

MALACHI

Week 4

OVERVIEW

The sin of the people has caused damage that was beyond what anyone in the tribe could have imagined. The ripple effects of improper sacrifices, intermarriage, adultery, divorce, and a general lack of faith are crushing the community. Worst of all is they are living in denial and downplaying it. It would be easy to feel as though all was lost - the people have gone too far, too much sin abounds.

BUT GOD... Two of the most powerful words in all of Scripture. Just like when Adam and Eve first brought sin into the world... Just like when Pharaoh was pressing close behind the Israelites in their escape from Egypt... Just like when it seemed that Israel's army would not be able conquer the Philistine armies with the champion Goliath in the way... GOD MAKES A WAY.
In this passage HOPE enters the story through the person of The Messenger.

KEY QUESTION:

Are there any thoughts, beliefs, words, behaviors, or habits that you need to submit to the Father and His refining fire? Pray Psalm 139:23-24 to help you in this pursuit of God's best way for your life.

DISCUSSION

READ Malachi 2:17-3:5 out loud as a group

OBSERVATION:

- Who is involved/mentioned in the text?
- What does God say?
- What sections or passage breaks do you notice?
- What key words stand out to you?
- What are some repeated words, phrases or ideas?
- What have the priests done?
- What have the people (Judah) done?
- What promises are made by God?

INTERPRETATION:

- Where have you read the word "wearyed" already in Malachi?
- What does this help us understand about the people's ability to discern right and wrong?
- What is the issue with the people questioning God's justice?
- How will God respond to the people's sin?
- READ
 - Mark 1:1-8
 - Matthew 3:1-12
- What do these texts have in common with this part of Malachi?
- What other examples of "messengers" does God use in the Old Testament? The New?
- What is God communicating to people through His messengers?
- In this passage, what is the appearance of the messenger compared to?
- What do you know about God's judgment?
- What other Scriptures speak to God's judgment?
 - examples: Genesis 3; Genesis 15; Matt. 7, 10, 12; John 5; Rev. 20
 - What do these Scriptures tell us about God's judgement?
- How are justice and judgment related?
- In what ways do you experience God's justice in your life?
- In the list of judgments against the people, there are certain sins named. What are they (v5)?
 - What might these sins look like today?
- What do you think Judah would be like if they truly were repentant and took God's warnings here in this text to heart? What would change? What would look different?

APPLICATION:

- In what ways does John the Baptist's message (Mark 1, Matt. 3) resonate with you?
- What are some of the emotions you feel around this text? Why?
- When it comes to the "Day of the Lord's Judgment", what images come to mind? What do you feel as you anticipate that day for yourself?

APPLICATION:

- Are there any thoughts, beliefs, words, behaviors, or habits that you know are not pleasing to God - that need to be purified by His refining fire?
What are they?
 - o If you can't think of anything specific, take time together as a group to pray that God would give you eyes to see your sin.
- In what ways does the bringer of Good News (The Messenger) in Jesus Christ help you have comfort or peace in the face of your sin?
- How might God be directing you to change your thoughts, attitudes or behaviors to go His Way, instead of your own?

NEXT STEPS

- Read Malachi 3:6-15
- Make notes of Observation, Interpretation, and Application
- Bring your thoughts to group to share next week