

**Malachi 3:3** *He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the Lord An offering in righteousness.*

**Background of Malachi:** Malachi was written to the Levites or to the priests because they had lost their respect for God in their worship (see ch. 1:6). That was manifested by their offerings to God. They chose to dishonor God. God, in His love for them, knew this was not good for them, so He purified them.

By the end of Malachi we find that the refining did its work. The priests listened to God and obeyed and they were able to offer *offerings in righteousness.*” The next verse says, “*Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD.*”

In I Peter 2:5 it talks about NT believers being a “*an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*” We have the same position as the priests in the OT did. The values God wanted to see in the lives of the priests in Malachi, He is looking for in us today.

God puts trials in our lives for different reasons.

1. For Learning (Job 23:10 – When I am tried I shall come forth as gold.) God put him through a trial because there were things about God that he needed to learn.
2. For Chastening (Malachi) There was sin in the way the Priests worshiped God. God got their attention.
3. For Teaching Others (Jn 9:3) The man blind from birth was created for the purpose of showing God’s power. “*Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*”

**Transition:** All of us go through testing and trials in our lives. I would like us to focus on trusting **God because of His love that is shown through His presence, purification, and purpose in trials.** First of all we will see that ...

### **I. God’s Love is shown by His Presence.**

*He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;*

**Explanation:** We see God here pictured as a refiner of gold and silver as well as the refining process (vs2). When a refiner puts his gold in a pot on the fire he never, ever leaves the gold for any reason. He values that gold and wants to see that fire bring up the dross or the impurities in the gold.

**Application:** When God puts us as His children on the fire He doesn’t leave us there by ourselves. He stays right there beside us watching to be sure that the fire or the trial does what He wants it to. The work in progress has His full attention.

#### **A. God Cares**

**Explanation:** God know our limitations and will not put any trial in our path that He does not give the strength for. *1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

**Illustration:** There were two men in Rome long ago that were sentenced to be burned at the stake for being Christians. One of the men was an older more mature Christian and the other was a young man newly saved.

As the two men were put in their cell they looked out the back window into the arena where their stakes were being prepared for them to be burned the next day. The young man nervously tried to light a candle and in the process he burned his finger badly. He turned to the older man and said, “If I have this much pain over a burn on my finger how will I stand it tomorrow when my whole body is engulfed in flame?” The older Christian said, “Young man, God did not ask you to burn you finger so you do not have the grace to endure the pain. Tomorrow God has asked us to go out and burn for His honor and glory.” And the next day the two men went into the arena and burned with songs of praise to God on their lips.

**Application:** God gives us the grace to endure what we need endure so that we will learn what God would have us to learn so that we can to offer to God an offering in Righteousness - serving Him with our lives. That does not mean that when we go through a trial that it will be easy. No, when silver gets purged it gets very hot and melts, and our trials are to melt us. But God will give the strength to go through it.

“Don’t pray for lighter burdens, pray for stronger shoulders” –unknown author

## B. God Comforts

**Explanation:** God has promised us directly that He will be with us. *Isaiah 41:10 Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’*

**Application:** We don’t have to be afraid of what we are going through right now because we know that God will give us the strength and He will always be with us.

**Illustration:** There was a train traveling through the mountain passes late one night. There was a bad storm raging and the water was starting to rise along the tracks. The passengers started panicking until one older man noticed a little girl sitting with a quiet smile on her face. He made his way over to her and asked her why she wasn’t afraid. She looked up at him and said, “My father is the engineer.”

**Application:** Whatever “storms” are going on outside or whatever mountains we are facing, we can have complete assurance that nothing will happen to us that God does not allow as long as we allow Him to “direct” our life. If verses like Isaiah 41:10 do not provide comfort, we do not know our “Engineer” very well.

## II. God’s Love is shown by His Purification.

*He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver,*

**Explanation:** God had a reason for the trials that the Levites went through. That was to purify them. To make them serve God with the respect that they were supposed to have.

**Application:** God has a reason for every trial that we go through. *Heb 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

**A. God uses every circumstance for good.** *Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

**Explanation/application:** Well, whose definition of “good” are we following? Our understanding of “good” will set our expectations of God’s promise. Our definition of good often includes saying, “Well things will just turn out right and everything will be comfortable again.” God’s definition of good comes in the very

next verse. In Rom 8:29, God shows us that His best plan for us, the greatest good in the light of heavenly values, is for us “to be conformed to the image of his Son.”

God takes all the seemingly bad things and all the seemingly good things and brings them together and it works out for good. We will be more like Christ. So, if we know that the good and the bad work together for good then we can conclude that

### **B. God controls our trials. “He shall sit”**

**Explanation:** Nothing is going to happen to us that surprises God or that He is not ready for. When we are in a fiery trial we don’t get knocked over into the fire or the fire does not consume us.

**Illustration:** Story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. *Daniel 2*

#### **Application:**

##### **A. Trials do not destroy.**

The three Hebrews were thrown into the fire but they came out without harm. We may go through great times of testing, but they are designed to teach us something, not destroy us.

##### **B. Trials free from sin.**

The three Hebrews were cast into the fire with cords binding their hands. When we are in a trial often God uses it to show us the sin that weighs us down. *Hebrews 12:1 let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

##### **C. Trials make God’s presence real.**

When the three Hebrew boys were in what seemed to be the toughest part of their trial, it was then that Christ walked with them and they were the closest to God. When our trials get the toughest, it is at that time that we draw the closest to God.

### **III. God’s Love is shown in His Purpose.**

*That they may offer to the Lord An offering in righteousness.*

**Explanation:** God brought the Levites back to a place doing what was right in a right way. He kept the heat on until the dross was dealt with.

**Illustration:** A man walked into a silversmiths shop long ago and went to the back of the shop to talk with the silversmith. He found the silversmith bending over a pot of molten silver skimming the dross off the top. The man asked the silversmith how he knew when the silver was ready to be used. The silversmith said, “Do you see how I am bending over the pot looking into it?” The man said, “Yes.” The silversmith said, “When I can see my reflection in the silver then I know it is done.”

**Application:** When God puts us on the fire, He sits there with us cleaning the dross off the top of our lives. When God can look at us and see the reflected image of His Son Jesus Christ shining back, then He knows that the trial has accomplished its purpose in that area of our life. *Romans 8:29* says that we are “to be conformed to the image of his Son.”

God put people through different trials so that they can be in a position to do something for God that He will be pleased with. Look at **Joseph**. He was first betrayed by his brothers, and then he was falsely accused and

sent to prison, and then was forgotten by friends. He went through all this so that he could be in a position to be of service for God at the right time.

Think of what **Hannah** had to go through in order to be willing to give Samuel to God's service.

Think of **Ruth** leaving her country to live with her mother-in-law. She went to a new country where she was a Gentile in a Jewish country. All so she could help Naomi and God used her to be part of the line of Christ.

#### **A. God's purpose is to change us**

**Our lives need to be a worthy sacrifice for God.** *Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

**Explanation:** Our lives need to be holy and acceptable to God. This means that if we are living for ourselves, if there is sin in our lives, or if we are resisting God's will that anything we do for God will not be acceptable. God values obedience over any service we do for Him. If we serve God with the wrong attitude or motive than we are doing what the priests did in Malachi. *I Sam. 15:22 Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.* We cannot come to God with the attitude that God owes us something. We need to realize that God owes us nothing and we owe God everything. God is in charge of our lives and He is in control of what happens in our lives. Let us serve Him with the realization that God is doing a work in each of our lives and we need to trust Him and learn what He is teaching us. God will be able to use more and more of our life as we yield it to Him. God's purpose in trials is so that He can shape us and mold us to serve Him in the best way possible. That is an offering in righteousness.

#### **B. God's purpose is to make our sacrifice acceptable -**

**Explanation:** When our service is done with our efforts, our strength, our wisdom, our understanding, we contaminate God's work. The work must be what God is doing in us and through us. There is nothing left for us to boast about. He is Lord, He is King, He deserves all the praise!

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.