

God's Holiness Profaned – Malachi 2:11

I. Introduction:

- A. Years ago, when you were much younger, you spent five hours hiking up into the mountains.
 - 1. The trail was narrow and not very well used, but it took you over ridges and into valleys with such beauty that you kept pushing on.
 - 2. It was late in the day when you finally arrived at your destination: a secluded, high mountain lake.
 - 3. It was nestled at the end of a small valley, with a permanent snow bank resting behind it and feeding it.
 - 4. With the sun setting over your right shoulder and onto to the lake, the image was magnificent.
 - 5. Your soul filled with praise to the Creator at what beauty He still provides in this sin cursed earth.
- B. That was twenty-five years ago, and now on a whim you've decided to make that hike once again.
 - 1. This time you find the trail much wider, with obvious marks from the tires of dozens of ATVs.
 - 2. It takes you longer to reach your goal then it did originally, because you're not the person you once were.
 - 3. This time when you arrive at your destination the natural beauty has been marred. Destroyed actually !
 - 4. The snow bank is gone; the trees which framed the beauty of the lake have been roughly chopped down for firewood, and there is garbage scattered all around.
 - 5. The beauty of this little corner of God's creation has been destroyed by the sinfulness of man.
- C. That is very poor illustration of something which is suggested here in this text.
 - 1. Judah was behaving treacherously and abominably in their homes and in God's temple.
 - 2. In both of these, they had **profaned** God's **holiness**.
- D. Since there is nothing in this world that can accurately illustrate God's infinite holiness, there is also nothing we can imagine that will adequately illustrate that holiness being profaned.
 - 1. Despite my obvious limitations, I feel that the text demands that we try expound on this theme.
 - 2. In addition to the example which we have here, there seem to me to be several other ways in which God's holiness may be profaned.
 - 3. And there are ways in which **we** might be become guilty, just as Israel had become guilty 2,500 years ago.
- E. But first, what exactly is meant by that verb **"to profane?"**
 - 1. I am told that the root of the Hebrew word is **"to bore"** or **"wound,"** as in **"to stab."**
 - 2. In the process, to profane means **"to pollute."**
 - 3. Picture a well-muscled, handsome man in the prime of his life and in excellent health.
 - a. One day he is walking along, with sandals on his feet, when he steps on an upturned rusty nail.
 - b. It pierces his shoe and stabs into his foot, poisoning his blood and giving him tetanus.
 - c. In days, that once great man is reduced to the level of an ordinary human being by a tiny bacteria.
 - 4. Young's Concordance takes the extension of our Hebrew word **"profane"** to say **"to make common."**
 - 5. Israel, through sin, had made the holiness of God profane, common and polluted.

II. But, of course, **THEOLOGICALLY** speaking, it is impossible for the holiness of God to be profaned.

- A. Jehovah God is infinitely holy, and He is absolutely immutable.
 - 1. Holiness is one of His attributes; it is a part of His nature; Holy is **WHO God is**, not just **WHAT He is**.
 - 2. He said to Israel by way of **Ezekiel, Isaiah** and others, **"I am the LORD (Jehovah), the Holy One of Israel."**
 - 3. There is no one, and nothing else, that are intrinsically holy; holy in themselves.
 - 4. The Lord may **declare** other things holy, like the ground before Moses' fiery bush, or the tabernacle or the interior of the temple, but they were not holy in themselves.
 - 5. Jehovah may **make** something relatively holy, or in His holiness He may look upon His saints as holy, but nothing beside the Lord is holy by nature.

- B. Furthermore, Jehovah is so infinitely high and holy that nothing can harm or hurt His holiness.
1. God's glory; God's majesty; God's holiness cannot be increased or diminished by anything or anyone in His creation.
 2. Lucifer may think he might bring God down from the heights of Heaven and usurp His throne, but it is only Satanic wishful thinking.
 3. And when Malachi speaks of defaming the Lord's glory or holiness, it is only in a relative sort of way.
 4. Jehovah's personal holiness is more resilient than spiritual Teflon.

III. On the other hand Israel had **NATIONALLY** profaned the holiness of God.

- A. Malachi says, *"Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange God."*
1. There were enough wicked people in Judah that it could be said that as a nation she had married into idolatry. When the prophet spoke those words his mind might have returned to **Leviticus 20**.
 2. In the midst of several important pronouncements, the Lord spoke to Moses about idolatry, and eventually about mixed marriages.
 3. That chapter also contains the words, *"Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God."*
 4. Nine chapters earlier, in **Leviticus 11** the Lord said, *"I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves... For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."*
- B. Israel, as a nation, was commanded to sanctify herself, and to **make** herself holy.
1. That means, she was to separate herself from the rest of the world & to live righteously in the sight of God.
 2. *"And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you."*
 3. Two of those statutes, very clearly worded, forbade Israel from worshiping idols and from marrying the sons and daughter of idolaters.
 4. Now, a thousand years later, Israel was living in spiritual adultery with those idolaters.
 5. And in doing so they were making common the holiness of the Lord in the sight of the heathen.
 6. This scripture in Malachi is speaking about profaning God's holiness nationally.

IV. There is also the possibility of profaning the holiness of God **TYPOLOGICALLY**.

- A. Twice now, I have pointed out that John Gill applies this scripture to the betrayal of the Lord Jesus Christ.
1. He wants to **allegorize** or **"spiritualize"** this scripture to mean something beyond what Malachi says.
 2. He wants to transform something which is quite plain into something mystifying.
- B. I often marvel at the way God weaves the tapestry of my life.
1. I started re-reading **"Lectures to My Students"** which one of you so graciously gave to me.
 2. And yesterday I read as Spurgeon warned his college student against what he called **"spiritualizing."**
 3. He said, "Do not violently strain a text by illegitimate spiritualizing."
 4. Then he said, "In no case allow your audience to forget that the narratives which you spiritualize are facts."
 5. Then he added, "never spiritualize for the sake of showing what an uncommonly clever fellow you are."
 6. And finally, speaking of the man who once pastored Spurgeon's church, he said, "Dr. Gill is one whose name must ever be mentioned with honour and respect in his house in which his pulpit still stands, but his exposition of the parable of the Prodigal Son strikes me as being sadly absurd in some points."
- C. After pointing out that Malachi is talking about the sad state of the Judean family, I will push on with Gill's spiritualization.
1. There are New Testament scriptures which speak of Christ as the Holy One of Israel, just as Jehovah speaks of Himself in the Old Testament.
 2. For example, **Peter** after the healing of the **lame man** in **Acts 3** told the crowd, *"But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and kill the Prince of Life..."*

3. The Jerusalem church in **Acts 4** referred to Christ as the Holy Son of God.
4. And even the demons of **Luke 4** and **Mark 1** call Jesus, *“the Holy One of God.”*

D. These references just seem to spur Brother Gill on to say, *“Judah hath dealt treacherously (and abominably); for Judah hath profaned the (Holy One) of the Lord, (Christ Jesus) whom he loved.”*

1. When did Judah do that, Dr. Gill?
2. When they denied Him and desired the Romans to crucify the eternal Son of God.
3. If we want to push that point, we could say that typologically the holiness of God was profaned.

V. But more practically, the holiness of God is often profaned ECCLESIASTICALLY.

- A. Paul’s letter to the **Ephesians** is sometimes described as an ecclesiastical book; it is about the Lord’s church.
1. But actually there are a great many glorious doctrines in that letter.
 2. In **chapter 3**, for example, Paul prays for his Christian friends in Ephesus: *“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...

 - a. That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;
 - b. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,
 - c. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;
 - d. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”*
 3. Here in this prayer we find references to **God’s glory** and **love**.
 4. And then Paul concludes, *“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be **GLORY in the CHURCH** by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”*
 5. I have often said that none of the Lord’s attributes can be separated from any other attributes.
 6. And I have said even more frequently that the greatest of all God’s attributes – the foundation of all His attributes – is His holiness.
 7. If God is to be glorified in His church, then, among other things, those churches must glorify God’s holiness.
- B. In **chapter 2** Paul speaks about the church in Ephesus, saying, *“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

 1. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:
 2. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”*
3. Each church of Christ scattered around the world is a holy temple in the Lord.
 4. In **Chapter 5** he says, *“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

 - a. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
 - b. 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.”*
- C. Churches which are supposed to be holy, glorifying the holiness of God, often profane that holiness.
1. They make themselves common when they fill their membership with unsaved people – baptizing and receiving babies and receiving unsaved members in other ways.
 2. When churches are supposed to be sanctified and holy, separate and different from the churches of Satan and the churches of the world, some profane the holiness of their Saviour by imitating the world.
 3. They profane the holiness of God when they permit their members to continue in their sins, and when they retaining members who do nothing in the service of God.
 4. Their preachers profane the holiness of the Lord, when they preach a gospel which doesn’t include the condemnation of sin and the demand for repentance.

5. Those churches profane the Lord and themselves when their gospel doesn't include Christ's blood atonement.
6. In my estimation the vast majority of today's "**Christian**" churches live in the profanation of God's holiness.

VI. Finally, the holiness of God is profaned by many **PERSONALLY**.

- A. A few minutes ago, I quoted two scriptures from **Leviticus** in which God told the **NATION** of **Israel**, "*Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God.*"
 1. As you are well aware, it is impossible for the government, any government, even that of Israel...
 2. It is impossible for legislators to enact laws which will make their nation righteous.
 3. Holiness, or righteousness, must be implemented personally and privately.

- B. And it is in that personal way that the Apostle takes **Leviticus** and reuses it in **I Peter 1**: "*Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*
 1. *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:*
 2. *But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*
 3. *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:*
 4. *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;*
 5. *But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*

- C. We who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ have the responsibility to be holy before God and before the world.
 1. It is the key to our ministry and our purpose.
 2. And this involves the practical application of God's will throughout our entire conversation – our entire manner of life.
 3. "*But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*"

- D. The Israelites in Malachi's day were profaning the holiness of the Lord in their homes and in their worship.
 1. In so doing, they prove to us how easy a thing this is to do.
 2. You and I must strive, with God's help, to magnify God's holiness by living in the light of His precepts.