

Hurst Green
1st Sep 19
Malachi – Bored with God?
Malachi 1:6-14

Last week we looked at God's love to us and this week we are going to look at another aspect of God – His greatness! And of course we will look at our response to his greatness and what happens when this goes wrong.

You have heard our reading for today and it can be seen in two ways:

God pleading for his people to honour him in the same way as a kid in the school playground to like him.

Or God demanding the honour that is due to his name.

You will not be surprised that I choose the second one but unfortunately Israel chose the first one and ended up bored with God because they made out that God was ordinary and therefore the things of the world became far more interesting and they started to give God the second best when he deserved the best.

It all starts with the first half of verse 6

Malachi 1:6 (ANIV)

⁶ "A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honour due to me? If I am a master, where is the respect due to me?" says the LORD Almighty. ~~"It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. "But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'"~~

God uses those real world examples of a son and a servant to describe us and we should be happy with that because we call God our Father every time we pray the Lords Prayer.

2 Corinthians 6:18 (ANIV)

¹⁸ "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

And that is quoting 2 Samuel because God is a consistent God and the theme of his fatherhood is found throughout the bible.

John 1:12 (ANIV)

¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

Romans 8:16-17 (ANIV)

¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, ~~if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.~~

And that gives you a tremendous incentive to pay attention and get worship right. Heirs of God.

All that glory and wonder that that lines up for us. What joy is going to be ours because God has chosen to make us his children! That could be a sermon in its own right.

But back to Malachi and the lessons on worship.

We come together to worship as the family of God. We stand here today before God as his children and what an honour that is.

But God also uses the example of a servant to his Master and that is a very important relationship to remember and honour. We like the child of God bit but we also have a God that we choose to serve and we cannot have one without the other.

But in either of those relationships we have to give honour. That is not a phrase that people usually use today however I took a look at the various modern translations to see if they used a different phrase and I found that they all still use the word honour. They have not been able to find a better phrase.

Now we have all had Fathers and hopefully we love them but it is a very different love than we show other people and this is because we also respect them or honour them because they are that unique person in our lives.

We also all have worked somewhere or studied somewhere and so we have had bosses. Some have been good and some not so much but that is another tale. People have told us what to do but when your boss tells you to do something then that carries more weight because you respect them as your boss.

God is both our Father and our Master and so on both front is due honour from us and what he tells us to do should carry more weight because of that honour. But that is also a lesson for another day

God is due our honour and respect.

But back to verse 6 and the second half

Malachi 1:6 (ANIV)

⁶ *"A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honour due to me? If I am a master, where is the respect due to me?" says the LORD Almighty. "It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. "But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'"*

God lays down that charge *"It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name"* Because Malachi is bringing this message to a wayward people who have forgotten the solemn covenant and become lazy in their worship.

And of course the people respond not by examining themselves to see if God's charge is right but by denying everything *"How have we shown contempt for your name?"*

Isn't that a typical human response? What not me surely not me! It must be someone else.

So God goes on to show them.

Malachi 1:8 (ANIV)

⁸ *When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or*

diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty.

The Priests were meant to ensure that only the very best animals were presented for the sacrifice and in the solemn covenant the people had promised to supply them. But the people had got lazy. It was only going to be burnt on the altar so let's use the weak and the ill and keep the best for ourselves.

But God lays it on the line using human examples. Try presenting them to your Governor and see what he says!

And how much greater is God than a human governor!

And God goes on to say why should he accept them – very good point. The people are coming before God with their prayers and these blemished sacrifices when they know it is wrong and yet they expect the same answer.

God twice tells them that he is to be great.

Malachi 1:11 (ANIV)

¹¹ *My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.*

Malachi 1:14 (ANIV)

¹⁴ *"Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations.*

So we have a severe case of the careless worship going on here and we can have the same. OK we do not bring animals to be sacrificed and we do not have that huge altar we learnt about a few weeks ago but we worship our God both here together, when we meet up and when we are on our own and we do not want that worship to be rejected because it is careless.

So how does careless worship come about?

Firstly by failing to see **Gods overwhelming love**. Going back to verse 2

Malachi 1:2 (ANIV)

² *"I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?' "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says. "Yet I have loved Jacob,*

That is God's overwhelming love for all as I discussed last week. His amazing and saving love for us that is so great that we respond with love because we have chosen him but our love for him can never be as great as his love for us.

Failing to see this love is the biggest hindrance to spreading Gods word because if we could show this love to people they would respond but their eyes are shut to this particularly in this rich and comfortable land.

And secondly careless worship comes about through failing to see **God's greatness**.

This is the other facet of our God. We have God the loving father who welcomes us as his children but we also have the awesome majestic mighty God who is greater than we can fathom.

Hence all the talk about where is the honour that is due his name. As we sometimes sing

"I give you all the honour and praise that's due your name"

That has to be an important part of our worship. As a contrast to words from the same song:

"As your spirit moves upon me know you meet my deepest need"

God shows that their worship has been careless in verse 11 and 14.

Malachi 1:11 (ANIV)

¹¹ *My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.*

If their worship at the temple had been magnifying the name of the Lord their God, the Lord our God then it would have been acceptable because it would have made God's name great. It obviously wasn't!

Malachi 1:14 (ANIV)

¹⁴ *~~"Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations.~~*

Again the Lord's name is to be great.

Careless worship is unacceptable because it fails to God's overwhelming love and God's greatness.

And all of this causes careless worship because failing to see those things mean that you don't get excited by God and you join Israel in seeing it all as a burden as it says in verse 13.

Of course there are times when worship is hard work. Getting here, getting your head in the right place, getting your heart in the right place, not worrying over whether you set the oven timer or if the meat is defrosted. Other times you will trip in in exactly the right mood and have a great time.

But are you with Israel seeing it all as a wearily some burden or are you here for true worship.

Careless worship has the form without the power and God's view of it is in verse

Malachi 1:10 (ANIV)

¹⁰ *"Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands.*

So if that is all about careless worship what is the nature of true worship?

Firstly it has to be about preparing yourself and I know that is difficult in our busy lives and the devil will try to disrupt it. It is getting yourself in the right place ahead of time.

Going back to 1 Corinthians 14

1 Corinthians 14:26 (ANIV)

²⁶ ~~What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.~~

It does not have to be contemporaneous – that is decided on the spur of the moment. You can do this ahead of time but by having spent time with God you can bring something to this service.

Worship expresses our response to the greatness of God and the overwhelming love of God.

It comes from our heart where we treasure God, it overflows because we do not just worship God on a Sunday but every day; all day!

It is not a slick service where everything runs smoothly, although that is important and is part of the role of the service leader. But that on its own just produces a performance not worship.

It is not a time of warm emotionalism. Where we feel great because we have sung familiar hymns and made ourselves feel good because we have spent time with friends. There may be times when you need that but alongside that we need to hear God talking to us; normally that will be through the bible and the exposition which I hope gives you a challenge week by week.

It is also not a laid back approach – as Evangelicals some would see us as laid back not having the form and structure. However we have chosen our style as not relying on laid out formats and great buildings but relying on individuals to be the body of Christ.

So what is it? It comes from acknowledging and responding to the greatness of God and worship humbly expresses the intensity of our love for God without the distractions of artificiality. That is why our worship is our joint expression of our Love for God and is something everyone can be involved in.

I hope that here we never have the showmanship and artificial make overs that you find in some churches; here I want us to be able to express our love for our Father God in ways that suit us all.

May God protect us at all times from careless worship that he would reject and let us always worship from the bottom of our hearts because we love the Lord our God and stand in awe at his greatness and his overwhelming love for us.

Now think on this while we take up our collection as a thank offering to God and, as usual, if you give electronically hold the bag for a few seconds and commit your gift to God

COLLECTIO**n**

Now we will express our worship as we come to a time of communion obeying Christs command to do this in remembrance of him and lets still our hearts by singing _____

