



March 1, 2020

“Ministry, Marriage, and Money”

Malachi 1 - 4

Pastor Gary Hamrick

In the days of Malachi, the people had become spiritually lazy and morally apathetic about things. They had grown complacent about ministry (to God), about marriage, and about money. These are important areas for us to examine in our lives as well. What does your devotion to God look like? Are you committed to marriage or do you have a casual view of divorce? How do you manage the resources God has given you? These are questions each of us need to answer, and Pastor Gary’s message today will help us understand God’s perspective on these important topics.

Historical Background

1. In Hebrew, Malachi’s name means my messenger.
2. Bible scholars are unaware of any of the details of Malachi’s heritage, birthplace, etc.
3. Malachi prophesied circa 400 B.C., which was about 100 years after the Jews had returned to Jerusalem after 70 years of captivity in Babylon.
4. Malachi’s ministry followed Ezra and Nehemiah.
 - a. Haggai was called by God to encourage the people to rebuild the Temple.
 - b. Nehemiah was called by God to encourage the people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
 - c. Malachi was called by God to challenge the people of Judah.
5. Pastor Gary said, “When a hundred years has passed, and your work is done [the Temple and the walls of the city had been rebuilt] a completely different generation has come and gone. And the tendency is for things that are important to [be]

forgotten. In a hundred years' time if you aren't intentional about passing down to the next generation the values and the principles, and in this context, the commandments of God, you end up having another generation that has been raised up without shared common values and principles and truths. [Malachi was sent to the people] because they had grown spiritually apathetic and morally lazy. ... Human nature and human tendency is [to become complacent and lazy] because you get comfortable. ... They were unconcerned about things that should matter!"

6. There are 55 verses in the book of Malachi, and 47 of these verses are first person spoken by God.

Eight Questions

7. Pastor Gary said, "[The people] ask questions every time God [called] them out on something, as basically, sarcastic denials of what God [was] saying."
- a. In what way have you loved us?
 - i. **Malachi 1:1-2a** - *"The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. 'I have loved you,' says the LORD. 'Yet you say, "In what way have You loved us?" ' "*
 - b. In what way have we despised your name?
 - i. **Malachi 1:6** - *"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am Master, where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts to you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?' "*
 - c. In what way have we defiled you?
 - i. **Malachi 1:7a** - *"You offer defiled food on My altar but say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' "*
 - d. For what reason do you not receive our offering?
 - i. **Malachi 2:13-14a** - *"And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and crying; so He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill from your hands. Yet you say, 'For what reason?' "*
 - e. In what way have we wearied you?
 - i. **Malachi 2:17** - *"You have wearied the LORD with your words; Yet you say, 'In what way have we wearied Him?' "*
 - f. In what way shall we return to you?
 - i. **Malachi 3:6-7** - *" 'For I am the LORD, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,' says the LORD of hosts. But you said, 'In what way shall we return?' "*

- g. In what way have we robbed you?
 - i. **Malachi 3:8a** - *“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ ”*
- h. What have we spoken against you?
 - i. **Malachi 3:13** - *“ ‘Your words have been harsh against Me,’ says the LORD, ‘Yet you say, “What have we spoken against You?” ’ ”*

Areas Of Neglect And Apathy - Ministry

8. Pastor Gary said, “The people had been careless and neglectful concerning their devotion to God. ... [Until] Jesus Christ was revealed, God made a gracious provision in the Old Testament that if [a person] would sacrifice an [innocent] animal on behalf of [your life sinful life]... then God would receive [that person as being] righteous by faith looking toward the cross. ... In that day [people] were to bring [a lamb] to the sacrifice for the atonement of their sins. ... What they were doing... was bringing the blind, [lame, and sick lambs]. ... Instead of bringing [God] the cream of the crop, [they] were bringing the worst of the flock. ... When we don’t give God our best of our abilities, [time, talents, and resources], we are in effect offering him our leftover stuff.”
 - a. **Malachi 1:7-8** - *You offer defiled food on My altar but say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’ By saying, ‘The table of the LORD is contemptible.’ And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?’ Says the LORD of hosts.”*
9. The people didn’t use their words to praise God, instead they used their words to complain against God, that he was too harsh, and his commandments were too hard.
 - a. **Malachi 3:13-15** - *“ ‘Your words have been harsh against Me,’ says the LORD, ‘Yet you say, “What have we spoken against You?” You have said, ‘It is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the LORD of hosts? So now we call the proud blessed, for **those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free.**’ ” ’ ” (Emphasis added)*
 - b. Pastor Gary said, “[Sometimes we do the same thing. We sometimes look at what wicked people ‘seem’ to get away with; we think it’s unfair of God to let them get off without consequences.] ... People who live for this world may have short-term gains, but they will experience long-term consequences. [By way of] contrast, Christians who live for the Lord may experience... short-term consequences, but we will be rewarded with long-term gains. ... If you keep your eyes always on the short-term, you will always be disappointed. But if you keep your eyes fixed on Jesus... you will always be content no

matter what the circumstances. [If] you lose sight of eternity, you will be depressed [when] looking at the short term. So, don't compare your life to people who don't want to live for the Lord because they might experience short-term gains, but ultimately, they will experience long-term consequences."

- i. **Romans 8:18** - *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*

Areas Of Neglect And Apathy - Marriage

10. The people of Malachi's day were apathetic about the sacredness of marriage, and the evidence was clearly seen in the extremely casual way men divorced their spouse.
11. **Malachi 2:14-16** - *"Because the LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom **you have dealt treacherously**; yet she is your companion and your wife **by covenant**. But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and **let none deal treacherously** with the wife of his youth. 'For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence,' says the LORD of hosts. 'Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you **do not deal treacherously**.'" (Emphasis added)
 - a. Some Bible translations use the words "you have broken faith" instead of "you have dealt treacherously."
 - b. A covenant is a sacred bond.
 - c. **Genesis 2:24** - *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."*
 - i. The Hebrew word for one flesh is *duvach*, which basically means to be glued together as husband and wife.*
12. Pastor Gary said, "[Divorce] is not the unpardonable sin as some people want to make it out to be, but it is something that grieves God. ... Marriage is something that God has instituted, and he wants us to honor marriage... [but people go through divorce] without biblical grounds; [people] dishonor God. ... God puts high value on marriage because this is something that he has implemented. ... God hates divorce because marriage was intended by God to be a display of God's love and grace and faithfulness toward us. ... When we come into a marital union, ideally, we are supposed to be mirroring [those things] to our spouse. ... Throughout the Bible God [shows his relationship to Israel in the Old Testament, and to the Church in the New Testament, like a marriage]. ... When we break faith with a spouse without biblical grounds, we are misrepresenting God's character and distorting the image

of God's love, grace, and faithfulness. ... [We live in a culture in which there is a casual view of no-fault divorce]... divorce has been made easy, accessible, and appealing to people who no longer want to be committed, [all because] they aren't 'happy.' ... **The ultimate goal in marriage is not personal happiness; it is personal holiness.** ... We need to keep our oath even when it hurts.¹ ... Aren't you glad that God doesn't treat us like we sometimes treat each other in a marriage? He stays committed. He loves us with an everlasting love. He woos us back when we stray. He is loving and gracious and faithful to us." (Emphasis added)

- a. **Isaiah 54:5** - *"For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name..."*
- b. **Isaiah 62:5** - *"For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."*
- c. **Jeremiah 3:14a** - *" 'Return O backsliding children,' says the LORD; 'for I am married to you.' "*
- d. **Ephesians 5:31-32** - *" 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*
- e. **Revelation 19:7** - *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*

13. God made marriage to be a complimentary union between a man and woman, and we should make every effort to make sure there is unity, which won't come easily.

- a. **Ephesians 4:3** - *"... endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."*

14. God never commands or encourages divorce.

15. God allows two narrow circumstances in which divorce is **permissible**. (Emphasis added)

- a. Marital unfaithfulness/sexual immorality.
 - i. **Matthew 5:31-32** - *"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery."*
- b. Desertion by an unbelieving spouse.
 - i. **1 Corinthians 7:13-15** - *"And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving*

¹ **Psalm 15:4** - *"In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the LORD; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change."*

wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.”

16. Pastor Gary said, “If you are in a situation [in which] you don’t have one of these two grounds, yet it [your marriage] is completely miserable or maybe even dangerous, or alcoholism or pornography or something else is going on, then separation may certainly be a step that you need to take for your safety or maybe for you to work on your marriage... **Separation should always be with the biblical mindset of reconciliation.** In our culture today separation is [typically] a step toward divorce.” (Emphasis added)
- a. **1 Corinthians 7:10-11** - *“Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: a wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.”*
 - b. A woman should never be in a home where there is abuse. Some of you would say, ‘I didn’t even know these things and I got divorced... or I wasn’t a Christian...’ ... All I can say to you is now that you know what you know, wherever you are in a circumstance in life, whether you are married or divorced, or married and on the brink of divorce, or whether you are single, just know what God says about the sacredness of marriage, and live it out to the best of your ability and trust God.”

Areas Of Neglect And Apathy - Money

17. **Malachi 3:8-10** - *“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, “in what way have we robbed You?” ‘In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.’ ”*
- a. The word tithe means tenth, which means ten cents out of every dollar is to go to the Lord.
 - b. Pastor Gary said, “[This] is his idea for us because it is a way that honors him with everything that we have, which has come from [him in the first place]. Everything that we have we are not owners of it; we are just managers of it... If you have a biblical worldview of resources and income and earnings, it’s that everything [we] have accumulated; everything [we] have accomplished is from the hand of God. He’s either given it to [you] or given [you] the abilities to produce an income... he gets all the glory for it. [He] wants a tenth of it back, and he gives us the privilege of living off of ninety percent of it. ...

Offerings are over and above [the] tithe. [Offerings are] discretionary generosity. ... The problem is that a lot of people can't be generous with God or others because they are a slave to debt. Most Americans live beyond their means. Most Americans are spending more than they are earning. ... [Honoring God and being generous with God and others] begins with reining in your spending. ... God will never let his children beg for bread. ² [God will take care of us]. ... The tithe is not a legal mandate; it is simply a loving principle."

18. The principles and purpose of tithing are twofold.
 - a. To worship the Lord as provider of all things.
 - b. To condition the heart against greed and selfishness.
 - i. **1 Timothy 6:10** - *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."*
 - ii. **2 Corinthians 8:7** - *"But as you abound in everything - in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us - see that you abound in this grace also."*

Discussion Questions

1. Provide an overview of the life of Malachi. (See #1 through #6 above)
2. Read and discuss the Scriptures and the questions in Pastor Gary's outline. (See #7 above)
3. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they "said" these things to God in an attempt to justify their lifestyle, decisions, mindset, etc.
4. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments concerning the way the people of Malachi's day considered it to be of little importance to be in right relationship with God and worship him. (See #8 above)
5. How has the Holy Spirit helped you to change your heart and mind concerning the need every person has to properly "minister" to the Lord?
6. Read and discuss **Malachi 3:13-15**. (See #9a above)

² **Psalm 37:25** - *"I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread."*

7. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks regarding the way we consider short-term and long-term circumstances/consequences incorrectly. (See #9b above)
8. Read and discuss [Malachi 2:14-16](#). (See #10 and #11 above)
9. Spend time reading Pastor Gary's comments about the sacredness of marriage and the cultural view of marriage, as well as the associated Scriptures that show God's perspective. (See #12 above)
10. Read and discuss the Scriptures that define the two narrow circumstances in which divorce is permissible. (See #13 through #15 above)
11. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments regarding separation and having a mindset of reconciliation. (See #16 above)
12. Read and discuss [Malachi 3:8-10](#) and Pastor Gary's remarks about tithing. (See #17 above)
13. Read and discuss [1 Timothy 6:10](#) and [2 Corinthians 8:7](#). (See #18 above)
14. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)