

Malachi: Return to Me
I Have Loved You
Malachi 1:1-5



2024.11.24
Sermon 1 of 8

1. Intro
 - 1.1 Open to **Ezra 9**
 - 1.2 Recently finished a short series covering the book of Haggai
 - 1.2.1 The Jews, following 70 years of exile in Babylon, had been granted permission to return to Judah to rebuild Jerusalem
 - 1.2.2 Through Haggai, God confronted the Jews about the temple
 - 1.2.2.1 They had been back for about 15 years and hadn't rebuilt
 - 1.2.3 The people, led by Zerubbabel, responded correctly to the Lord's messenger
 - 1.2.3.1 They repented and got to work
 - 1.2.4 Not all sunshine and roses
 - 1.2.4.1 People complained, compared the temple being built to the first temple
 - 1.2.5 Haggai ends on a positive note
 - 1.2.5.1 The people responded well
 - 1.2.5.2 Their leader was seeking God, and would be blessed for this
 - 1.3 The return of the Jews to their land came in three waves
 - 1.3.1 Zerubbabel led the first back in 538 B.C.
 - 1.3.1.1 This is when Haggai was prophesying
 - 1.3.1.2 Contemporary of Haggai was Zechariah
 - Pastor Rick taught Zechariah 2 years ago (2022)
 - Both prophesied about rebuilding the temple
 - 1.3.2 57 years later, Ezra, the priest, led the second back (457 B.C.)
 - 1.3.3 Nehemiah led the third in 444 B.C.
 - 1.4 57 years, a little more than a generation
 - 1.4.1 Let's read about Ezra's response to what he saw and heard going on in Judah
 - 1.4.2 **Ezra 9:3-15**
 - 1.5 Turn to **Malachi 1**
 - 1.6 Malachi was the next and final Old Testament prophet
 - 1.6.1 Though timing of his activity is debatable, most commentaries place him between the return of Ezra and the return of Nehemiah, or after Nehemiah
 - 1.6.1.1 I think it's between the two returns, but we'll talk about that more when we get to chapter 2
 - 1.6.2 Malachi is quoted several times in the New Testament
 - 1.6.3 God's final word to His people before the coming of the Messiah
 - 1.6.3.1 450 years until Jesus comes
 - 1.6.3.2 We have been given God's final word until the return of the Messiah
 - 1.6.4 This parallel offers a good way to approach the content and prophecy
 - 1.6.4.1 The people had been taken out of bondage in captivity
 - 1.6.4.2 They believed God's word as it came by Haggai and Zechariah
 - 1.6.4.3 Then they back-slid
 - 1.7 Malachi can be looked at from several perspectives
 - 1.7.1 Personal, as well as national
 - 1.7.2 Each individual had made their own decisions that resulted in back-sliding
 - 1.7.3 As God's chosen people, He speaks to them as a nation
 - 1.7.3.1 There is an expectation for God's people as a whole
 - 1.7.3.2 For the leaders to pursue Godliness, priests to administer right worship
 - 1.8 Pray

2. Message

2.1 **Malachi 1:1-2a**

2.1.1 “The burden of the word”

2.1.1.1 Phrase used by a few prophets or prophetic sections

2.1.1.2 Communicates weight of the message being delivered

2.1.2 “I have loved you”

2.1.2.1 Present perfect tense

- Happened in the past, but speaking about now
- Past event with present consequences, gained experience
- Have visited a town

2.1.2.2 Look at all the things I have done in the past for you

- God chose this nation out of love

Deuteronomy 7:6-8

⁶“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

- Even in one of Judah’s darkest times, the prophet Jeremiah

Jeremiah 31:3-4a

³Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. ⁴Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt...

2.1.3 “In what way have You loved us?”

2.1.3.1 Post-exile Judah

- Small nation, poor, only semi-autonomous
- Looking at their current state, feel like they are lacking
- Focusing on the wrong things

2.1.3.2 In arrogance, demand an answer from God

2.1.3.3 Reminds me of Job

Job 31:35

³⁵Oh, that I had one to hear me! Here is my mark. Oh, that the Almighty would answer me, that my Prosecutor had written a book!

2.1.3.4 Job endured great suffering, and desired an answer from God

2.1.3.5 God sent Elihu who said you can’t even look at the sun, God’s majesty is more

2.1.3.6 Then God spoke directly to Job and said He will do the questioning

Job 38:4a

⁴Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

2.1.3.7 God is sovereign, He does not owe an answer

2.1.3.8 His ways are higher, and His thoughts are higher

2.1.3.9 We want answers for life’s troubles

- Why me? Why this way? Why now?

- 2.1.3.10 This is an issue of faith and trust
 - God made the universe, He owns it all
 - Does He have the right to allow things to happen?
- 2.1.3.11 It is in these times that our faith and trust are exercised
 - What are the promises of God?
 - First, His faithfulness
 - Salvation
 - Fellowship (He will not leave or forsake)
 - Peace
 - Strength
 - New Life
 - Deliverance from temptation
 - Comfort
- 2.1.3.12 Do not forsake what you know for what you don't know
 - I don't know why this is happening, but I know God's promises
- 2.1.3.13 Paul was also a man familiar with suffering

Philippians 4:13

¹³ **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**

- 2.1.3.14 Paul's response to suffering is to look to Christ
- 2.1.3.15 All the promises of God are Yes and Amen in Christ
 - He is the point of fulfillment, and His resurrection is the guarantee
- 2.1.3.16 Our trials, tribulations, need for justice cannot be the focus of our life
 - That will tear us down, always lead to despair
 - Our focus must always be the promises of God

Isaiah 26:3

³ **You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.**

- 2.1.3.17 We give our struggles an improper place in our hearts and minds
 - God belongs before all things
 - His promises should take prominence over our circumstances
 - Our very life is evidence of His love
- 2.1.3.18 None of those promises, none of the verses are about our circumstances
 - It's about God and our hearts, regardless of what's around us

2.1.4 For the Jews at this time, God chose to give them an answer

2.2 Malachi 1:2b-3

- 2.2.1 God compares the state of Judah to a foreign nation
 - 2.2.1.1 Esau and Jacob were brothers
 - 2.2.1.2 Both the fathers of nations, Edom and Israel
- 2.2.2 "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated"
 - 2.2.2.1 When we see words like these, we should pause to make sure we understand it
 - Did God hate Esau?
 - Does God hate? What does He hate?
 - 2.2.2.2 God loves people unconditionally, God hates sin exceedingly
 - 2.2.2.3 God is righteous and will judge sin when He sees fit
 - 2.2.2.4 God is faithful and will keep His promises

- 2.2.2.5 The nation of Edom was given warning
 - Jeremiah, Isaiah, Amos, Ezekiel and Obadiah

2.2.3 In 553 B.C., God fulfilled His word given through the prophet Obadiah

2.3 **Malachi 1:4**

- 2.3.1 Through this prophecy, God says they will never rebuild
 - 2.3.1.1 Why is He saying this?
 - 2.3.1.2 Think about Judah, what are they at this time? A rebuilt nation
 - 2.3.1.3 The very fact that they still exist is proof of His faithfulness to covenant rooted in love
- 2.3.2 Israel and Judah are guilty of the same crimes that Edom committed
 - 2.3.2.1 Idol worship, taking advantage of people
 - 2.3.2.2 Uncomfortable to talk about God's wrath
 - The only reason Judah still existed is because love
 - If it wasn't for the covenant, they would be relegated to history as well
- 2.3.3 God uses Esau as personal connection, but this is meant for all nations
 - 2.3.3.1 Jonah and Nahum prophesied to Nineveh
 - 2.3.3.2 Book of Jonah reveals God's heart for every nation

Jonah 3:10

¹⁰ **Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.**

- Last verse of Jonah - left from right
- 2.3.3.3 In Ezekiel, His heart for each person

Ezekiel 33:11

¹¹ **Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'**

- 2.3.4 God calls every nation to seek Him - Acts 17
 - 2.3.4.1 Every nation will be judged at its appointed time
- 2.3.5 It is not wrong to look at our nation and wonder its place
 - 2.3.5.1 All nations are called to seek Him
 - 2.3.5.2 We live in a nation where we can vote
 - If we aren't in the leadership/government, we can still affect it
 - Many nations this is impossible, believers meet in secret to further the kingdom
 - 2.3.5.3 We should exercise our right to elect officials that seek after God
 - What if none of them do? Pick the lesser of two evils
- 2.3.6 The Jews had become so arrogant
 - 2.3.6.1 They've seen nations come and go
 - 2.3.6.2 God used them to remove wicked nations from the promised land
- 2.3.7 Forgotten their own judgment
 - 2.3.7.1 As many prophets as God sent to foreign nations, He sent more to Israel
 - 2.3.7.2 See the remnant as proof that they are measured differently
 - 2.3.7.3 God is fair and righteous in judgment
- 2.3.8 What set the Jews apart is nothing of their own, God's sovereign choice
- 2.3.9 Up to this point, God through Malachi has spoken of the past
 - 2.3.9.1 Now looks forward

2.4 **Malachi 1:5**

- 2.4.1 Judah will one day look out and see that God's plan is so much bigger
- 2.4.2 The Jews took for granted God's choosing
 - 2.4.2.1 Judgment, wrath - those are for the gentiles
 - 2.4.2.2 Righteousness, justification - God chose us
- 2.4.3 In a short-while Jesus will refute this

John 6:40

⁴⁰ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

- 2.4.4 God's intention from the beginning was to draw all people to Himself
 - 2.4.4.1 The Jews were to bear witness of His grace and mercy and love
 - 2.4.4.2 They were to the main avenue through which people could come into right fellowship with the one, true, living God
 - 2.4.4.3 But it wasn't ever meant to end there
 - 2.4.4.4 Through the Jews, through the Messiah, salvation would come to all people

3. Closing

- 3.1 The Messiah has come, His name is Jesus
 - 3.1.1
 - 3.1.2 2000 years ago, He demonstrated His love by dying on the cross
 - 3.1.2.1 He loves us unconditionally

Romans 5:8

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- 3.1.2.2 Death is the penalty of sin
 - 3.1.2.3 The punishment we deserve was dispensed on Him
 - 3.1.3 When the women came to attend to Jesus' dead body, the angel said

Luke 24:5b

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

- 3.1.4 Jesus' resurrection is the fulfillment of all of God's promises

Romans 6:4

⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

- 3.1.5 Because He has loved us, we have available to us a new and abundant life
 - 3.1.5.1 Free from the chains of bondage
 - The bondage of sin, our past, the need for justice
- 3.2 If you've never accepted this truth, I pray you receive it now
 - 3.2.1 Christ died for you, He has loved you
 - 3.2.2 He has made a way for you to be right with God
 - 3.2.3 Your eternity is determined according to belief in Him
 - 3.2.3.1 Not what you've done
 - 3.2.3.2 Not what others say about you
 - 3.2.3.3 Only by your belief in His sacrifice

- 3.3 For those who've accepted His gift of grace
 - 3.3.1 Don't grow tired of hearing His gospel
 - 3.3.2 It is the power to save, and the power to protect
 - 3.3.3 God's chosen nation was reverting to sinful ways, the very people He had delivered
 - 3.3.4 How easy it is for us to fall away, to focus on the wrong things
 - 3.3.5 Don't be arrogant, thinking it couldn't happen to you
 - 3.3.5.1 Peter fell prey to pleasing the Judiazers - reverting to the Law
 - 3.3.6 His gospel and His promises should be in our hearts, in our minds, and on our lips always