

October 18, 2020 Malachi

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Intro:

Text: 4:1-6

Point: God's grace will bring about repentance in our lives which is evidenced by radical change.

Malachi's setting is a time of economic recession as well as moral recession. The historical setting for Malachi's prophecy is the return of the exiles. Though not completely free, they were free to rebuild their lives, the Temple, and worship in the Temple.

If normal was the way that Israel lived before the exile, the people of Malachi's day should have had a firm resolve to never return to normal.

Malachi's Message is Driven by Questions.

Seven distinct statements of indictment from God followed by perceived questions from the people of Israel.

Let's see these 7 questions.

1:2 How have you loved us?

1:6 How have we despised your name?

2:14 "For what reason?" (does the Lord reject their offerings)

2:17 How have we wearied Him?

3:7 How can we return? (Begs the issue that they do not think they need to return.)

3:8 How do we rob you?

3:13 What have we spoken against You?

The message: The people returning from exile just did not get it.

The tone of all of these questions indicates an argumentative, rebellious, complacent, and hardened relationship with God. They are so out of touch in their relationship with God that they believe they have done no wrong.

Each of the seven questions has a contemporary application to us. The bottom line in our walk with Christ is not what we think about ourselves, but what God thinks about us.

Malachi's Message is Driven by a Burden.

Here's Malachi's burden for his nation. Nothing had changed!

The problem is that nothing has changed in the hearts and behavior of the people. The same sin that led to the exile was already rampant post the exile. In short, they had not learned anything. They had not been humbled by the exile. In fact, if anything, they had grown more arrogant, argumentative, complacent, flippant, and rebellious toward God. In that context, God raised up another prophet with a "burden" (oracle of verse 1 means burden) for Godliness.

Does this sometimes happen to us. We are convicted about our sin, but nothing changes. We make a new commitment, but nothing changes.

So What?

Take advantage of His grace; Don't take advantage of His grace!

The issue of Malachi, after the exile, is the same issue as the prophets, before the exile. Repentance! Repentance is absolutely essential for salvation. "Everyone must repent."

Repentance is the heart of John the Baptist's message—Mark 1:15

Repentance is the heart of Jesus' message= Repent or perish—Luke 13:5

Repentance is the message of the resurrection—Acts 2:38, 3:19

Repentance is the message of Paul—Acts 26:20, 17:30 on Mars Hill "God is now declaring that all men everywhere should repent."

Repentance is the consistent message of the Bible. Repentance is absolutely essential for salvation. Some might say that this sounds contradictory to grace. No, it is consistent with grace because only by God's grace can we be delivered from sin, which is at the very heart of repentance. Remember the definition—change!

Repentance should be obvious in the life of one who has been saved.

Acts 26:20 says that when a person repents that person ought to “show deeds appropriate to repentance.”

It’s in this statement that we begin to see what repentance really is.

- (1) Repentance is not the same as feeling sorry about your sin.
- (2) Repentance is not the same as penance “I’ll make it up.”
- (3) Repentance is not the same as reformation. “I’ll try to do better.”

So, what is repentance?

Repentance is being convicted by Christ about sin in your life, confessing that sin as wrong, and living a changed life as the result of the conviction and the confession.

In his book, *In the Heavens*, Dr. Harry Ironside tells the story of an attempted assassination of Queen Elizabeth I. The woman who sought to do so dressed as a male page and secreted herself in the queen’s chamber awaiting the convenient moment to stab the queen to death. She did not realize that the queen’s attendants would be very careful to search the rooms before Her Majesty was permitted to retire. They found the woman hidden among the gowns and brought her into the presence of the queen. She realized that humanly speaking, her case was hopeless. She threw herself down on her knees and pleaded and begged the queen as a woman to have compassion on her, a woman, and to show her grace. Queen Elizabeth looked at her coldly and quietly said, "If I show you grace, what promise will you make for the future?" The woman looked up and said, "Grace that hath conditions, grace that is fettered by precautions, is not grace at all." Queen Elizabeth caught it in a moment and said, "You are right. I pardon you out of my grace." And they led her away, a free woman. It is said that from that moment Queen Elizabeth had no more faithful, devoted servant than that woman who had intended to take her life.

That is exactly the way the grace of God works in the life of an individual--he or she becomes a faithful servant of God.

Point: God's grace will bring about repentance in our lives which is evidenced by radical change.