

Malachi: Return to Me

God Hates Divorce

Malachi 2:10-16



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Sermon 5 of 8

1. Intro
 - 1.1 Up to this point in Malachi, God has been concerned with right worship
 - 1.1.1 The priests have been defiling the altar
 - 1.1.2 The last section had some intensely graphic descriptions of what God thought of the actions of the priests
 - 1.2 In today's text, God will speak to the whole nation
 - 1.2.1 Still concerned with the altar
 - 1.2.2 Instead of how the priests view their duty, it's about how the people are bringing their offerings
 - 1.3 Let's read and pray **Malachi 2:10-16**
2. Message
 - 2.1 **Malachi 2:10**
 - 2.1.1 Speaking to all of Judah for the rest of the book
 - 2.1.2 "Have we not all one Father?", similar in nature to Malachi 1:6
 - 2.1.3 "Why do we deal treacherously with one another...?"

Jeremiah 9:4-6

⁴"Everyone take heed to his neighbor, and do not trust any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanderers. ⁵Everyone will deceive his neighbor, and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies; they weary themselves to commit iniquity. ⁶Your dwelling place is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know Me," says the LORD.

- 2.1.3.1 Charged with similar accusations as pre-exile Israel/Judah
 - 2.1.3.2 God's Law spoke to every part of life, there is a right way to act
 - 2.1.4 This verse is the first of 5 times we see "deal/dealt treacherously"
 - 2.1.4.1 God's people were to live in a way that represented qualities of God's character
 - Peacefully, graciously, generously, etc.
 - 2.1.4.2 Here they are accused of being treacherous within their nation
 - 2.1.4.3 The next four times we see this phrase, it will be about a specific situation
- 2.2 **Malachi 2:11a**
 - 2.2.1 "Judah", "Israel", "Jerusalem"
 - 2.2.1.1 Indicating the totality of the commission, all of the people
 - 2.2.1.2 Israel - the ancient name for the nation
 - 2.2.1.3 Judah - the modern name for the whole of the people
 - 2.2.1.4 Jerusalem - in the very presence of the temple

2.3 Malachi 2:11b

- 2.3.1 "Institution" is italicised - translators inserted the word

Malachi 2:11b (KJV)

²...For Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD...

2.3.2 Not a wrong insertion, but we need to clarify a point about marriage and the Jewish people
Leviticus 20:26

²⁶And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.

Deuteronomy 14:2

²For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

2.3.3 Jews weren't to marry gentiles - as a general rule

2.3.3.1 Why?

Deuteronomy 7:3-4

³ Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. ⁴ For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.

2.3.3.2 The Jews are a holy people - a people set apart, not to be defiled by idolatry

2.4 Malachi's prophecies were sometime around Ezra and Nehemiah

2.4.1 Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 13 (15 to 20 years in between)

2.4.2 Jewish men are marrying foreign women, and idolatry is entering into the land

2.4.3 This is what Malachi is addressing

2.5 **Malachi 2:12**

2.5.1 The punishment for this crime should be swift, so it doesn't increase

2.5.2 "Awake and aware"

2.5.2.1 Translated very differently - idiom - "alive and kicking"

2.5.2.2 i.e. whoever would do this thing

2.5.3 "Yet who brings an offering"

2.5.3.1 Idolatry at home, church on Sunday

2.5.3.2 God detests the hypocrisy

2.5.3.3 His covenant people, "playing the harlot"

2.5.4 God speaks of His covenant with Israel in marriage terms

2.5.4.1 Spiritual adultery, Hosea is an object lesson on this

2.6 God's accusation of treachery culminates in His judgement of not accepting their offerings

2.7 Next section God brings a second accusation, beginning with its consequence

2.8 **Malachi 2:13**

2.8.1 God's altar is covered in tears and weeping and crying

2.8.2 There is a pain and a crying out that God receives

Psalms 34:18a

¹⁸ The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart

2.8.3 God burns with a righteous anger at the suffering of His children

2.8.3.1 Those committing the sin ought to tremble

Proverbs 6:16-19

¹⁶ These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: ¹⁷ a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, ¹⁹ a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.

2.8.4 We'll see in a second that what was happening was not far from these things that God says He hates and calls them abominations

2.8.5 The question is: whose tears, weeping, and crying is God receiving on the altar?

2.9 **Malachi 2:14a**

2.9.1 Prophet uses similar form to most of chapters 1 & 2, disputational

2.9.2 "For what reason are you not receiving my offerings?"

2.9.2.1 Proud look from the verse in proverbs

2.10 Malachi 2:14

2.10.1 The treachery is Jewish men are abandoning their wives for the foreign women

2.10.1.1 Not only playing the harlot, but at the cost of their spouses

2.10.1.2 “3 things you don’t mess with: God’s Word, God’s wealth, God’s women.”

2.10.2 T.V. Moore, a puritan preacher from mid-19th century said this:

T.V. Moore

She whom you thus wronged was the companion of those earlier and brighter days, when in the bloom of her young beauty she left her father’s house and shared your early struggles, and rejoiced in your later success; who walked arm in arm with you along the pilgrimage of life, cheering you in its trials by her gentle ministry; and now, when the bloom of her youth has faded and the friends of her youth have gone, when her father and mother whom she left for you are in the grave, then you cruelly cast her off as a worn-out, worthless thing, and insult her holiest affections by putting an idolater and a heathen in her place.

2.10.3 Can’t help but think of Jamie when I study this

2.10.3.1 She gave up everything she knew to give me everything she has

2.10.3.2 How could I turn around and abandon her?

2.11 Malachi 2:15a

2.11.1 Hardest to translate and understand verse in the entire Bible

2.11.1.1 Many ways people have interpreted this

2.11.1.2 Who has God made one? The people of Judah? And He maintains a remnant?

2.11.1.3 Context gives a clue

Genesis 2:24

²⁴ **Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**

2.11.2 God makes two flesh into one, with a portion of His Holy Spirit in their union

2.11.2.1 Goes beyond Mosaic Law, this is Moral Law

2.11.2.2 Marriage and its sanctity is a universal truth, a picture of God’s oneness and holiness

- I am set apart for my wife and she is set apart for me

2.11.2.3 Jesus quoted this verse then said

Matthew 19:6

⁶ **So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.**

- This is a stern word from the Lord
- Implies that man is capable of tearing a marriage apart, you can see that plainly
- He tells you not to do it

2.11.2.4 Marriage is holy, and makes man and woman holy, it reflects God’s holiness

2.11.2.5 It also serves another purpose as it pertains to holiness

2.11.3 “And why one?”

2.11.3.1 Why has He made them one? What does the one seek? What purpose for one?

2.11.4 The marriage union is meant to produce godly children

2.11.4.1 Not to say godly people can’t come out of ungodly circumstances

2.11.5 The world might hate it, but marriage is from God

- 2.11.5.1 “It’s just a piece of paper”, “We’re basically married”, “It’s just so the government can tax you a certain way”
- 2.11.5.2 Marriage exists because God created it
- 2.11.5.3 Man has taken God’s creation and defiled it, but it originates with God
- 2.11.5.4 Different cultures around the world view marriage according to their religious history
- 2.11.5.5 God said that marriage is between one man and one woman for one lifetime
- 2.11.5.6 Where in the world is polygamy allowed? Or rather, which religions permit polygamy
 - Islam, Hinduism, Mormonism, various cults
 - Are any of these godly?
 - Have any of these produced godly “offspring”, figuratively? Produced holiness?
 - They are wicked, some of the most vile places and behaviors
- 2.12 End of verse 15, while connected to what precedes it, might fit better with verse 16 to emphasize what God’s about to say
 - 2.12.1 God makes an unequivocal statement about Himself
 - 2.12.2 Sandwiched between two warnings having to do with this thing
- 2.13 **Malachi 2:15b-16**
 - 2.13.1 “Take heed” - “consider your ways”
 - 2.13.1.1 God says “I hate something that you’re messing around with”
 - 2.13.2 This isn’t the same hate from Malachi 1:2, if you remember
 - 2.13.2.1 “I have hated Esau” - loved less
 - 2.13.2.2 This is utter loathing
 - 2.13.3 Divorce violates the holiness and perfection of God
 - 2.13.3.1 Not that God’s holiness or perfection are diminished
 - 2.13.3.2 But something that represents Him in a unique way is diminished
 - 2.13.3.3 In this book, God is specifically concerned with how He is represented
 - 2.13.3.4 This most holy, most personal union is most precious
 - 2.13.3.5 God takes marriage seriously, and detests the thought of it being mistreated
 - 2.13.4 After He proclaims His hatred for divorce we see “Says the Lord of Hosts”
 - 2.13.4.1 This is also recurring in Malachi - we saw it many times in the first two chapters
 - 2.13.4.2 Lord Almighty, Creator of the Heavens and Earth, Commander of Armies, and Father to all Believers - He hates divorce
 - 2.13.4.3 How do you think we should feel about it?
 - We’ll come back to this thought in a minute
 - 2.13.5 Verse 16 repeats the warning - “take heed” and “do not deal treacherously”
 - 2.13.5.1 Repetition communicates importance
 - 2.13.5.2 God is very clearly saying these actions will result in judgement, so “consider your ways”
- 2.14 This section has these interesting historical aspects, but what do we take away from it?
 - 2.14.1 The most important part is what God says about Himself
 - 2.14.2 Preparing for this message, I didn’t know where God wanted to go with it
 - 2.14.2.1 I started looking at the deep dive of divorce and remarriage
 - 2.14.2.2 As a pastor, it’s important to be well versed in what God’s Word says about it
 - 2.14.2.3 These are pervasive issues
 - Divorce rates are 48% for first, 60% for second, 70% for third
 - 80% of first time divorcees remarry
 - 2.14.2.4 They say christian divorce rates are just as high, not actually true

- It is for nominal christians
- Practicing christians it's around 30% - while better, not good
- 2.14.2.5 There is a related statistic that also should be addressed
- 2.14.2.6 Divorce rates are falling, not as good as it sounds
 - Divorce rates are falling because marriage rates are decreasing
 - Those who do get married view it as important and are less likely to get divorced
 - Going back to christian marriages, 30% of those who view marriage as important enough to pursue still end up divorcing
 - An increasing number of people view marriage as not important to pursue

2.15 The church has to address these issues from God's Word

2.15.1 Lay the foundation:

- 2.15.1.1 God established the marriage covenant
- 2.15.1.2 People should marry
- 2.15.1.3 God hates divorce
 - Just because God hates it, doesn't mean it is strictly forbidden
 - Just because God permits it, doesn't mean it should be pursued
 - Divorce is for the extreme exceptions, and the statistics show that it is pursued far too frequently
 - I won't advocate for divorce
 - Maybe separation under those rare exceptions, knowing that separation almost always results in divorce
 - But I can't suggest somebody pursue something God says He hates
- 2.15.1.4 I'm not going to dive into it more than that
 - If you are dealing with these things and want to discuss it, we can talk through it together
 - You should be in counsel with a pastor and his wife
 - You should not be navigating it alone

3. Closing

3.1 Instead, I want to address a few situations that people might be in

3.1.1 Not yet married

- 3.1.1.1 There is no command to be married, but most should healthily pursue marriage
- 3.1.1.2 God calls few to singleness and by extension celibacy
- 3.1.1.3 You should be preparing yourself for marriage
 - Remain pure, pray for a God-seeking spouse

3.1.2 Married and happy

- 3.1.2.1 Praise God!
- 3.1.2.2 Seek Him in order to protect your marriage
- 3.1.2.3 Don't be so proud to think your flesh can't ever rise against your marriage

3.1.3 Married and struggling

- 3.1.3.1 Put thoughts and talk of divorce away
- 3.1.3.2 If you entertain divorce for even a moment, the damage may be insurmountable
- 3.1.3.3 Hate the idea as much as God does, commit yourself to honor your marriage as a holy thing before Him
- 3.1.3.4 Seek counsel from a godly person - pastors or elders, elders' wives

3.1.4 Divorced and single

- 3.1.4.1 For many, this is hard: consider your divorce in light of God's Word

- 3.1.4.2 Though your marriage has ended, your marital obligation may not have
 - 3.1.4.3 Is restoration or reconciliation possible?
 - 3.1.4.4 Seek counsel so you can walk in righteousness
 - 3.1.4.5 This and a struggling marriage may be the hardest situations to navigate
 - 3.1.5 Divorced and remarried
 - 3.1.5.1 The statistics aren't in the favor for remarried people - divorce is more likely
 - 3.1.5.2 God hates divorce, regardless of which marriage you're talking about
 - 3.1.5.3 You are now in a covenant with someone, it should be honored in the same way
 - 3.1.5.4 You need to devote yourself all the more to it
 - 3.2 For those who are divorced and feel condemnation, or for those who interact with those who are divorced
 - 3.2.1 We should look to John 4 - Jesus speaking to the woman at the well
 - 3.2.2 Did He speak to her with condemnation? He revealed Himself to her!
 - 3.2.3 He didn't sugar coat it - He knew her situation, told her that it wasn't right
 - 3.2.4 Jesus' interaction was gracious and merciful
 - 3.2.4.1 Grace and mercy doesn't mean to be permissive of sin
 - 3.2.4.2 He didn't bring judgment and condemnation, He invited her to drink of the Living Water
 - 3.2.5 Divorce is destructive, and those who have been through it may be carrying a burden that you can't imagine
 - 3.2.5.1 What good does it do to cast judgment without knowing them?
 - 3.2.5.2 Instead, love them like Jesus did
 - 3.2.5.3 Invite them into a relationship where God can use you to plant and water seeds that bring life and hope
 - 3.3 Last though I want to reiterate - seek counsel
 - 3.3.1 For the unmarried or happily married, maybe the remarried, you ought to be in some form of discipleship
 - 3.3.1.1 Constantly putting on the armor of God to defend against your flesh and the attacks of the enemy
 - 3.3.2 For those struggling with divorce or considering it
 - 3.3.2.1 You need to seek counsel
 - 3.3.2.2 You need to let someone outside the situation, who isn't emotionally compromised, to help you navigate your situation
 - 3.3.2.3 You need to let God minister to you through godly counsel
4. Prayer and Last Song