

# Advent 2018

## Preparing in Silence

### Malachi 4

#### Day of the Lord Described

- Ridding of evil (v.1)
- Healing in its wings (v.2)
- Justice (v.3)
- Order (v.4)

#### Day of the Lord Announced (v.5-6)

- The prophet comes before
- The prophet comes like Elijah (in the power of the Spirit)
- The prophet has social impact

#### What do we learn in the silence?

##### God's desires are still legitimate in the silence

- We don't stop pursuing what He says is best and right
  - If lying is still lying, then justice is still justice
- Pastorally, what do you *know* you're supposed to be doing?
  - Examples – go and wait in Jerusalem until HS comes, go to Galilee and He will meet you, go wash in pool of Siloam
  - What if God won't say more until we fully obey?
  - Waiting (in most cases) has nothing to do with inactivity and passivity but the kind of active patience that positions us for what God is going to do next by shaping our character or sharpening a skill
    - Joseph – arrogant teen to humble leader; unskilled brat to administrative genius
    - Trent – college ministry to Saturday nights; speaker to preacher to pastor

##### God's movement is still active in the silence

- We are tempted to think that because we can't see God moving He's not at work
  - Language – united under Alexander the Great (331 BC)
  - Culturally – Hellenization gave people common framework
  - Spiritually – Antiochus Epiphanes persecution (Sabbath, Circumcision, Torah all forbidden as capital crime) made people long for Messiah and get used to living

in different culture that hated them – God hasn't left us even though it's pretty awful

- Politically – set up Roman Empire (63 BC)
- Governmentally – roads, rule by Herod the Great (Temple)
- We are tempted to think that because we can't see God moving we need to take matters into our own hands
  - Abram and Sarai, Moses and the rock, Uzzah and the Ark, you and me
- But the call is clear: be faithful in doing what you *know* to do

### **God's promise is still true in the silence**

- The prophet came
- The Messiah came
- God is still ruling the world

Psalm 89.8 – surrounded by faithfulness

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. When is a time in your life when you sensed God was being silent? What circumstances surrounded it? What (if any) was the outcome of it?
2. When (in what circumstances or in what season) do you find it hardest to obey God? Why do you think that is? What good have you seen come from obedience in that time? What negative outcomes have you seen when you don't obey in that time?
3. When waiting, which do you find harder to believe: God is shaping your character or sharpening a skill for the next stage?
4. When waiting, do you find it more tempting to believe God is **not** at work or to believe that you should take matters into your own hands? How has that expressed itself? What was the outcome? Review the biblical examples above (Abram and Sarai – Gen. 16, Moses and the rock – Num. 20, Uzzah and the Ark – 2 Sam. 6). Any insights or parallels you gain that apply to your life?
5. Read Psalm 89.1-8. What were some of the things that Ethan (the psalmist) did while He waited? What is one action you need to imitate?