

Malachi 1:6-11 (NIV)

6“A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?” says the LORD Almighty. “It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. “But you ask, ‘How have we shown contempt for your name?’

7“You place defiled food on my altar.

“But you ask, ‘How have we defiled you?’

“By saying that the LORD’S table is contemptible. 8When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?” says the LORD Almighty.

9“Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?”—says the LORD Almighty.

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.

11My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations,” says the LORD Almighty.

39-01-01-Have We Dishonored God’s Name?

Lent, Father, Master, Lord’s Table, worship, reverence, God’s Name
Mal 1:6-11

We honor the Name of God through pure-hearted worship.

INTRODUCTION:

–*Malachi* is great material for a Lenten sermon series, because it deals with heart problems that God’s people can still have today. The 1st message asked, “**Have We Doubted God’s Love?**” This 2nd one asks, “**Have We Dishonored God’s Name?**” It’s about having the proper heart attitude in approaching God for *worship*. **HOM.idea.**

–First, I’ll describe the situation and explain the issues Malachi addresses, then offer some applications for our own Christian lives.

I. The Situation Was That of Discouraged Religious Hearts

- A. Background: Malachi’s message came to a disheartened group of people. Under a new Persian regime, they had been returned from a Babylonian exile to the *once prosperous land* of their glorious past that was now in economic, political and social instability.
- B. This discouragement led to a loss of religious hope: The promises in the OT predicting the endless glory of God’s kingdom had not materialized, and this caused both priests and people to lose faith.
- C. As faith in God’s Word diminishes, so does devotional obedience: The people violated the Mosaic Law by bringing defiled offerings, and the priests were carelessly sacrificing them, because they too had lost confidence that honoring God’s name was worthwhile.

TRANS: God addressed the religious results of this *discouragement* by pointing out their faith’s failures and anticipating their responses [“you ask...” used 8 times in a unique way of rhetorical argument]. He first dealt with how they doubted His love. Next, He addressed their devotional failure to honor His name in their worship– **v.6b-7**, “**But you ask, ‘How have we shown contempt for your name?’** “*You place defiled food on my altar. “But you ask, ‘How have we defiled you?’* “*By saying that the LORD’S table is contemptible.*” In this passage, God explains His complaint, and...

II. The Explanation Reveals the Burden of God’s Heart

- A. Malachi’s message truly is a “burden” [NIV trans., “*oracle*” is *massa*,

“burden”— v.1 (NKJV), The **burden** of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.] (God’s message is never a light matter, nor to be taken lightly; the prophet speaking it is carrying a heavy *burden*.)

B. God uses analogy to reason with His people— v.6a, “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?” says the LORD Almighty. — v.8b, “When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?” says the LORD Almighty. (This *burdened* God’s heart!)

1. God’s heart-burden is to be “father,” not just “master”— Isa 1:2-3, Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: “I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.”
2. If His Fatherhood is rejected, God is still “*the LORD Almighty*” [that name for God repeated 20 times in Malachi] (God won’t stop ruling the universe, just because of people’s devotional failure.)
3. God’s final analogy really makes it plain: “*Would you serve a visiting official with stale, wormy bread and a used tea bag in a cup of dirty water? Yet, this is how you treat Me, your Creator!*”

C. God was getting ready to shut down the whole OT system of worship— v.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.*”

1. This “offering” [*minchâh*, “portion,” often of a grain offering] relates back to v.7 (BBE), You put unclean **bread** on my altar. And you say, How have we made it unclean? By your saying, The table of the Lord is of no value. (God’s plan was to set Himself on this “table of the Lord” as a future “bread” that would fulfill and end all OT sacrifices.)
2. Malachi’s prophecy closes the OT—it was God’s last word for 400 silent years, until John the Baptist came to announcing Jesus: “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

TRANS: That OT sacrifices were to be replaced is clear in v.11, *My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations,*” says the LORD Almighty. Early church fathers saw this as being fulfilled by the Gospel making God’s name “*great among the nations*” and by the Eucharistic celebration establishing “*in every place... pure offerings.*” This brings Malachi up-to-date for us, because as

children of the Gospel era and as participants at this new “Lord’s Table,” we are still called to honor the Name of God through pure-hearted worship.

III. The Application Is in How Our Hearts Are to Respond

- A. God’s heart-burden is still to be “*father*” to us, and not just “*master*.” (Jesus, God’s Son, brought us to the Father and the Father to us, teaching us to pray, “Our Father...” *and to mean it!*)
- B. What we bring to God in worship should not *bits and pieces* of ourselves—the *leftovers* from a busy, hectic week—but *our whole selves*, as Jesus called us to follow Him in doing— Mark 12:30, Love the Lord your God with **all your heart** and with **all your soul** and with **all your mind** and with **all your strength**.
- C. They had a table with bread for worship then, but today we have a better Table with better Bread, “*living bread*”— John 6:33, For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.
- D. Today Malachi’s appeal still calls us to authentic adoration:
 1. God is after those who are after Him [Chuck Swindoll]: “Some of us would love to buy three dollars worth of God. Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine...I want ecstasy, not transformation. I want the warmth of the womb, not new birth. I want a pound of the eternal in a paper sack. I want three dollars worth of God, please.”]. (God *wants* to give us more!)
 2. God is after sincere worshipers who will not pollute His Table by coming with *unrepentant hearts* of doubt or unbelief, of bitterness or unforgiveness, of selfish pride or fretful worry. (These *should* be brought to the Table only to leave them there!)
 3. God is after those who, because of Christ’s supreme sacrifice for us, will surrender all for Him— Rom 12:1, Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your **spiritual act of worship**.

CONCLUSION:

—Have we dishonored God’s name by half-hearted worship? If so, God is a loving Father Who will forgive us. But with that forgiveness, His Son Jesus, Who loves and honors His Father supremely, calls us to follow Him, not only in praying to the Father “*hallowed be Thy name,*” but in committing ourselves whole-heartedly to a life of pure-hearted worship.