

Home Group Leader's Notes
Week of September 24, 2023
Malachi 3:13-4:6

Sermon Series: *Intensity!*

We finish Malachi this week with a powerful message. Please be sure to listen to the message and study the passage for yourself.

SHARE IT

What kinds of reactions do people in our nation have to the fact that God will one day judge every person? Have you ever discussed something like this with a friend?

The final words in the Old Testament remind us that a "day" of judgment is coming. While this is unpopular or even hated, it is the truth and it would be unloving to not be clear about this. How we communicate matters.

LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

This is our final study through Malachi. As we have seen, God speaks to the questions and attitudes of the remnant people of God. He addressed . . .

- their lack of faith and obedience
- the failure of the priests
- the violation of the covenant of marriage
- His plan to offer mercy through Jesus
- their need to remember God's ownership of all things and their call to proper worship
- and this week's call to stay faithful to God and remember that He will one day judge the world based on who revere's God

Read Malachi 3:16-4:6 and consider the following questions:

What were the people wrestling with in Malachi's times? (3:14-15)

They saw the prosperity of the wicked (cf. Psalms 73) and wrestled with the idea that they were serving the LORD and not living in the luxury or ease of this world.

How did God address what they were feeling? How might this speak to what God understands about me and my world?

God acknowledged that there was a difference in how people lived and that following Him / revering Him was a contrast to how the world lives.

The call to sacrifice and suffer by following Jesus is throughout the New Testament. We would do well to remember and even take joy in a willingness to suffer for Jesus.

We will see this focus in the fourth branch of discipleship in the upcoming series on Discipleship Vision presented by Bill Born in October.

What does God say about those who choose to serve Him? (Malachi 3:14, 17-18, see also Colossians 3:23-24)

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ."

What was God's final command in the Old Testament? (4:4) How was that helpful to the people of that day?

Malachi / God reminded them that Moses had given them instructions in how to love, worship, and obey God and that they should continue in what God had revealed even though they were living in a corrupt world.

What was God's final promise of the Old Testament? (4:5-6) How was that helpful to the people who were struggling? (3:14)

God has a master plan that includes blessing those who revere Him and judging those who don't.

According to what we have read in Malachi, what is the chief division between all people? (2:5; 3:5, 16) How do you understand this?

As above, those who revere Him or don't and those who serve him or don't.

For us today, those who have repented and believe and follow Jesus in obedience or those who don't.

WHAT ABOUT ME? WHERE DO I STAND?

Malachi is a dialogue between God and His people. Two final questions arise that we must all ask:

(1) Am I among those who revere God? When God judges the world, will I be counted as one who turned to and trust in God? Have I humbled myself, repented of my sinful ways, and put my faith and life in Jesus? (2) In this dark and arrogant world, am I staying strong in my love for God and the obedience that is born out of love? Or, am I fading in my faith when I see the world's pleasure and goods? Do I live to serve God and believe I am His treasured possession, here to serve Him with my life?

DISCUSS TOGETHER

What comes to mind when you read, the signpost at the crossroads reads: "Will you SERVE the Lord?" (Doug Baker) How would people in your world respond to this?

Have you ever felt like the people of Malachi's time – Why am I serving the Lord when so many others seem happy serving themselves? Why am I focusing on reaching people or giving away my money or caring for others? What is the path to thinking this way?

What is your understanding of "the day" in "On the day when I act" (3:17) or "Surely the day is coming?" What is our responsibility concerning "the day?"

This is the final week of our walk through "Malachi." How might this final book of the Old Testament also fit the church or Christians of our times?

PRAYER

Reading through Malachi should call us to prayer. Please pray for God's will, ways, and kingdom.

- Pray that Trinity and the churches in the I.E. will follow God in unity and courage of faith
- Pray that we heed the call of Malachi to revere His Name, His Word, and His ways
- Pray for our leaders, marriages, tithes and offerings, obedience and perseverance
- Pray for us to be reaching the world that will soon face God's judgment

Praying that God gives you insight and passion to help God's family live with conviction and passion as they follow Jesus,

Steve