

God Are You Really There? - Part 3

Sunday, July 9, 2023

So far in this series on the Book of Malachi we have seen that we lose our way as we...

1. Lose our Passion for God
2. Lose our Devotion to God
3. Lose our Dependence on God
4. Lose our Confidence in God
5. Lose our Belief in God

God's messages to us are intended to wake us up and call us back to him.

Last week we saw that God's first message to us is "I Have Always Loved You"

Today God's message confronts us with our love of God and reminds us that when it comes to loving God - Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Malachi 1:6-14 (NLT)

6 The Lord of Heaven's Armies says to the priests: "A son honors his father, and a servant respects his master. If I am your father and master, where are the honor and respect I deserve? You have shown contempt for my name!"

"But you ask, 'How have we ever shown contempt for your name?'

7 "You have shown contempt by offering defiled sacrifices on my altar.

"Then you ask, 'How have we defiled the sacrifices?'

"You defile them by saying the altar of the Lord deserves no respect. **8** When you give blind animals as sacrifices, isn't that wrong? And isn't it wrong to offer animals that are crippled and diseased? Try giving gifts like that to your governor, and see how pleased he is!" says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

9 "Go ahead, beg God to be merciful to you! But when you bring that kind of offering, why should he show you any favor at all?" asks the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

10 "How I wish one of you would shut the Temple doors so that these worthless sacrifices could not be offered! I am not pleased with you," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, "and I will not accept your offerings. **11** But my name is honored by people of other nations from morning till night. All around the world they offer sweet incense and

pure offerings in honor of my name. For my name is great among the nations," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

12 "But you dishonor my name with your actions. By bringing contemptible food, you are saying it's all right to defile the Lord's table. **13** You say, 'It's too hard to serve the Lord,' and you turn up your noses at my commands," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. "Think of it! Animals that are stolen and crippled and sick are being presented as offerings! Should I accept from you such offerings as these?" asks the Lord.

14 "Cursed is the cheat who promises to give a fine ram from his flock but then sacrifices a defective one to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, "and my name is feared among the nations!

God has just finished telling them about His love for them... How unconditional and powerful and unending it is. And yet the openly accused God of not loving them by questioning that love.

Now God turns the tables and opens up a discussion about their love of Him. In stark contrast to God's love for us, God says they have not truly loved him. Their love, though professed with their lips, is not proved true by their actions. In fact, their actions prove the opposite - that they do not love God - they give Him lip service but their actions show the level of their contempt and disrespect.

Once again they answer with incredulous shouts of "No Way! How have we ever not loved you?" How have we shown you contempt and disrespect?"

God responds with specific examples of how their actions show their lack of love for Him

- Where are the honor and respect I deserve?
 - You bring cheap, defiled, worthless and unworthy sacrifices
 - You defile the Lord's table
 - You say "It's too hard to serve the Lord"
 - You turn up your noses at my Commands
- He even exposes their lack of love for their God by prophetically showing them that His name will be worshiped among the gentiles in stark contrast to how they are treating Him.

Malachi 1:11 (NIV)

11 My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations,” says the Lord Almighty.

We are not secure because of our nationality or Christian heritage or church membership or attendance. But because of our sincere undying relationship with Him which is evidenced by actions of true love for Him

So let's bring the principles of this message from God into a New Testament relationship with Him and see 4 ways our actions demonstrate our lack of love for God.

4 ways our actions show our lack of love for God

1. Not Giving Him the Best

In the Old Covenant, God called for sacrifices that were unblemished - the best of what they had. While we no longer bring animal sacrifices we are called by God to be living sacrifices

Romans 12:1 (NIV)

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

As a sacrifice we are still called to give God the best

Mark 12:30-31 (NIV)

30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these.”

Are you giving God the best of your time, your talents and your treasures? Or are you giving Him the leftovers?

2. Not Separating Ourselves From Sin

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1 Peter 1:14-16 (NIV)

14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Romans 6

6 Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? 2 Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? 3 Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. 6 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. 8 And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. 9 We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. 10 When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. 11 So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

12 Do not let sin control the way you live;[\[a\]](#) do not give in to sinful desires. 13 Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. 14 Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace.

15 Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! 16 Don't you realize that you become the slave of

whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. 17 Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. 18 Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

19 Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. 21 And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. 22 But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

What are you doing to separate yourself from sin?

3. Not Obeying His Commands

John 14:15 (NLT)

15 "If you love me, obey my commandments.

1 John 2:3-4 (NIV)

3 We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. 4 Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person.

What are you doing to obey the commands of living a life that is Holy and Pleasing to God? You say, "But how do I know what His commands are?" He has given them to us in His word and through the teaching of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

But you can't know those commands if you don't read and study His word. You can't hear the voice of the Holy Spirit if you are not spending time with Him. You won't keep his commands if you continually search for ways to water them down and making them easier to swallow.

4. Not Loving Others

John 13:34-35 (NIV)

34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

1 John 4:20-21 (NIV)

20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

What are you doing to love your brothers and sisters?

NOTE: This message was primarily for the spiritual leaders who were responsible for allowing and even supporting these actions in the people's worship of God rather than calling them to live by higher standards.

What are you doing to separate yourself from sin? What are you doing to obey the commands of living a life that is Holy and Pleasing to God? What are you doing to love your brothers and sisters? Are you giving your best to God?

These are the things that display the truth of our Love for God... Our belief that He is really there and is deserving of our fear, respect, honor and love.

Maybe you are hear today and you say I do love God... But I have not been giving him my best... I have not been separating myself from sin... I need to do a better job obeying His commands... I am guilty of not loving others the way He wants me to...

God thank you for honest hearts that love you and want their actions to match their words. Help us by the power of Your Holy Spirit in us to defeat the lies of the enemy that tell us we can give you weak and unworthy sacrifices of our time, talents and treasures. The lies that tell us we don't have to separate ourselves from sin. The lies that tell us we don't have to obey your commands because they are just too hard. The lies that tempt us to water down and change your truths. The lies that tell us we don't have to love others the way you love us. We surrender to your call to love you with all of our hearts and to live a life whose actions prove that to be true... In Jesus Name!
AMEN!!