

"Seeking a Godly Seed"

Malachi 2

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As I announced, I intend to bring several messages on what the Bible says about order in the family. I know this can be a mine field, and already several mothers have asked me, "is it because of me and my children?" The answer to all such questions is, "Of course not." I do not deal with individual problems from the pulpit—preferring to speak to you one on one. But there is a pattern of teaching in the Scriptures that is very useful to be known for all mothers and fathers, and the major application I am going to make is to our walk with Christ and the nature of the Christian way of life. Christian living begins in the home and needs to be nurtured there. This is the purpose for these messages, and I hope they will be a blessing all of us.

My text this morning is verse 15 of this second chapter of Malachi, but before we get into the details of this text, I want to set the table for you. The following things need to be said about the spiritual condition in the nation of Israel.

The people held the worship of God in low esteem. Their offerings were of the sick, the lame and the blind of the flocks and herds. [Mal. 1:6-8]. They denied it, of course, for people always deny their sins. The fathers connived at it, for they probably reasoned that a bad offering was better than none at all, and that God would be merciful to them. It is true that God is merciful, but we are not to presume on God's mercy, and despise Him by being half-hearted in our service to Him. It is true that the sacrifice itself is nothing to God, for the cattle on a thousand hills is His, but true worship is from the heart, and it is a sinful spirit that imagines that God will be pleased with half-hearted and indifferent service. We are not to look back when we put our hand to the plow; nor are we to serve the Lord with a slack hand. Even successful human endeavors demand excellence in their servants, and so does God.

Therefore the message of Malachi is very appropriate for our age, considering the silly things that are done in the name of worship and service to the Lord.

This second chapter of Malachi is to the fathers that connived at this debased service of the Lord. The families of the fathers were a mess, and Malachi sets his sights on them. Malachi's message is pertinent in our day to every Christian man, for every man is a father of God under the new testament in the blood of Christ. It is every man's duty to see that true worship is established in his home. This requires:

1. Knowledge: for you cannot worship what you do not know.
2. Poverty of Spirit: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.
3. These may appear to be contradictory, but in truth they are not: the more more true

knowledge you have of the true God, the less arrogant you will be.

4. In this passage I want you to substitute “father” for the word father, and I will read it that way. This passage has wider application than to fathers in the home, but it does have this application. The order in a family begins with the father.

Vs. 1-3 And now, O ye fathers, 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. (Mal 2:1-3)

1. The prophet Malachi now delivers his message to the fathers that connived at this debased service.
2. The name of God is to receive the glory that is due. God is to be revered according to His true being. A very important part of the duties of the fathers was to teach the people the way of the Lord.
3. Their blessings will be cursed. The blessings that the father said would become curses instead. If the father raised polluted hands in blessings, the blessings would become curses. This is true certainly of officers and ministers in the church, but it is also true of fathers of families. They must go before in the way of godliness that their families also may truly be blessed by them.
4. Instead of sanctifying them, their offerings would defile them. Vs. 3 I will defile you with your defiled offerings. A man can rise no higher than his worship. If he is lackadaisical in worship; if His worship is defiled with false doctrine, humanism, the works of the flesh, so will he be. Men become like their Gods, as we read in Psalm 115

Vs. 4-6. 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. (Mal 2:4-6 av)

There was sufficient gospel in Moses to have given life, if the fathers had taught faith in the coming Christ plainly, and if the people had received it in faith. “They have Moses and the prophets,” Abraham told the rich man. Jesus said that He was spoken of in the Scriptures: “Search the scriptures,” He said, “for they testify of me.” The purpose for the giving of the law was gracious, for God gave the word to Israel, and passed by the rest of the world, leaving them in darkness.

Vs. 7-9. For the father’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. 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. (Mal 2:7-9 av)

1. As a father, the man is the messenger of the Lord. The father in the home does not have his own message; he was not to seek his own ways or his own agenda. He was not to follow his own imagination as to what he should say and do. The idea of messenger is "deputy." He must deliver the whole message, and he is not to add or subtract from it. Otherwise, his pride and ambition, his arrogance will bring tyranny and oppression to his family.

2. This is the true honor of the servants of the Lord. They become contemptible when they corrupt the message and speak their own words and seek their own agenda.

Vs. 10-13 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? 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. (Mal 2:10-13 av)

1. It seems that even common decency had failed from among the Jews. They were all descended from Abraham, yet they did not treat one another as brothers, but cheated and deceived each other. They also had one God, Jehovah, and they defiled His covenant. It is a serious thing when the "ties that bind" us to one another are broken off, and men act without restraint or affection toward each other. I follow Calvin, that "father" here may be applied to God, and it certainly was a phrase common among the Jews, but it seems more natural to connect it to Abraham, especially when we consider the purpose of the passage concerning the godly seed.

2. Abraham was the head of their race, and the one to whom God had made the promises concerning redemption and the godly seed. But this had ceased to have any weight with them. This shows that when a man profanes the covenant of God, he also will be treacherous to his neighbor. If God's word means nothing, then why should my word be valued by my neighbor? "Evil communications corrupt good manners." I Cor. 15:33. People will be- have badly when they corrupt the message and promise of God.

3. Vs. 11. The particular sins. The marriage of strange wives. The corruption of marriage. Israel was called to be holy because of the promise of the redeemer that had been given to them, a most holy and precious promise. But they despised the promise and refused to honor the Lord by godly and holy living. They indulged their lusts by marrying the ungodly. "The daughter of a strange god." Their wives were ungodly and defiled because they were sanctified by the God of Israel. Under the law, if an Israelite insisted on marrying a women taken captive in their conquests, it was permitted only if her hair was shaved and her nails pared; in a sense humiliating her and abasing her pride. To be the daughter of god was to be trained up and educated in the worship of that God.

4. This was to pollute the pure worship of God in Israel, and these intermarriages were one of the main reason for their corruptions.

5. In other words, the men had failed in their most basic duty: the establishment of their homes in the worship and service to the true God.

6. God is a jealous God, and it is a terrible affront to Him to have His glory abased in the eyes of men and to have His people corrupted. God cares a great deal for His word and for his church, but especially for his word. If they had not corrupted His word, they would have corrupted their lives.

7. The tears of the people, or the tears of the fathers, [depending on how you read it] were all in vain. If the father and the worship is corrupt, God does not hear our prayers. When there are no answers to prayers, then men become indifferent and careless in their worship. What does any of it matter?

Vs. 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." (Mal 2:14 av)

1. "Wherefore?" is the denial of the fathers. "What have we done?" They had divorced the wives of their youth in order to marry the heathen. A wife is a "companion" and an associate. The most tender affection and regard should have prevailed among the father for their wives. But they easily cast them aside, so they could marry the daughters of the heathen. A wife is a "wife of thy covenant." What God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

2. The home was founded in ungodliness, and the responsibility is laid here directly upon the men.

3. We who are alive today are on the second generation, at least of this particular apostasy from God. When I was a boy divorce was rare and homosexuality was a criminal offense. It was my generation that couldn't stay married. Men were chiefly responsible, I believe, but that is no longer true, for women nowadays take their vows as lightly as men do. But that is because children are not brought up in the way of righteousness and taught what Christianity is, nor is the Christian faith modeled before them. This is the concern of this minister and the reason for the messages that I intend to bring before Christmas.

Vs. 15, 16. Here we have the purpose for marriage: *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. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away [divorce]: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.* (Mal. 2:15, 16)

1. "Hath not God made one?" God, who is one God, made one man. But the man was incomplete, so God made Adam one wife, and then Adam was complete, "one flesh," made whole and complete. It was not because God lack any more "spirit." God had plenty of spirit left to endow Adam with a thousand wives.
2. But Adam was complete with one, and didn't need any more than one. One was enough to complete Adam as the image of God. Lust will never be satisfied with any number of partners, but the godly man and women are complete.
3. Why did God give Adam one wife. To have a godly seed. When the covenant of marriage is destroyed, it is the children who suffer and the seed is spiritually illegitimate, and not holy.
4. Of course, it is often in God's providence that couples cannot have children, but that does not contradict this text which gives the reason for one wife for one man. Godly children, nurtured in the love of a godly man and a godly woman. This was so from the beginning, as Jesus told us.
5. Take heed to your spirit. God will not hold you innocent if you deal treacherously with the wife of your youth. Set a watch upon your spirit and your desires.
6. The bond and sacred vow of marriage is not to be taken lightly or defiled or cheapened by pornography, homosexuality, coarse and vain speech, or any such thing. This is the reason for the confession of the Catechism on the 7th commandment:

Q108: What does the seventh Commandment teach us?

A108: That all unchastity is accursed of God, and that we should therefore loathe it with our whole heart, and live chastely and modestly, whether in holy wedlock or single life.

Q109: Does God forbid nothing more in this Commandment than adultery and such gross sins?

A109: Since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Ghost, it is His will that we keep both pure and holy; therefore, He forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever may entice thereto.

Vs. 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?

Finally, we see the horrible blasphemies of the Jews. All sin has its roots in the spiritual, in the heart. The most horrible lies about God lived in the hearts of the Jews. Twofold:

1. That God, because He did not immediately damn the wicked, was not truly righteous. This is often a very difficult thing even for the Godly, who often have suffered under the hand of the ungodly the most terrible persecution.

2. That God, because He did not damn the wicked, must not exist, because He could not exist without truly judging the world. Many people, because they cannot explain the problem of evil, resort to the elimination of God-either by outright atheism, or by practical atheism, making God limited in power, in will, in knowledge, or making him mutable and contingent upon the things on the earth.

Application:

To Fathers, be serious about worship and to teach and to KNOW and to teach the way of Christ to your family, and to model Christian behavior, including confession of sin and humbleness and a contrite heart. Treasure your family and your wife above all, for she is your companion and a great gift from God.

To Mother, support and be a helper to your husband in his duty before God. Be ready for support and counsel and most of all your prayers. If you find it difficult to be in submission to your husband, remember that he also has difficulty in obeying the Lord.

Children, obey your parent in all things, for this is the commandment of God.

May God bless you.

Amen and Amen.