

Week Beginning: 23rd June 2019

Worship Series: #5 in series

living sharing growing

Theme Verse

"A son honours his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honour due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the Lord Almighty.

Malachi 1:6a

Remember This Week

God deserves nothing less than your very best...in everything.



lifegroups
live life abundantly



MAJOR FROM THE **MINOR**
QUESTIONS PROPHETS



Restore us again, God our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us. Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger through all generations? Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your unfailing love, Lord and grant us your salvation. I will listen to what God the Lord says; he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants—but let them not turn to folly. Surely his salvation is near those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.

Psalms 85:4-9

Heavenly Father, you are worthy of all honor, glory, power and praise. So we thank you for all that you have done for us. For the world which you created, for life which you give and for the salvation you won for us through the life, death and resurrection of your son Jesus. As we gather together tonight, we dedicate this time to grow in faith toward you so that we may be empowered to always do our best for you. Amen



1. *Share your highs and lows since you last met with one another.*
2. *Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *What are some of the household tasks that you just can't get excited about?*
4. *What person/people do you find yourself willing to always do your best for?*
5. *What does it communicate to you when you see someone has pulled out all the stops for you?*



"Half-hearted, Insipid. Going through the motions. Lazy.' It sounds like a coach at a press conference, reflecting on his team's performance after being flogged by the opposition. But instead, it is God reflecting on his people's attitude to worship. They had slipped into spiritual neutral - maintaining the externals, dutifully performing the rituals, coasting along in their faith but not really caring about it. Their hearts were not in it; they had checked-out and become spiritually lazy and complacent. In God's eyes, that was and is just not good enough. So he sends Malachi to reveal the emptiness of their religion, to remind them of his love and to reawaken in them a passion for worship that brings honour and glory to his name. Today Malachi asks us to do some honest reflection as he helps us answer this important question, 'Why should I care?'

Read Malachi 1:6-2:9

6. *What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?*
7. *What kinds of things/behaviour would you expect to see from a son/servant who honors their father/master?*
8. *Look again at chapter 1 verse 8. Do you agree that we often find it easier to be lazy with God than with other earthly authorities? Why do you think this is?*

In this particular passage of Malachi, God's word to Malachi is directed specifically to the priests. The priests served a number of functions in the worship life of Israel. They were



responsible for making the appropriate sacrifices and praying to God on behalf of the people. In broad terms they served as intermediaries between God and the nation of Israel. They represented God to the people and they represented the people before God. We no longer adhere to much of the Old Temple practices yet as Christians we all hold some of the responsibilities of the priests.

Have a look at 1 Peter 2:9

9. *How well do you feel that the Christian church is currently doing at being a royal priesthood. That is, how well do we represent God to the world and intercede on behalf of the world before God?*
10. *In what ways might we do this better both as individuals and as communities? (read a few more verses of 1 Peter 2 if you need some ideas)*

Despite our limited success in the role of being God's priests, and despite his warning to us, God is still concerned about maintaining his promises and covenant with Levi. Look again at Malachi 2:4-9.

11. *What can you learn about the character of God from this passage?*
12. *We continually hear God speak words of judgement and warning through the prophets. Words which address the people's immorality and wicked behaviour and outline the consequences. What are some of the consequences God warns of in Malachi?*
13. *Although it seems like God's heart is set on retribution and judgement what does verse 4 say God's intent is behind this message?*
14. *Have there been times in your life when you have thought God must be punishing you?*

We see judgement and retribution more easily than we see loving discipline and correction because that is what our fallen human condition wants. It wants justice and vengeance. However, God wants to restore our relationship with him. He wants to keep his covenant promises. This is his major focus.

15. *Now with the 20/20 vision of hindsight, can you see how those times you thought God was punishing you might have brought you closer to him?*
16. *What ways does God communicate his eternal love, care, and devotion to you?*

The perception of inconsistency between God's promises and God's actions is often a stumbling block for many people to come to faith. Inconsistency between how God asks his people to live and how God's people actually conduct themselves is another.

What we learn from Malachi, is that God is serious about the standards he has set for us and serious about having true and reverent expressions of worship which are not just religious rites but communicate our heart attitudes to him. But God also reminds us that he knows our weaknesses and is intent on providing a way forward for us, even when we have stopped caring and lost the zeal and passion we once might have had for him.

17. *When you experience a dry spell or a winter season in your life of faith, a period when your zeal and passion for God seems low, how might you be re-energized?*
18. *What ways will you express your zeal and love for God during this week. What will your life communicate about your relationship with God?*

- * Praise God for his steadfast and consistent love that protects and keeps you. Thank Jesus for his steadfast commitment to living the will of the Father. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the courage to live boldly as his people in this world
- * Pray for those who are faint-hearted and/or unsure about who they are and what they are living for.
- * Pray for each other - for enduring passion and zeal for the things of God; to not be complacent in the spiritual disciplines of devotion, prayer, reading God's Word, worship, serving and generosity.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

Name, God loves you with an everlasting love. Amen.

