorified far beyond the borders of the Promised Land, He will be honored among the pagans[[42]](#footnote-42) (that would be most of you and me). It had been God’s intent that the Jews would point people to Himself, but they did not do it. Instead, they became an isolated self-righteous people.

This remains a very real danger for “religious” people. We forget that our acceptance is not based on our goodness, it’s based on God’s grace and mercy. We start to treat people “outside” of our faith as second class. We get proud, and our witness is compromised.

**Priests ~**

God told His people that they were supposed to be a kingdom of priests;[[43]](#footnote-43) Exodus 19:6 ~

6And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

They were supposed to be a people devoted to serving their God in all things at all times. They were supposed to be the ones who would lead the surrounding nations into the worship of the One True God.

This was not supposed to be a religion of going through the motions. It was supposed to be a religion that promoted a reciprocal love relationship between mankind and God. That did not happen. Now that priesthood has been expanded to encompass all who will rightly glorify His name; 1 Peter 2:9-10 ~

9But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.[[45]](#footnote-45)

These verses reveal a breaking through of the barrier that was erected between Jew and Gentile.[[46]](#footnote-46) Now all people are one people in Christ.[[47]](#footnote-47) We find this in Zephaniah 2:11 ~

11 The Lord *will be* awesome to them,

For He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth;

*People* shall worship Him,

Each one from his place,

Indeed all the shores of the nations.[[48]](#footnote-48)

That God is more than a mere regional god, that He is sovereign over all creation, is evident.[[49]](#footnote-49) Evidence of this is written on every page of history.[[50]](#footnote-50) Every culture, nation, society, community, and person who has ever lived, or will yet live, is inevitably moving towards an encounter with the sovereign God.[[51]](#footnote-51) He will receive the worship that He deserves; Revelation 15:4 ~

4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

For *You* alone *are* holy.

For all nations shall come and worship before You,

For Your judgments have been manifested.”[[52]](#footnote-52)

The day is coming when His universal Lordship will become clear, His sovereign intention to subdue the earth and rule over it will be literally realized. He will remove the wicked and He will exalt those who fear Him. His rule will ultimately become an unmistakable reality.[[53]](#footnote-53)

Now, anyone with faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord are seen as God’s people;[[54]](#footnote-54) Ephesians 2:14-16 ~

14For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is,* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, 16and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.[[55]](#footnote-55)

With all of this, we see that God is worthy of our undivided allegiance. The vast majority of the Jews, both before and after the exile under foreign powers, failed to do this. Then, by faith, God made it possible for the Gentiles, the pagans and idolaters and the immoral, to serve Him. There too, mankind has often failed to keep the Lord at the center of their lives.

That will change. During the Messianic age all nations will, indeed, serve the Lord as they travel to Jerusalem;[[56]](#footnote-56) Jeremiah 3:17 ~

17“At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.[[57]](#footnote-57)

**Our Great God ~**

This idea is expressed in both verse 5 and verse 11. Malachi 1:11 says it this way ~

11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down,

My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles;

In every place incense *shall be* offered to My name,

And a pure offering;

For My name shall be great among the nations,”

Says the Lord of hosts.[[58]](#footnote-58)

The word is “great” (גָּדוֹל)[[59]](#footnote-59) [gā ḏȏlʹ], and it’s an adjective conveying the idea of “great” or “mighty”.[[60]](#footnote-60) This greatness is not revealed so much through His judgments as it is through His faithful love for His people.[[61]](#footnote-61) His majesty and wonder and glory is best revealed through His love and mighty acts in obtaining our salvations; Romans 5:8-10 ~

8But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.[[62]](#footnote-62)

Even so, He will not allow His name to be dishonored with unacceptable offerings.[[63]](#footnote-63) If His chosen people will not bring Him offerings that are holy and undefiled, then the pagan nations will do so.[[64]](#footnote-64)

The expression, “from the rising to the setting of the sun” points to the global nature of the worship He will receive at the appointed time.[[65]](#footnote-65) There will be no place on earth that is not involved in honoring Him. The same idea is given in Psalm 50:1-6 ~

1 The Mighty One, God the Lord,

Has spoken and called the earth

From the rising of the sun to its going down.

2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,

God will shine forth.

3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent;

A fire shall devour before Him,

And it shall be very tempestuous all around Him.

4 He shall call to the heavens from above,

And to the earth, that He may judge His people:

5 “Gather My saints together to Me,

Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

6 Let the heavens declare His righteousness,

For God Himself *is* Judge.[[66]](#footnote-66)

For this to be true, then the entire world will need to be sanctified, set apart, to Him and for Him. In the passage’s context today, once again we find God’s greatness revealed through His love, but now manifested through the Lord Jesus;[[67]](#footnote-67) John 3:16 ~

16For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.[[68]](#footnote-68)

**Our Role ~**

I don’t believe the Hebrew Scriptures were preserved as merely a curiosity. I think the lessons we find there have direct applicability for the Church, that’s you and me, today. We become priests of God through Jesus Christ. It’s now our honor and duty to share this good news with those we come in contact with.[[69]](#footnote-69) What’s more, through the Holy Spirit we’re supernaturally empowered to function as priests of God, that draws a line from Malachi to the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost;[[70]](#footnote-70) Acts 2:4 ~

4And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.[[71]](#footnote-71)

What was the purpose of Pentecost? God’s purpose remains the same as it always has, to make Himself known and worshiped among all peoples.[[72]](#footnote-72) It is His purpose to share His love and joy with the world, to deliver mankind from the consequences of their sin so that we can live with Him forever. It’s happening, and it’s happening in ways that we would not expect;[[73]](#footnote-73) Romans 11:11-12 ~

11I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles. 12Now if their fall *is* riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness![[74]](#footnote-74)

Through the descendants of Abraham the Messiah came.[[75]](#footnote-75) He would be and is a light to the nations; [[76]](#footnote-76) Isaiah 42:6-7 ~

6 “I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness,

And will hold Your hand;

I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people,

As a light to the Gentiles,

7 To open blind eyes,

To bring out prisoners from the prison,

Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.[[77]](#footnote-77)

An all-inclusive worship of the Lord is coming, and will be literally fulfilled with the return of Jesus Christ.[[78]](#footnote-78)

**Salvation ~**

How are people able to participate in all of this? It’s not universal and it’s not automatic. The first step is to come to realize we don’t deserve what God is offering. None of us are worthy of entering into a relationship with God; 1 John 1:8 ~

8If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.[[79]](#footnote-79)

There are consequences to defying God, that is, sinning against a holy God. In spite of this, because of His love for us, He has other plans; Romans 6:23 ~

23For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord[[80]](#footnote-80)

God offers an alternative to the wages our life-choices have earned, when we turn to Jesus in faith God saves us simply because He loves us; Ephesians 2:8-9 ~

8For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9not of works, lest anyone should boast.[[81]](#footnote-81)

All that God asks of us is faith, the kind of faith that turns from the past and turns to God. It is the kind of faith that seeks to honor God from the heart, something that does not come naturally to any of us.

At some point we’ll learn that we cannot do this. And then we turn to Jesus and surrender ourselves to Him. We ask Him to do through us what we could never do ourselves; Malachi 1:11c ~

… In every place incense *shall be* offered to My name,

And a pure offering;[[82]](#footnote-82)…

We offer up a sacrifice to God that’s from the heart.

**Application ~**

There are many implications to these passages, but at the most foundational level it’s clear that the Lord is too great to be pleased with unworthy offerings, with partial sacrifices.[[83]](#footnote-83) This conclusion has never lost its significance, and is equally a warning to the Church as it was to the Jews.[[84]](#footnote-84)

That brings it down to us. We with faith in Jesus need to examine our own hearts. The Jews of Malachi’s day were guilty of offering their second or third best in sacrifices to God. For them these offerings were animal sacrifices. For us, under the New Covenant, the sacrifices are something more personal; these sacrifices are living sacrifices to God;[[85]](#footnote-85) Romans 12:1 ~

**12** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.[[86]](#footnote-86)

Is God pleased with your sacrifice? Is all of your life now laid before Him, ready for His review and use? That’s what the Jews failed to recognize, it was always supposed to be more than keeping the rules. Their sacrifices reflected their heart’s attitude.

The same is true today.

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5. Ralph L. Smith, [*Micah–Malachi*](https://ref.ly/logosres/wbc32?ref=BibleBHS.Mal1.6-2.9&off=15344&ctx=1%3a11+~is+one+of+the+most+difficult+verses), vol. 32, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1984), 312. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
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9. Ralph L. Smith, [*Micah–Malachi*](https://ref.ly/logosres/wbc32?ref=BibleBHS.Mal1.2-5&off=3291&ctx=Comment%0a~Malachi+begins+his+book+with+a+m), vol. 32, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1984), 305. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [*The New King James Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nkjv?ref=BibleNKJV.Mal1.2&off=22&ctx=rael+Beloved+of+God%0a~%EF%BB%BF2+%E2%80%9CI+a%EF%BB%BFhave+loved+%E2%80%A2) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Mal 1:2s. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Christo van der Merwe, [*The Lexham Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fhhebint?ref=BibleBHS.Mal1.2&off=2&ctx=%D6%B0%D7%99%D6%B7%D6%96%D7%93+%D7%9E%D6%B7%D7%9C%D6%B0%D7%90%D6%B8%D7%9B%D6%B4%D6%BD%D7%99%D7%83%0a2+~%D7%90%D6%B8%D7%94%D6%B7%D6%A4%D7%91%D6%B0%D7%AA%D6%BC%D6%B4%D7%99+%D7%90%D6%B6%D7%AA%D6%B0%D7%9B%D6%B6%D7%9D%D6%99) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2004), Mal 1:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
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