

Post-Exile Prophets
SHUT THE DOORS!
Thursday, October 2
Reading: Malachi 1:9-14

Malachi 1:10 *"Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on My altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands."*

We have this idea that half-hearted or self-centered worship is better than no worship at all. This is what the Israelites believed. Despite the defective and defiled sacrifices they had been offering to God (1:6-8), the people would still "plead with God to be gracious to us." They expected God to answer their prayers even though they were being callous and careless in their attitude toward Him.

The defiled sacrifices revealed their defiled hearts. God calls their offerings "contemptible" (1:7) and "useless" (1:10). Not only will God refuse to accept their sacrifices, He wishes they would just close the whole temple down instead of making these vile sacrifices coming from sinful hearts.

The worst part was that the priests and people knew their sacrifices didn't meet God's holy standards, but they didn't care. They considered God's demand for their best to be "a burden" and stuck up their noses at God's law. (1:12). Following their priests' example, the people thought nothing of cheating God of the worship and offerings He deserved. They broke their vows and kept the best, which should have been offered to God in worship, for themselves (1:14).

Despite their actions, God proclaims, "My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets." God's purpose in choosing Israel as His people was that they would declare His glory and greatness to the world. But Israel was failing at this task and were actually tarnishing God's name instead of magnifying it.

One day the whole world will honor and worship God, the "great King." It is the duty of the church today to share God's love and grace with the world. The apostle Peter wrote:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9).

'Worship' without heart-devotion is worthless! We are as guilty as Israel when we offer God our leftovers instead of our best. It may sound harsh, but God would rather see a church close, then see it filled with empty-hearted people who are 'playing' at Christianity. Why? Because a church that is not truly honoring God...a church that is focused on the happiness of people instead of the glory of God...is giving God a bad reputation and leading people away from the truth of the gospel. Does your church point people to Jesus? How about you? Is your worship, service, and giving pleasing to God?

"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16)