

Audio Transcript of Sermon
November 2, 2019
Don't Cheat God

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. We recently observed the Feast of Tabernacles and last week we looked at Malachi chapter four to see about this curse that would come upon all of the entire earth if man did not turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.

The Book of Malachi is a book of relationships and it teaches us how we should have relationships with other people, as well as with God. We'll take a look today at Malachi as well as other verses from the New Testament to get a better understanding of what God would expect from us in our relationship with God as well as other people.

So, we'll begin today by taking a look at Malachi chapter one verse one, that's Malachi one verse one .

Malachi 1:1-14

- 1. The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.**
- 2. I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,**
- 3. And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.**
- 4. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.**
- 5. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.**

These verses are a warning to Edom. Edom, the children of Esau always felt less than the children of Jacob. They saw Israel grow in power and wealth and majesty, and they did not see the same growth within their own people. There was jealousy, and the children of Edom wanted nothing more than to be very similar and just like the children of Jacob. God tells the Edomites that even though

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they would try and build up and make their nation great, that he would bring them down and at the border it would be very clear for the children of Edom to see the greatness of the children of Israel.

In verse six, Malachi shifts his message slightly to offerings made at the temple. Let's take a look at Malachi one verse six.

6. A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

With God, that's a pretty big charge against a priest. People think priests are people who honor and worship and revere God. Here, that's not what is being said. The exact opposite is being said of these priests. The LORD is saying the Priests despised His name, and the priests are challenging that assertion asking, "How have we despised your name?" We get an answer beginning with verse seven.

7. Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.

So, for the bread offering, an impure bread was provided upon the altar. Verse eight.

8. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.

We're talking about animals that are blind, animals that are physically unable to move easily around, animals that are sick, and to offer these animals, God said that this was evil. The animals themselves are not evil. There is nothing evil about a disability such as blindness. There is no evil in lacking the physical ability to get from one area to another. There is no evil in being sick. The fault was not with the animal, the fault was with the perception of the person. In making an offering to God, that offering is supposed to be your very best, and these individuals were trying to trick God. They were trying to save the very best for themselves giving a

blind, sick, or lame animal as a sacrifice. Again, the problem was not with the animal itself, but with the perception. Sadly, in 2019, we look at ourselves as being an inclusive society, people with disabilities often find themselves on the outside looking in, excluded from employment and opportunities in society. Not much has changed from the time of ancient Israel to the modern era. We think we are much better in many ways, but the reality is we're pretty much the same. Sadly, as a society, we look at individuals who may have a disability, who may have a physical inability to move around, and those who may be sick as somehow being less. And, it was precisely for that perception that it was wrong for those animals to be offered to God. Again, there is nothing wrong with having a disability, with being sick, or having a physical inability in moving around. Verse nine.

9. And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts.

10. Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

Because the people were trying to trick God, God did not respect their offering. Because the people did not want to offer the very best to God, God did not respect their offering. God is magnificent and in charge of the entire universe. God deserves nothing less than our very best in what we do. In all things that we do with God, we must do our very best. There is no fooling God in what we do day in and day out. Let's look at verse eleven.

11. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

That's God intention, that God be known throughout the entire world. God is not a God who is to be kept solely for people who are Christians. God is a God who wants to be the savior of all of mankind and to bring everyone to salvation. Let's look at verse twelve, His concern for the children of Israel.

12. But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.

13. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.

The children of Israel became bored with serving God. The children of Israel became accustomed to the routine of worshipping God. They saw no awe in God. They did not worship God. Again, the problem with offering an animal that has a disability that has an inability to move from one area to another area, that might be sick, is simply when this animal is being offered, it is an act of deception. Satan the devil deceived Eve, we know how that turned out and its impact on society as we know it today. Verse fourteen.

14. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.

In our relationship with God, we cannot deceive God. God is beyond deception. We cannot lie to God in our workings with Him, in our relationship with Him. We have to be above board and honest. God will respect that honesty with Him, as long as it is coupled with this dreadful and great awe that God said the heathen had.

So, the problem with the children of Israel, they became tired of worshipping God. They got tired of giving God the very best in their life. They tried to deceive God. They gave God instead of the very best of their flock, the sickly animal, the animal that had the disability, the animal that had a physical inability to move around in the pen. And again, those are problems not because there is any problem with having a disability, or having a physical inability to move about, or being sick, the problem was with the attempt to deceive God. That's where the problem came from. That's where the sin came in. And it contrasts greatly to what we see in the life of Jesus Christ and the ultimate sacrifice he paid for our sins. Let's look at first Peter one verse seventeen, first Peter one verse seventeen.

1 Peter 1:17-21

17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

18. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

21. Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Our salvation that we have today is not something that can be bought. There is no amount of money we can give God, that we can give to a church, that we can give to a priest that will guarantee our salvation. Salvation is not something that can be bought with money. That's simply a vain idea that has been around since the beginning of time. Mankind is corrupt, that will never go away. People will always see the opportunity in trying to bribe their way into a better tomorrow.

Our way into the better tomorrow, which we looked through our observance of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, is through the precious blood of Christ. And, when he was offered as the ultimate sacrifice once and for all, if you look again at verse nineteen, it was as lamb without blemish and without spot. When we commit ourselves to God it is with the very best and that is what God expects of us and there are no exceptions with God in that regard.

Let's look at an extension of this concept by taking a look at Ephesians five verse twenty-seven. Later in today's sermon, we'll look a little more deeply into Ephesians five. But speaking of the relationship with the church in verse twenty-seven, Jesus Christ,

Ephesians 5:27

27. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Even in our path toward salvation, and ultimately being part of God's Kingdom in that world tomorrow as we observed during the Feast of Tabernacles, the ultimate goal for us is to also be not having a spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish, matching the very character that Jesus Christ had when Jesus Christ was sacrificed as the offering for sin once and for all.

Sometimes when people take a look at the requirement to offer a sacrifice that has no blemish on it, they focus solely on the disability and the physical diversity that is being discussed and they overlook the more important component that God does not want us to try and deceive Him. God requires and expects and will accept nothing less than the very best from us.

With the knowledge that God would only accept those animals that were without spot or wrinkle, or without blemish, what should our perspective be as we are in a society that has people with disabilities? We need to accept and understand that disabilities as well as physical diversity are a natural part of the human condition. If you are a person and you do not see yourself as having a disability at this moment in your life, all you need to do is wait a few decades, and by the time you are old, you will likely have many disabilities that limit your physical ability. Disabilities and physical diversity are a natural part of the human condition. There is absolutely no getting around that. Disability is not a result of sin. I'm aware that decades, and decades, and decades ago, some people thought that was a correct teaching. That is a significant error in teaching. Disability is not a result of sin. It is a natural part of the human condition. We take a look at passages in the Bible, and when we read these passages, it's easy to see where these false errors came from in understanding the Bible. We'll take a look at Mark chapter two verse one, Mark chapter two verse one.

Mark 2:1-12

- 1. And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.**
- 2. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.**

Jesus showed up, word got out on the street that Jesus had arrived, people came to see Jesus. There was no place for people to sit, there was barely standing room. Verse three.

3. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

And the reason they brought his person of the palsy to him was simply the person of palsy simply couldn't move from his prior location to where Jesus was. He had the physical inability to do that. Verse four.

4. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

These were determined people. They knew there was something special about Jesus. They weren't going to let their friend who had the palsy in the bed be denied access to Jesus. When they could not get him through the door, which was Plan A, they came up with Plan B. And in this case, Plan B was let's break a hole in the roof, and let's lower him down on his bed. If it were my house, I would much rather have people make room for this person and let him come in through the front door. But that's not what happened in this case. Verse five.

5. When Jesus saw their faith,

And it's an act of deep faith when you're denied entrance through the front door to go up on the roof, break a hole in the roof, and lower your friend down on his bed to the floor where Jesus was. That's an incredible act of faith and Jesus recognized it as an act of faith.

he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

And because of verse five, there are many people who think that disability is a result of sin. We'll learn in a few more verses that's not why Jesus said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Verse six.

- 6. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,**
- 7. Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?**
- 8. And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?**

We would say today, Jesus had a “Spidey sense” about him. He knew when people were questioning what he was saying. As a teacher, when you are speaking and teaching your students, you learn different looks and expressions on people’s faces that give you a physical cue that you need to go back and explain in greater detail or in a different way. Verse nine.

- 9. Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?**
- 10. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)**

So, everyone has sins and when this person of great faith was lowered down through a hole in the roof to see Jesus, Jesus wanted everyone to know that he had been given power by God to forgive sins here on earth. But the fact that Jesus said to the person who had palsy that his sins were forgiven does not mean that disability and sickness and illness are caused by sin. Jesus acknowledged in verse nine. He could have also simply said, arise and take up thy bed and walk. In other words, “You no longer have your disability.” Instead he said, “Your sins be forgiven you.” Verse eleven.

- 11. I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.**
- 12. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.**

Jesus healed this person in such a public way to bring attention to the fact that as the Son of Man, He had been given power to forgive sins on earth. But again, whether he would have said, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” or, “Arise, take up thy bed and walk,” Jesus had the power to say both and get the same results. That’s

why in verse eleven we say, “Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.” Both would have been a proper way for Jesus to talk with this individual.

The miracle of healing did not stop with Jesus. In the New Testament in the Book of Acts chapter three beginning with verse one we see the story of a man who had his disability removed.

Acts 3:1-10

1. Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

That would be about three in the afternoon.

2. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

This is a person who had a developmental disability, he was born with his disability. He did not have the ability to walk, so he was carried to the gate of the temple. And there he sat all day begging for alms, donations, a plea for help and assistance. Verse three. This person who seen Peter and John about to go into the temple, so he asked Peter and John for financial assistance.

3. Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

4. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

5. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

6. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

So, Peter and John had the ability to call on the name Jesus Christ to do a miracle and have people get up and walk. In the case of this man in verse seven,

7. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

8. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9. And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

10. And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

So, in verse six when Peter gave the command, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk," he did not say that this person had sins that had been forgiven in the process. It was about this same time that the Christians were being persecuted for their beliefs, and the biggest person who the Christians feared the most was somebody by the name of Saul, and Saul would later on go and become the Apostle Paul. And in his conversion, Jesus saw Saul on the road to Damascus, and a different kind of miracle took place. Let's take a look at Acts chapter nine verse one.

Acts 9:1-9

1. And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

If Saul were alive today, putting out breathings and threatenings, he would probably be arrested for making terroristic threat, but back in this day it was perfectly OK to threaten people with religious differences. Verse two.

2. And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

So, he wanted to have documentation that would give him permission to bring any Christians back to Jerusalem.

3. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

All of a sudden, there is this huge bright light, boom, the spotlight is shining on Saul.

4. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5. And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

That would be a pretty incredible thing to have happen. Thousands of years ago there was no iPhone that could broadcast a sound out of somebody's back pocket. If you heard somebody, it was because somebody was nearby speaking to you. This was incredible for these people. Verse eight.

8. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

9. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

Saul was blinded through this visitation by Jesus. God, through a miracle caused Saul to have a temporary disability. Saul was blinded for three days and three nights. Looking at some of the Apostle Paul's later writings, there's reference to Paul using large letters. People who provide accommodations to people with visual impairments and disabilities know that when somebody has a problem with their eyesight a very accommodation are large print letters. It's likely that Paul had a disability related to eyesight for the rest of his life after his blindness was lifted.

Going back to the Book of Malachi, let's look at Malachi two verse one.

Malachi 2:1-9

1. And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.

2. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.

3. Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.

- 4. And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.**
- 5. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.**
- 6. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.**
- 7. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.**
- 8. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.**

The priests were not doing what they were supposed to be doing. They had changed what needed to happen. Verse nine.

- 9. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.**

When you are partial in the law, different standards are applied to different people. We believe through our legal system that all people should be equal before the law. That's what we believe. The practice is, people are unfortunately treated differently in many different circumstances. The result of that unequal treatment is sadly many people have contempt for those people whose responsibility it is to uphold the law. Being partial in the law causes contempt.

James explains why we should avoid partiality. Let's take a look at James chapter two verse one, James chapter two verse one.

James 2:1-13

- 1. My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.**

We are not to be partial in our faith. Our faith should treat all people equal. Verse two.

- 2. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;**

3. And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

4. Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

We easily look at people and make a judgment based on their appearance. We are not to be a respecter of persons; we are not to have the faith of Jesus Christ based in respect of persons. We are to be impartial. If we are partial, we limit ourselves to evil thoughts. We limit our judgment to the five senses. God's judgment is righteous judgment that transcends the five senses because God's judgment can look into the heart and souls of men. All we can do is look on the surface and see with our eyes as one of our five senses. Verse five.

5. Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

6. But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

7. Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

8. If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

9. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

10. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Notice in verse ten, if we offend, we are guilty of every single point in the law. During the Feast of Tabernacles, we studied those who would be excluded from the New Jerusalem. It was a list of sins, so if you are guilty of one sin, you would be guilty of those sins that would have you excluded from the New Jerusalem. Verse eleven.

11. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

12. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

The law that Jesus Christ brought to us is a law of liberty. It is a law of freedom.

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13. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

As we find ourselves with people, we are not to judge them. If we judge other people, we will be judged. If we judge other people harshly, we will be judged harshly. Instead, we are to have mercy because it is mercy that rejoices against judgment. It is mercy that is celebrated over judgment. It is mercy which will allow for this future happy time that we celebrated through the Feast of Tabernacles. Mercy triumphs over judgment. We cannot use partiality in our actions today just as much as the priests that Malachi wrote about could not use partiality with the people. Being partial is evil. Let's go back and take a look at Malachi two verse ten, Malachi two verse ten.

Malachi 2:10-17

10. Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

We are alike as children of God; we should not treat each other with treachery.

11. Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

12. The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts.

13. And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.

God is not impressed with acts of sorrow and contrition. That won't impress God. There are people who cry in an attempt to act righteous. If it's just an act, God will not regard their act. If somebody is crying with sincerity and truth, God will respect that. Verse fourteen.

14. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

When there is a problem in a marriage, God knows about it. People look wonderful in society, yet they treat their spouse horribly. That's an example of how we are not to be. Verse fifteen.

15. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

In marriage relationships, we are to treat each other with loving kindness. We are not to act one way behind the closed door of the house and another way in public.

16. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

17. Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?

We cannot use evil and see evil in the world and blame God for it. God is not the author of evil, Satan is the author of evil.

Returning to the New Testament, let's go back and look at Ephesians five. We looked at Ephesians five twenty-seven earlier in the sermon. We'll take a look at this chapter now in a little greater context to see that it does talk about the marriage relationship. Ephesians five verse twenty-two.

Ephesians 5:22-33

22. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Many people have problems with these verses because they don't understand the loving relationship that is supposed to be present between husband and wife. As Jesus Christ is the husband, if you will, to the church, the husband in the marriage should be willing to equally lay down his life and sacrifice himself for the benefit of the wife and the family. Being a husband is an act of service to the wife and to the children. Verse twenty-five.

25. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

The physical marriage is a mirror of the spiritual marriage between Christ and the church, and husbands are expected to love and cherish their wife, and wives are expected to have that respect for their husbands in return. So, in the marriage relationship, it is the husband who loves, and it is the wife who in the Bible respects. Today we would look at that marriage being a loving relationship between husband and wife. Let's look at Malachi three verse one, Malachi three verse one. We're continuing our review of Malachi to see what additional information we can use as we move forward in our Christian faith. Verse one.

Malachi 3:1-18

1. Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the

messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

2. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

3. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

4. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

There will be no imperfections that will come before God. God will have that presented to him that is without spot and without blemish, even when it comes to silver and gold. That will be the purest silver and gold that God will have presented to him. Verse five.

5. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

A lot is said in verse five. God will be a witness against those who practice witchcraft, sorcerers, those who are unfaithful in their marriage, those who are false swearers, those who take an oath, and they know they are lying when they take the oath. Continuing in verse five, God will judge those oppress wage earners, who oppress widows, and orphans. That's a continuing theme of the kind of oppression that God hates. Then, those who turn aside the stranger from his rights. All countries have immigration standards, and in the United States and in many countries in Europe, there is this ongoing and raging immigration debate because of a huge influx of migrants. What the Bible says is we are not to turn those people away from their right, what would be provided to them through the law. Verse six.

6. For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

7. Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

So, after being given all of these examples of how people were oppressed, these people still had no idea. They said, "How should we return to you? We're not aware we had left you." When challenged by God, we need to respond to the direction God is leading us and not expect God to change to the way we would see life and the way people should be living. Let's continue Malachi three verse eight. We talk about tithes and offerings.

8. Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

I've heard many priests use this verse almost to coerce people to give tithes and offerings to the church. I will counter and simply say, "Will a priest rob men in the name of God?" Well, we know priests will molest children in the name of God, so if they will molest children in the name of God, they will definitely rob men in the name of God. But tithing and offerings are something that is expected of us in the Bible. Verse ten.

10. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

12. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

Tithing in the Old Testament was given on agricultural produce and the increase of your herds, much different than today's world where most of us earn incomes and salaries. It would be much too complicated to look at tithing in the remainder of this sermon because we want to take a look at the remainder of Malachi three

and Malachi four. We'll look at tithing some other week ahead. Continuing with verse thirteen,

13. Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?

14. Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?

15. And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

When we start questioning ourselves and the benefit of worshipping and following God's way of life, that's the time we are significantly in trouble. We need to examine ourselves to remember that it is a blessing to know God's way of life and to follow God's way of life. Instead, we need to be people who fear God, as it is given to us in Malachi three verse sixteen.

16. Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

These are all things we should be doing. Verse seventeen.

17. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

18. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

That's the judgment God will be making. Are we serving God, or are we not serving God? And if we are not serving God, whom are we serving? We're probably just serving ourselves. I believe most people are mistaken in thinking that they are worshipping God and that they know God. I believe most people worship themselves and they take the image of themselves and put the image of themselves onto God. It's important when God judges us though, that we be judged and be among those that serve Him because one day the world that we know will be quickly changing as God's Kingdom is ushered in here on planet earth.

Let's continue on now with Malachi four and verse one.

Malachi 4:1-6

1. For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble:

All of those who do not serve God will have this fate. All of those who serve God will not have this fate.

and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

2. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

3. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

4. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

5. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

6. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

The Book of Malachi is not only the final book of the Old Testament, it serves as a reminder that the ultimate judgment that will come upon all of mankind is whether we serve God or if we are simply serving ourselves. That is the ultimate judgment that we will be judged in. We want to be among the group that is found to be worshipping and serving God. We know we are worshipping and serving God when we don't try to cheat and trick God. We need to give God our very best in what we do at all times. In all that we do, in worshipping God and serving God, we cannot do that if show partiality to people. All people are equal before God, all people should be equal in our hearts. As we are worshipping God and striving to be counted among those who serve God and not being self-serving, we also need to remember that what we do in private behind closed doors must match what is seen in public. The example that is given for us in the Book of Malachi is the example between the husband and wife. But the reality is, all of us have a door that we close at the end of the day, and what we do behind that door is as

important to God as how we are when we are in public. God does not expect, nor will God tolerate hypocrisy from us.

By doing these things, God will be able to look at us and see we are worshipping Him, that we are serving Him, and that we are simply not worshipping ourselves, or serving ourselves. And, we will be in that future Kingdom of God. Our efforts to serve God are not something we simply do on the weekly Sabbath, it's something we do every day of the week.

We have this incredible opportunity that is given before us and it is one, we cannot take lightly. We have this hope of this future time of happiness in the Kingdom of God. We want to be there and the way that we are going to be there is each and every day without any hypocrisy to be serving God.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together again next week on the Sabbath. Until next time, thank you for joining us today.