

Week Beginning: 30th June 2019

Worship Series: #2 in series

living sharing growing

Theme Verse

But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves.

Malachi 4:2

Remember This Week

Don't go anywhere. It's just the intermission. Stay for the rest of the story. For there is still another act to come where the unsolved problems are resolved and the unfulfilled promises are fulfilled. Come and meet Jesus who changes everything and guarantees that your story does not end with tears and curses but with unbridled joy and unceasing blessing.



lifegroups
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MAJOR FROM **MINOR**
QUESTIONS THE PROPHETS



But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect 1 Peter 3:15

Heavenly Father, Sometimes we forget who you are and all that you have already done for us. As we gather together around your word again, remind us of your love for us. Remind us of the hope and joy that we have through your son Jesus. By your Holy Spirit, give us confidence to live in that hope and bring glory to your name. 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. *Have you ever been to a movie or theatre production in which the ending was dissapointing? How did that make you feel?*
4. *Who is the one person in the world who you think knows you the best? How did that come to be?*
5. *Do you know the story of how you got your name? How did your parents choose it? Does it mean something significant to you or your family?*

Imagine you are at a theatre production. You have met the main character and his love interest, witnessed a perfect beginning, full of colour, vibrancy, song and life. You've been introduced to the villain who wrecks everything and witnessed the ensuing conflict and darkness that weighs heavy over the scene. You've heard the promise of what will be and what is to come and through the various scenes you've been drawn into victories and been crushed by the defeats. You've been touched by moments of beauty and grace and felt the devastating consequences of bad choices. The tension is brewing. There's an escalation in the plot. Nothing has resolved the alienation that has occurred between the main characters. The final word our ears hear is 'curse' - it's bad news. And the curtain goes down. There is silence. The only problem is, it's not a theatre production. It's the Old Testament. As we come to the final scene and final word in the Old Testament, having journeyed through 2000 years between the promise to Abraham and the end of Malachi, navigated around all the plot twists and scene changes, we are still left with an unsolved problem, an unfulfilled promise and a major question that needs to be dealt with - 'What hope do I have?'

Read Malachi 3:16-4:5

6. *What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?*
7. *God writes down the names of those who feared/revered him? Why would God need to write something down?*
8. *How does it make you feel to hear God refer to you as a 'special posession'?*





If we were writing the script for God's unfolding drama, we might be tempted to end the first act with a dramatic sequence that ties all the threads of the story together so we are clear about what is coming in Act 2. Yet in Malachi God seems to be reminding us of everything that has come before this point. His message is the same. If you trust and revere me, I will bless you. If you turn from me and do evil and wicked things you will be judged and punished accordingly. He calls us to remember the covenants he has made, particularly with Moses - 'I will be your God and you will be my people' (Exodus 6:7, paraphrased)

9. *What does God's repeated message of judgement and hope communicate about his character?*

God reminds us of who he is and that his character has not changed throughout the history of the Old Testament. The name he spoke to Moses from the burning bush is still who he is. 'I am who I am' (Ex 3:14). God is who he says he is. He gives hope to those who revere his name (4:2). Have you ever considered what it means to know and revere God's name?

10. *What kinds of people know your name? What different ways do they use it?*

11. *There is something 'inevitable' about the great 'I AM', the God who is who was and is to come. How do you feel when you think about God in this way?*

An all powerful, eternal creator God, can be somewhat difficult to comprehend and relate to. Even with access to his name, we can only comprehend the smallest snippets of who God is. Yet this is our hope and joy, the story does not end here. The holy, all powerful, and unknowable God makes himself knowable by becoming one of us. When Act 2 begins, we no longer have to know God just by what he has done, we are invited to know him as a person.

12. *What is the difference between knowing about someone and knowing them personally?*

13. *How does God revealing himself to us as Jesus, change the nature of our relationship with him.*

14. *God promises that a day is coming when he will act. He calls it both a great and terrible day. How do you feel about the idea of Jesus coming back? Excited? Scared?*

15. *How do we move from knowing about Jesus, to having a living relationship with the risen Lord?*

The hope we have is simply God. It is knowing and trusting who God is. It is accepting that he is who he says he is. It is about knowing that he sent Jesus to die in our place. It is knowing that in the resurrection, in the rising of his son, we received righteousness and healing. The more we know who God is and all he has done for us, the more we trust what he says about us, the better we come to know ourselves as well. Our hope is only in Jesus.

This is also true in our own lives. With social media being such a part of how the world operates these days we can have hundreds, even thousands of friends, but these people do not really 'know' us; they know about us.

16. *How can we make sure that our relationship with Jesus is not just something people know about us but is instead something that they experience through us?*

17. *When we know someone well we trust them more implicitly. As we come to know more of Jesus in our lives, the lies and deceptions of the enemy are more easy to perceive. How are you going to get to know Jesus better this week?*



Try something a bit different this week. Consider giving everyone in your group a piece of paper to write their name and a prayer request on. Have people put all their prayer papers together and have each person select one randomly from the pile. You might pray about these things together as a group, but take them home and continue to pray for each other during the week.

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, the Lord is your living hope. Amen.

