

Sermon Series: The Minor Prophets
Sermon: Book of Malachi
Scripture reading: Malachi 3:6-10
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church
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Turn in your Bibles to the book of Malachi. If you are not sure where that is, turn to Matthew 1 and then go left a page. It's the last book of the Old Testament.

This short book was written about 500 years before Christ during the time of Nehemiah and Ezra. The exiles have come back from Babylon to Jerusalem- about 100 years before. They have set up the temple again and began worship. But there are problems.

The exile didn't seem to change them in any way.

They are back to their old ways.

So, God confronts them about their unfaithfulness in several areas, through the words of a prophet called Malachi.

The goal of the book is to urge the people to turn back and BE FAITHFUL TO GOD and his word in every area of their lives.

The most important sentences in the book is [Chapter 3 verses 6-7](#).

[“For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and](#)

have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.”

We saw this same thing last week in Zechariah. So, I think God is trying to tell us something.

In the book, there is a list of **6 debates** God has with them. There’s a pattern to these discussions that God, through the prophet is having with the people. It is:

- God says something
- They respond
- God gives an answer.

Let’s dive in.

1. GOD starts the 1st conversation in [verse 2](#).

GOD says: “I have loved you.” ([1:1-5](#))

The PEOPLE respond: “**How have you loved us?**”

The people don’t really feel that God has loved them. He disciplined the previous generation for their idolatry and their rejection of his law by sending the Babylonian army to take over and take them into slavery. They have come back and they’re not as wealthy. The land is not producing a lot of food. They don’t feel God’s love. But a Father that loves his children will not let them go their own way...down a path of destruction. A Father will discipline the child he loves. They say, “How have you loved us?”

GOD'S ANSWER: **"I chose you."** I chose Jacob, not Esau. I *could've* chosen Esau, but I didn't. I made my covenant with you, Israel. I revealed myself to you, Israel. God has loved them by choosing them and making them his own. He begins by reaffirming his love for them even though they have not loved him. They are **FAITHLESS IN THEIR GRATITUDE.**

2. In the 2nd conversation God shows them that they've been **FAITHLESS IN THEIR WORSHIP.**

GOD says: "You've despised my name." (1:6-10)

The PEOPLE respond: **"How have we despised your name?"**

GOD'S ANSWER: **"By offering polluted food on my altar."** They are giving God their leftovers and not their best. God's law tell them what they should give. They've ignored it. They're bringing rotten grain, rotten produce. The priests are also offering blind sheep, sick sheep, bulls with broken legs. They even offered stolen animals. (verse 13). The priests have neglected and ignored the Law of God. They've despised God. God says that it would be better for the doors of the temple to be closed, than to offer what they are offering. (verse 10) In vain they worship God.

There's something else they do to show they despise God. The priests have not only done wrong but are teaching people the wrong things. [Read 2:7-8.](#)

What about you?

What's the state of your heart when you worship God?
Are you giving God a little left over or are you giving
God your best?

In the first discussion God affirms his love for them even
though they are **FAITHLESS IN THEIR GRATITUDE.**
What we see **in the second discussion** is: they have
been **FAITHLESS IN THEIR WORSHIP.**

3. In the 3rd conversation God show them that they
have been **FAITHLESS IN THEIR
RELATIONSHIPS.**

GOD says: “**I no longer accept your offerings.**”

The PEOPLE respond: “**Why don't you?**”

GOD'S ANSWER: **2 things.**

- “**You've married women who worship idols.**” You have covenanted yourselves to foreign gods and broken covenant with me.
- “**You've divorced your wives.**” You have broken the covenant with your wife and left her just like you have left God.

So we know from [Nehemiah 13](#) as well that many men intermarried with women who worshipped idols and it seems that divorce was rampant.

Broke their covenant with their wives.

Broke their covenant with their God.

What about you? Are you honoring God in your most important relationships? Your marriage?

The people were:

Faithless in their gratitude.
Faithless in their worship.
Faithless in their relationships.

4. In the 4th conversation God shows them that they've been **FAITHLESS IN THEIR THEOLOGY.**
(2:17)

GOD says: **“You have wearied me with your words.”**
The PEOPLE respond: **“How have we wearied you?”**
GOD’S ANSWER: **“By saying, ‘Where is the God of justice.’”** “God seems to love the wicked.” “Not fair to us.”

Question: Is God fair?

Question: What do they deserve?

They were so faithless in their THEOLOGY that they thought they deserved something from God.

God says, “You want justice? You want the God of justice to come?” (3:1) You want me to make things right? I will make things right by coming myself to the temple. I will bring justice against sin, not by causing you to pay for it, but by Jesus paying for it. I will send a messenger of this covenant between us and he will purify the priesthood and offer something pleasing to me.

They (and us) deserve nothing from God but judgment but he will be faithful and make things right through Jesus Christ.

5. In the 5th conversation God says they've been **FAITHLESS IN THEIR GIVING.**

GOD says: “**You’re robbing me!**”

The PEOPLE respond: “**How are we robbing you?**”

GOD’S ANSWER: “**In your tithes and contributions.**

They had stopped contributing 10% to the temple.

Maybe they’ve done what we do. They’ve said, “I can’t afford to give 10%. There’ll be nothing left for me.”

But in his rebuke there is still love.....

God says they should test him! ([Read verses 10-12](#)).

Question: How much of what they had was really theirs?

Question: How much of what you have actually belongs to you?

100% is his. None of it is ours.

But he says we are to give 10% at least.

The firstfruits of our labor. Are you paying your tithe?

Are you contributing to the needs of this church and to God’s kingdom?

Are you robbing God?

They were faithless in their **gratitude**.

They were faithless in their **worship**.

They were faithless in their **marriages**.

They were faithless in their **theology**.

They were faithless in their **giving**.

6. Lastly, in the 6th conversation God says they’re **FAITHLESS IN THEIR SERVICE.**

Look in your Bibles at chapter [3 verse 13-15](#)

GOD says: **“You’ve spoken against me.”**

The PEOPLE respond: **“How have we spoken against you?”**

GOD’S ANSWER: **“You said it’s a waste of time to serve me.”**

-Well, is it a waste of time to worship the Lord rightly and follow his commands?

-Is it a waste of time to think carefully how we instruct people in the word? I mean can’t we just do *something*.

-Is it a waste of time to keep ourselves from idols....to keep ourselves from anything that would steal our hearts away from God?

-Is it a waste of time to stay faithfully married?

-Is it a waste of time to make sure our theology is right?

-Is it a waste of time to give God 10% of my income?

I’m not really robbing God. We can’t afford to give 10%! Our kid’s school is expensive and living in HK is hard.

-What’s the point of serving God?

Doesn’t really seem to be making my life better!

I mean, do we have to be so serious?

Let’s finish with looking at the rest of the book and some verses we skipped on purpose.

{In the end of chapter 3 and in chapter 4, God says “it is worth it to serve me because my purposes will stand. I WILL make a distinction between those who are mine and those who aren’t. There will be judgment. It will be really good for those who fear me and really bad for those who don’t.}

GOD’S GOT A BOOK.
THERE ARE NAMES IN IT AND THERE ARE NAMES MISSING.

This is a big deal.

You remember I said that the key verse is 3:6-7

““For I the LORD do not change; Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.”

How are they to return.....????

Well, it’s quite simple. As a prophet, he does his job and points them back to the covenant.

He tells them in 4:4.

4 “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

They had been:

FAITHLESS IN THEIR GRATITUDE.
FAITHLESS IN THEIR WORSHIP
FAITHLESS IN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS
FAITHLESS IN THEIR THEOLOGY
FAITHLESS IN THEIR GIVING
FAITHLESS IN THEIR SERVING

Why? How'd they get there?

Because they didn't take God's word seriously.
They relaxed.

Don't relax!

So, I have a question for you today.....

How serious are you about doing what God's word says?

Are you reading the Bible?

Are you marinating in the Bible?

How can we be truly grateful?

How can we know how to worship God rightly?

How can we honor God in our relationships?

How can we ensure that our theology is right?

How can we have God's perspective on giving?

How can we have the right attitude in our serving?

.....if we aren't hearing from God in his word.

No matter whether you don't know the Lord at all or you've drifted away or you're being unfaithful in one of these things like the people in Malachi.

The Lord doesn't change.

He says **'Return to me and I'll return to you.'** (3:6)

How do we return?

Come to Jesus Christ. He will change your heart.