

Home Group Leader's Notes
Week of September 10, 2023
Malachi 2:17 – 3:6

Sermon Series: *Intensity!*

For this week, we are going to combine what we learn from Sunday's message by Pastor Bill Born and our own studies and discussion. Let's dig in

LISTENING TO GOD IN HIS WORD

Malachi was written to the Jewish people who were back in their land after being in a God-imposed exile. About 100 years have passed since their return and this and other minor prophets reveal that they are not living according to God's covenant with them. The first two chapters identifies multiple gross violations of how God had commanded them to live.

Read Malachi 2:17-3:5 and consider the following questions.

What is the LORD's opening statement and the following question of the people? How does the LORD answer their question?

You have wearied the LORD with your words.

"How have we wearied him?" you ask.

What wearies the Lord? (2:17)

By saying, "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them" or "Where is the God of justice?"

Malachi lists numerous sinful practices in the first two chapters. They had abandoned faith in God and it was obvious. Most importantly, God wanted an ongoing relationship with them but they had disavowed the covenant.

The people thought that God was favoring the wicked, and asked, "Where is the God of justice?" How do you respond when you hear their question? (Notice God's words in chapters one and two and especially 2:17.)

It is easy to point to the lack of justice in our world right now. We hate seeing in the lawlessness. At the same time that we want God to punish the evil we see, we are also recipients of the grace of God.

What is God's main answer to their question in 3:1-5? When will justice be served up?

God answer was to send His Son, Jesus, to die in our place and clothe us in his Righteousness. It is by grace through faith that we do not face the wrath of God.

Justice will be served when Jesus returns. He will subdue the nations opposed to him, lock up the devil, and judge those who have refused to bow the knee.

What / who will save people from judgment? (3:1-4)

Because we are this side of the cross, we know that Jesus and only Jesus can save people from judgment. This what it means to be saved or rescued, i.e. we are rescued from facing the wrath of God. This is our message, our purpose, our mission – to make this known. People can turn to Jesus and no longer live in sin, in guilt, and shame. Instead, they can live knowing they have peace with God as His children.

Most agree that John the Baptism is the “messenger who will prepare the way” in 3:1. What was his primary message? (Mark 1:4) What does that mean?

John’s mission was to call people to repentance. The word “metanoia” means to change one’s thinking about God, self, sin, etc.. Therefore, John was called people to turn from sin to God. He was preparing the way, the path to faith in Jesus.

If Malachi 3:2-4 is speaking of Jesus, what did He do for the people and for us?

² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, ⁴ and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

From these verses, we see that Jesus will purify those who turn to Him. This will make their worship to be righteous and acceptable to the Lord.

What happens to those who do not “fear” the LORD? (3:5 and see also Exodus 34:7)

⁵ “So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty.

Those who do not “fear the LORD” will face trial before the righteous judge and be found guilty of multiple sins.

What is the good news of 3:6? What do we know about the heart of God? What does God most want for all people? (see also Exodus 34:6, 2 Peter 3:9, and 1 John 1:8-9)

“I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.” 3:6

In God’s own words spoken to Moses: ““The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

God does not change. He still wants the same thing, i.e. that we would repent, turn to Him and find forgiveness and love.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

Pastor Bill spoke into these questions. If you didn't get to, please listen to his message.

The people in Malachi's time were complaining about the lack of justice. What do we see today in America? How do people respond to the idea of judgment in general? (2:17-3:2)

Do you think that we who are striving to reach people with the gospel talk too much about judgment or not enough? What should we say if anything? (see 3:5)

How is self-righteousness manifested in us today? (see 2:17)

PRAYER

- There are Oh so many people suffering right now at Trinity. Here is a list of people to keep in prayer:
 - Jo Elliott, Jan Burgess, and Pat Derksen recently lost their husbands
 - JoAnn Nash is recovering from infection
 - Diane Hill has a serious aneurysm surgery soon
 - Karen Shoemaker had hip replacement
 - Stan Mattson is in hospital in Connecticut with blood infection
 - Emma Alloway began proton therapy 5 days a week
 - Bob Larivee is in chemotherapy
 - John Stark is beginning chemo for lymphoma
- Please remember to pray for your global partners
- Please pray for Trinity as we have many new people with whom we want to connect and serve
- Please pray for our middle and high schoolers who are growing up in a troubled world