

Malachi 1vs6-14

God demonstrates his love to us in choosing us to be his children therefore trust in his enduring promises.

Introduction

Hi everyone and welcome to our devotional podcast on the book of Malachi. My name is Musa from Christ Central Soweto.

Today we look at the topic of honour in Malachi 1:6-14 in what I think is one of the most challenging of passages in this book. What is honour, how do we show it, and who deserves to receive it?

Honour according to the dictionary is how you regard someone. It is to hold someone in great esteem, and you show that by how you treat them. So, if a person you honour or

respected visits you go out of your way to cook them the best meal and give them your time and resources. If they say something to you, it carries more weight than anybody else and we honour any commitment we give to them.

Now in the culture of honour and shame in the Ancient near East how you treated someone and how they treated you determined your position in society, in some instances it was the difference between life and dead. To shame someone was the worst thing you could do to them. With that in mind, the words of Malachi in vs. 6 carry a lot of weight...

⁶ “A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?” says the Lord Almighty.

Honour is not something unfamiliar with you, a son honours his father, a servant his master but I am both those things to

you, Israel yet where is my honour? In these words God questions how highly, they consider him. Israel was probably good at say it but something in their conduct shows where their hearts truly are.

And to make matters worse it is the priests, those dedicated to serve and honour God (the spiritual leaders), who show contempt for God's name in the sacrifices they accepted from people.

Deuteronomy 15:21 is clear that...

²¹ If an animal has a defect, is lame or blind, or has any serious flaw, you must not sacrifice it to the Lord your God

Yet these priests were offering blind, lame, and diseased animals to God and not even seeing this as something wrong. If this is so honourable, says Malachi try offering them to your governor and see how happy he is with what you give him.

There is this meat that is sold emabutcher called pet mince, it's just all the off pieces grinded up and sold. My dogs love it and can't get enough of it. Now imagine me hosting a dinner and feeding that to my guests, once they find out they will never come visit me again, they will feel disrespected and offended. Now imagine taking the thing you would not even feed other people and offering it to God to honour Him. If it's not suitable for people, what makes you think its suitable for God.

It would be better if you shut the temple doors and not light a single fire at the alter than for you to do this says God.

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.

Now contrast the greatness of God in all the nations with the attitude of the Israelites in vs. 12 and 13...

The Lord's table is defiled,' and, 'Its food is contemptible.' ¹³ *And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously,"*

What are you hoping to receive with such sacrifices and such attitudes? You are just calling down curses on yourself for you are offering the great King of the nations blemished sacrifices when you have something better stashed up at home. You cannot cheat God or hoodwink him: *For his name will be feared among the nations.*

This passage brings to mind the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. They wanted to have their cake and eat it too by offering to sell their property and give the money to the church, at the same time keep some for themselves (in the

background). They wanted to look religious and Holy but also hold on to what they had promised God.

Peter calls what they did lying to the Holy Spirit. And I wonder whether in our own ways we want to look religious and tick the boxes but in our hearts we are saying what a burden to God!, like a wife who dishes for her husband supper but undermines and disrespects him in every other way. It is not honouring to him but just paying lip service, and no one is fooled.

We honour God by taking what he says to us seriously. By obeying his word and living for him. Mere religious observance one day a week but the rest of the week you are living for yourself and breaking God's word is not honouring to God.

What he desires is relationship, he wants your obedience, he wants you to honour him as your Father and Lord. God is on a

mission in this world, a mission to save the world from sin. When you needed saving, God didn't take the leftovers to come and help you, you were not an afterthought. God sacrificed that which was most precious to Him, His perfect son who had no blemish and no sin was found in him to save us so that we can be his children. Surely a king like that deserves our greatest honour. And we honour him by partnering with Him in this mission to save the world, we honour him by trusting Him and taking him at his Word. We honour Him by laying our lives for our brothers and sisters because Christ first laid down His life for us.

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