

**Scripture Text:** Malachi 1:6–14:

6 “A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’ 7By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the Lord’s table may be despised. 8When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. 9And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the Lord of hosts. 10Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. 11For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. 12But you profane it when you say that the Lord’s table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised. 13But you say, ‘What a weariness this is,’ and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the Lord. 14Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

Key Themes:

- Reverence,
- Authentic Worship
- Offering God Our Best

Introduction:

The prophet Malachi confronts the priests and people of Israel for their disrespectful and insincere worship. Through vivid imagery and bold accusations, God reveals how their actions dishonor Him. This passage challenges us to reflect on the authenticity of our worship and whether we are offering God our best. Worship is not merely ritualistic; it’s an expression of reverence and love for a holy God.

Study Notes:

1. *God's Expectation of Honour and Reverence (v. 6)*

- God identifies Himself as both a Father deserving honour and a Master deserving fear.
- The priests' neglect in showing proper respect sets a tone for the rest of the passage.
- Worship begins with an acknowledgment of who God is.

2. *The Charge Against the Priests (vv. 7–8)*

- The people offer defiled food on God's altar, symbolizing their contempt.
- God points out the absurdity of presenting blind, lame, or sick animals in sacrifice. Such offerings are offensive to Him and would not even be acceptable to human rulers.
- This highlights the necessity of giving God our best, not our leftovers.

3. *God's Rejection of Insincere Worship (vv. 9–10)*

- God refuses to accept empty rituals and half-hearted sacrifices.
- True worship is not about going through the motions; it requires sincerity and devotion.

4. *God's Global Purpose for Worship (v. 11)*

- A prophetic glimpse into God's desire for worship among all nations.
- God's name is great and worthy of pure offerings and worship.

5. *The Curse of Dishonouring Worship (vv. 12–14)*

- The people's attitude toward worship is apathetic, viewing it as burdensome.
- Those who cheat by promising better sacrifices and giving substandard ones face God's curse.
- The contrast between a holy God and the flawed offerings underscores the call for excellence in worship

Study Questions & Discussion Questions:

1. How does God describe His relationship with Israel in verse 6? What does this reveal about His expectations?

2. Why were the offerings presented by the priests unacceptable to God?

3. In what ways do we sometimes offer God "defiled" sacrifices in our own worship?

4. How does verse 8 challenge the value we place on what we give to God?

5. What is the significance of God's statement in verse 10, "I have no pleasure in you"?

6. Verse 11 mentions God's name being great among the nations. How does this verse expand the scope of worship beyond Israel?

7. What attitudes toward worship does God rebuke in verses 12–13?

8. Reflect on verse 14. Why is it important to keep our commitments to God?

9. How does this passage challenge the way we approach worship today?

10. What practical steps can we take to ensure we are offering God our best?

Practical Application

- **Examine Your Worship:** Reflect on your personal and corporate worship. Are you approaching God with reverence and authenticity?
- **Offer Your Best:** Commit to giving God your best in every area of life, including your time, resources, and talents.
- **Cultivate Sincerity:** Ensure that your worship flows from a heart of gratitude and devotion, not obligation or routine.

Take-Home Challenge:

This week, identify one area in your life where you may be offering God less than your best. It could be in your time spent with Him, the quality of your service, or the sincerity of your worship. Make a deliberate plan to honor Him in that area. Write down one practical change you will make and pray daily for God's help to follow through.