God Questions Careless Worship

Malachi 1:1–8

A. The Mission of Malachi

1. The book of Malachi was written to God's people after their return from exile.
2. The temple had been rebuilt, but spiritual passion had faded.
3. Religion continued outwardly, but hearts had grown cold.
4. They had a very dangerous spiritual condition.
5. The people still attended worship & sacrifices were still being offered.
6. But God was no longer honoured properly, with careless & half-hearted worship.
7. The same danger exists today.
8. God desires more than outward ritual. He looks upon the heart.
9. After Malachi there will be four hundred years of silence.
10. Malachi poses these questions from God before prophetic voices cease.

B. Malachi's First Message Is One of God's Love (v. 1)

1. God reminds them of His love
2. God's love had been constant despite Israel's failures
3. God is ever reaching out in love to lost and backslidden people
4. The people question God's love.
5. Spiritual coldness had blinded people. They had become ungrateful & cynical.
6. God points to his faithfulness, reminding them of Jacob and Esau.
7. Israel existed because of divine mercy, not human merit.
8. God had preserved His people through judgment and exile.
9. When we lose wonder at God's love, worship becomes mechanical.
10. Gratitude is fuel for genuine worship.
11. Remember the love The Lord has shown to you & truly worship Him.

C. God Confronts Their Dishonour (v. 6)

1. God asks searching questions.
2. God was being treated with contempt.
3. Even ordinary relationships understand honour and respect
4. God calls Himself "Father"-what a good word!
5. A father loves, provides, & remains faithful when others desert us.
6. How is God our Father?
7. On Mars Hill, Paul said we are His offspring through Creation (Acts 17:28).
8. Not all are God's spiritual children (John 8:44).
9. We become God's spiritual children by receiving Christ (John 1:12, 8:44).
10. We honour our heavenly Father by honouring His Son (John 5:23).
11. We must honour our Father with our lives, not just with our lips (Mark 7:6).
12. We can honour our Father with our substance (Prov. 3:9; Mal. 3:10).
13. God then asks a searching question. *If I am a master, where is my fear?(*v. 6).
14. "Master" is a word of dedication, "Fear" is respect, reverence, surrender.

15. The Priests were responsible for the situation the nation found themselves in.
16. Spiritual leaders had allowed compromise, handling holy things carelessly.
17. Their example led to worship becoming casual toward God's holiness.
18. Familiarity with spiritual things can breed carelessness.
19. Leaders especially must guard reverence. Who is your master?

D. God Exposes Their Polluted Sacrifices (vv. 7–8)

1. The priests were polluting the altar with inferior, defective sacrifices.
2. They offered lame, sick, blind lambs, which were not really sacrifices at all.
3. Most seriously, they did not picture the coming perfect Lamb of God.
4. *"It is evident that these understood not the meaning of the sacrifices, as shadowing forth the unblemished Lamb of God"* (Matthew Henry)
5. Christ was the spotless Lamb of God, shedding His precious blood (1Pet 1:19)
6. God has given His best for us; we ought to give our best to Him.
7. They gave God what cost them little. Instead of the best, they gave leftovers.
8. Worship became convenience rather than sacrifice.
9. They kept the best for themselves.
10. God reveals their hypocrisy, saying they wouldn't treat earthly rulers this way.
11. Yet they treated the King of Heaven dishonourably.
12. God deserves our best, not our scraps.
13. Half-hearted worship dishonours Him.
14. True worship involves surrender, devotion, and sacrifice.

E. What Lessons can we learn for the Church Today

1. We must guard against empty religion. Worship flowing from gratitude & love.
2. We can sing without worshipping, pray without faith, & serve without love.
3. God sees the heart. He desires sincerity and reverence.
4. Others may see outward activity, but God sees motives and attitudes.
5. Christ deserves our best. He gave Himself completely for us.
6. We should respond with wholehearted devotion.
7. Worship should flow from gratitude and love.

F. Conclusion

1. Israel's great sin was not open idolatry, but careless worship.
2. They dishonoured God while pretending to serve Him.
3. These three questions reveal both the compassion and holiness of God.
4. What is your answer to these questions with a broken heart over sin?
5. This is a personal challenge. What kind of worship do we bring to God?
6. Is He receiving our best? Or only what remains after everything else?
7. It is also a call to renewed devotion, to remember God's love.
8. Restore reverence for His holiness & offer Him wholehearted worship

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." — Romans 12:1