

## **Malachi 2:1-9**

### **Warning against dishonouring God's name**

#### ***Introduction***

Greetings to you all. My name is Todd Khupe. I am a member of Christ Central Soweto. Let me invite you to continue with us on the journey with prophet Malachi, a very interesting book indeed which reads like the scene of a court case where God is on **trial**. We have just seen God being accused of not loving Israel, His son and His chosen people among the nations. So far God has proven His case of faithfulness to His covenant love. Doubting God's love is actually an expression of Israel's own spiritual dryness and unfaithfulness not God's unfaithfulness. God will never be unfaithful to His own covenant. Malachi's hearers were very religious but detached from God, practising diluted worshipping characterized by hypocrisy and mere rituals.

I don't know whether you have ever landed in this space of spiritual dryness where you faithfully appear at church every Sunday, but in reality church has become just a Sunday ritual you have to go through with no bearing at all in your life. Such are the people being addressed by Malachi.

Today we focus on chapter 2: 1-9. The prophet hammers not on the congregation of God's people but on the priests themselves, you would call pastors today.

#### ***Priests are condemned (1-4)***

The prophet rebukes the priests for condoning fake worship and violation of the Lord's covenant. But why condemning the priest? As the mediators between God and His people, they had failed in guarding the purity of the temple against defilement. They allowed defiled worship which instead of honoring God, despised him and honoured people. In 1:8, Malachi has pointed out that their offering was so much an insult to God that even their human governors would not accept such despicable gifts.

For this failure in their ministry, the priests therefore deserved punishment and therefore God would despise and humiliate them before the people. Instead of blessings they received curses, even their own blessings they pronounced on the people were cursed by God. The hard-hitting message was that they had become so useless to God's cause that they were as good as dung from meat for sacrifice which only fit for throwing away and burning. This is very strong language of rejection.

#### ***God honoured Levi (5-7)***

Notice that in condemning the priests in 2:1, God uses a conditional clause, "*If*", which gives room for them to choose to do the right thing and be saved. In verses 5-7, the prophets points them to the covenant standard that they have deviated from, the true

Levite priesthood. The true Levites, honoured God and spoke his word truthfully without diluting it to please people. They spoke nothing but the truth as God had given them. Because Levi honoured God and upheld His holiness and turned people away from sin, he was also honoured before God. Malachi is calling them to examine themselves and get back to God's standard of His covenant with them. He calls them to repent and walk in righteousness before Him. They are warned against challenging God's word and replacing it with their own desires and the desires of those that they lead. He challenges the priests to be true representatives of God, holding His word in awe and honour. This is a warning to us as believers too. Oftentimes we are tempted to challenge and replace God's standard with our own human standards.

### ***Judgement pronounced (8-9)***

The serious charge that Malachi lays against the priests is that they themselves have turned away from the way of God. By their false teaching and condoning wrong doing they have caused God's people to stumble. Their straying away from the truth of God, has violated God's covenant and made them enemies of God. They have been unfaithful to their ministry. In response God has judged them by despising and humiliating them.

### ***Conclusion***

Brothers and sisters, while it is clear that this message is addressed to the shepherds of God's people who have left their place by putting aside God's word, dishonoring His name, it is also addressed to all of us as believers. We have been called to be a holy priesthood to proclaim the praises of God (1Pt 2:9-10) who has saved us from sin through the death of His Son Jesus Christ. We can't listen to this message and shout from the pews, "*Tell them God...*" as if we are innocent of the same condemnation. Priest or no priest, every child of God is called upon to uphold God's holiness at all times.

May peace love and grace be to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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