

Malachi 3-4

Good evening; tonight we finish the Old Testament.

What a journey that has been for us as a church, and for me as a pastor.

We will celebrate this feat by moving into the Book of Revelation here on Wednesday Nights; then we will go to Genesis and start our second time through the entire Old Testament.

We will be in Malachi chapter 3 and look at the last two Chapters.

We used to take our kids up to Calico Ghost Town every year to camp, until my wife encountered rattlesnakes on one trip.

She refuses to go back.

But, in the many tours we took of that Ghost Town, we learned a few things.

The most valuable people in a mining town were not the miners but the refiners.

The refiner would take a lump of ore that looked like a normal rock... Something that looked worthless to the normal, untrained eye.

Yet, he knew there was treasure inside, hidden behind all the ugly.

He would place it in the fire until the silver melted.

As the heat increased, impurities would rise to the surface.

Again and again, he would scrape away the dross.

The process slow, intense, and uncomfortable for the silver, if silver could feel.

An old illustration says that when someone asked a silver refiner how he knew the silver was pure, he replied, “When I can see my reflection in it.” Whether those were his exact words or not, the picture beautifully captures what God is doing in our lives.

Many people love the idea of God blessing them, but few love the idea of God refining them.

Yet God is more interested in our holiness than our comfort.

He is willing to turn up the heat, not to destroy us, but to remove what doesn't belong so that His image is seen more clearly in us.

Tonight, in these final chapters of Malachi, Israel has become religious without being righteous.

They offered sacrifices, attended worship, and claimed to belong to God, but their hearts had drifted.

They questioned God's love, robbed Him in their giving, tolerated sin, and wondered why God seemed silent.

Into that spiritual complacency, Malachi announces that the Lord is coming.

For some, He will come like a refiner's fire and a launderer's soap.

For others, He will come as a consuming fire of judgment.

Yet for those who fear His name, "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings"

The same fire that purifies silver also consumes chaff.

The difference is not the fire, but the condition of what enters it.

Today, as we come to Malachi 3-4, the question is not simply, "Is God coming?" The question is, "When He comes, what will His fire reveal in me?"

So, let's pray, and we will get into our verses...

We ended last time with the people asking, "Where is the God of judgment?"

Malachi will be used to answer that here in Chapter 3, as he speaks of the coming of John the Baptist.

Look at verse 1...

The Coming Messenger

3:1 "Behold, I send My messenger,
And he will prepare the way before Me.
And the Lord, whom you seek,
Will suddenly come to His temple,
Even the Messenger of the covenant,
In whom you delight.
Behold, He is coming,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

The three synoptic Gospels use this passage to show that this promise was fulfilled in John the Baptist.

Remember how Chapter 2 ended...

Mal 2:17 "Everyone who does evil
Is good in the sight of the Lord,
And He delights in them,"
Or, "Where is the God of justice?"

The people were complaining that God seemed to reward the wicked and did not exercise true justice in the world.

God tells them of what is to come: things will be made right one day; He will send His Messiah, and before Him will send His messenger.

When we get to the end of Malachi, the prophet will finish with a promise of Elijah coming to prepare the way for the Lord,

**Mal 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of
the LORD.**

This will be true for the Second Coming of Jesus... Many think one of the two witnesses will be Elijah.

But when Gabriel spoke about John the Baptist to his father Zacharias, he was told,

**Luke 1:17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and
power of Elijah,**

Both men were forerunners of Jesus: one at His first coming, and the other at His Second Coming.

Remember when the disciples questioned Jesus about this prophecy, that Elijah must come.

He answered them by saying this about John the Baptist: **Matt 11:14, "And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come."**

Understand: there are two comings of Jesus. The first is already behind us, when He came as the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

The Second Coming will bring judgment and justice, and the people's questions in Malachi will be answered emphatically when Jesus comes to establish His throne.

In the first coming, John was the forerunner in the spirit and power of Elijah; in the second, it will be Elijah.

His purpose is to prepare the way before the Messiah.

In ancient processions, a messenger was sent ahead of a king to announce his arrival and determine the route.

The purpose was for the messenger to have any obstacles in the road removed.

John did this as he ministered with a baptism of repentance, preparing the way for the ministry of Redemption that Christ would bring to this world.

The people in Malachi's day wondered why the promises of Haggai and Zechariah had not yet been fulfilled.

Malachi explains that the way must be prepared, and they were not ready yet.

He assures them that the second Messenger of the covenant will be the Lord Himself.

Jesus will come into His temple as the fulfillment of the Old Covenant and to institute a New Covenant.

We think of the New Testament account, and one of the first actions Jesus took in His ministry was to enter the Temple and correct the wrongs in that system.

Making a whip out of ropes, driving out the money changers, flipping over the tables.

Then He declared,

Matt 21:13 "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

The disciples remembered,

John 2:17 that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

They witnessed godly zeal for righteousness.

They saw the Lord's anger against the merchandising of religion.

When Jesus first came, He went right to the Temple; understand, the prophet saw this 400 years before it happened.

At His Second Coming, He will enter the Temple and establish His rule from there.

And Elijah will come before that time...

Look at verse 2...

2 "But who can endure the day of His coming?

And who can stand when He appears?

For He *is* like a refiner's fire

And like launderers' soap.

3 He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;

He will purify the sons of Levi,

And purge them as gold and silver,

That they may offer to the LORD

An offering in righteousness.

4 "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem

Will be pleasant to the LORD,

As in the days of old,

As in former years.

5 And I will come near you for judgment;

I will be a swift witness

Against sorcerers,

Against adulterers,

Against perjurers,

Against those who exploit wage earners and widows
and orphans,

And against those who turn away an alien —

Because they do not fear Me,"

Says the LORD of hosts.

We see really important imagery in verse 2.

As fire separates the impurities from the silver, so
soap separates dirt from our clothes.

And Jesus separates sin from the human heart.

Jesus is a refiner's fire and a launderer's soap.

The ancient launderer would take a raw garment and
work it over and over until the oils and gooey
substances attached to the fibers were removed.

He would use a paste made from various resins, ashes, and in some cases urine.

As he ran water over it, other workers would tread the cloth as it was rinsed.

They would hang it out to dry, let the sun bleach it, and allow the odors to diminish as well.

The launderer's house was usually isolated, but this was a stinky ordeal.

And Jesus, like an ancient launderer, offers us cleansing, and not a one-time purification, but more of a procedural purification.

When a person surrenders their life to Christ, they have remnants of their past and their flesh still torments them.

Christ redeems us eternally, but the process of sanctification begins in this life.

He rinses, works our life over, beats out that pride, and especially the self-sufficiency we all carry in our heart and mind.

There are even seasons He allows the heat of trials and tribulation to dry us out, to remove impurities.

Of course, the refiner's image speaks profoundly as well.

He turns up the fire under us, and the impurities come to the surface and are skimmed off.

And as mentioned before, the process repeats until the refiner can see his image in the reflection.

That is the goal: to get our lives more and more Christ-like.

The prophet here sees a purification taking place among the Jewish priests, the sons of Levi.

The New Testament tells us that this was partly fulfilled in

Acts 6:7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

And there is a remnant even today among the Jews who have been saved through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Yet the fulfillment of this promise will be fully seen at the Second Coming of Christ, when the Jews, as a people, will believe on Him.

Remember what Zechariah foretold,

Zech. 12:10 “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”

The New Testament testifies to this as well, when Paul declared in Rom 11:26 And so all Israel will be saved,

Verses 4 and 5 show that there will be a day when things will be made right, and it is always important to see where God’s eyes are set in this world.

The treatment of the weak, the widow, the orphan, the alien...

The way we treat and talk about other humans shows how we love God...

If your life is lived with a blind eye toward the weak in this world... especially in our land of plenty... It tells a person that God may not be their true God, but they themselves are their own god.

Well, that is the God of the Old Testament, someone might protest...

Look at verse 6...

6 "For I *am* the LORD, I do not change;

Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

7 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?'

God is immutable; He does not change and is forever the same.

He is a trustworthy, knowable God, and His Word reveals Him.

In a world where the paradigm is shifting constantly, where nothing seems certain, or even real anymore...

We as believers can rest in a God who does not change.

He is our anchor through life.

God does not care what is trending or what the culture demands, and He is not so insecure that He plays into the spirit of the age.

He is above it all, and His principles and defining line of right and wrong are constant.

He will not change His Ways because it hurts your feelings, or a person wants to be identified by the person they want to have sex with.

His Word is the standard in every age.

God does not care that Pew research shows that 70% of Americans believe cohabitation is okay.¹

That living together and sex before marriage is acceptable...

The percentage is higher, and even in the church, if a person says they will one day get married...

Popular consensus does not change God's Word; it is sin, however, lover boy tries to whisper it in your ear.

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/11/06/public-views-of-marriage-and-cohabitation/>

He is a liar; it was not for another time. God still cares about these things.

God's truth is eternal and not dependent on polls and culture.

Notice God tells them to return to Him, because He will not bend to them.

This is the modern man's mindset: if they don't like something about God, they believe they can change Him into something of their own liking.

Not so, "return to Me, and I will return to you," He says.

The problem is never God... the problem is usually this man right here.

God tells them, "Come back to Me, My ways, and I will return to you."

They wonder now about the specifics... They ask, "In what way shall we return?"

Verse 8...

Do Not Rob God

8 "Will a man rob God?

Yet you have robbed Me!

But you say,

'In what way have we robbed You?'

In tithes and offerings.

9 You are cursed with a curse,

For you have robbed Me,

Even this whole nation.

10 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.*

11 "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,

So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,

Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,"

Says the LORD of hosts;

12 And all nations will call you blessed,

For you will be a delightful land,"

Says the LORD of hosts.

We see here robbing God is a high heavenly crime.

Judas was known as **John 12:6 ...a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.**

He was stealing from the Lord...

Think about Ananias and Sapphira, who promised to give a certain amount and withheld from the Lord what they had committed.

The early church learned a valuable lesson in this...

After Ananias was slain for his lies, we are told about Sapphira and her continuation in the lies... in

Acts 5:9-11 Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband *are* at the door, and they will carry you out." **10** Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying *her* out, buried *her* by her husband. **11** So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

Fear came upon the early church... who would dare rob God at that point?

Malachi tells them they are stealing from the Lord.

They were withholding their tithe... The tithe in the Old Testament was not considered the people's to give at all; the first of the flock, the first of the crop, and the first portion belonged to God.

It was not that they were failing to give; rather, they were in fact stealing God's property.

Because they were stealing, they were told they were cursed.

J. Vernon McGee used to say, "The last stronghold in the child of God is their pocketbook."

"Show me a man of God by where his money goes."

Here God states that the people were withholding their tithes.

This principle is laid out in God's Word even before the Jewish nation came into existence.

In Genesis 18, Abraham offered a tithe to the priest Melchizedek.

In the Law, there were actually four tithes: three per year and one every third year.

Their annual tithe was actually 33%. That is what was God's.

Oh, and people want to fight and argue about the tithing principle.

Are New Testament believers under the tithing principle?

You can find all kinds of cantankerous videos on YouTube of disgruntled people articulating that the tithe is not a principle for today.

Now, it is true that we are free from the laws of dieting, feasting, sacrifices, the Sabbath, and even tithing as a matter of law.

But there is wisdom in setting aside a day of rest and worship.

The principle is still there.

There is New Testament precedent to this as well.

Jesus said, **Luke 6:38: Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For**

with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

He said, Luke 16:10-11: He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much. **11** Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?

And the detractors of the New Testament tithe claim that there is no mention of the tithe anywhere in the New Testament... Well, why would God limit us to 10%.

If the Old Law demanded a percentage, shouldn't we, who have been free from that Law, be more generous?

Jesus wants 100% of us... and when He has control, He then directs us to give according...

Do we really think we have given all if we can't even let go of a meager ten percent?

One pastor said, In Medieval times, entire armies were converted to Christianity, yet when the soldiers were baptized, they kept their sword hand out of the

water. That way, if they resorted to indiscriminate killing on the battlefield, they justified it by saying, “This hand was never baptized.”

I’m afraid many modern Christians get baptized with their wallet out of the water. They’ve given themselves to Christ, but they plan to handle their money their way. If that’s your attitude, then you’re robbing God.²

I agree we are not under the Law of the Tithe, but ignoring the principle is perilous to a believer's finances.

This is still a great discipline to adopt...

They were instructed to bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in the house.

Apparently, this was the Temple treasury... and these resources supported the Temple ministers.

God wanted to make sure His ministers had ample supply.

Paying their wage was one of the many reasons God required the tithe.

² <https://www.sandyadams.org/sermon/malachi-3-4/>

This is how the full-time pastors are paid here in this Church: by the tithes brought into the storehouse.

This is how our office staff is paid...

This is a little awkward, given that I'm a full-time pastor, but I want to explain how your budget works here...

I don't know how other places work their budget, but when I came to this church, there was a financial crisis...

It was meager, and one of the principles the leadership and I put into place in that very first budget was the tithe principle.

Even though we had slim amounts coming in, we stuck to that first budget and set 10% of whatever came in to go out to missionaries.

This church had not consistently supported missionaries, as far back as I can look in the books.

So, we committed first to the mission field, before I took a salary, before any pastor was on staff.

And any paid pastor here has committed to keeping funds going to those missionaries before we would

ever get paid, and this has only happened a couple of times when a pastor could not get paid.

But as we put this principle into place, we saw God immediately bring growth to the Church's finances, and it was only five months until the church budget was stable enough to support me, Jess, and our growing family.

We added more missionaries, and every year we come to the Board Meeting, we have to add new missionaries, because the more the Board shovels out, the more the Lord brings in.

This principle is so integrated into our budget and church life that I will not bring a pastor on staff to get a paycheck who himself has not committed to giving at least 10%.

We will not even consider a man for the office of Elder unless his pocketbook shows that the Lord controls it.

Now, this does not mean the Church is rich; our demographics and area are not where most ambitious church planters would look to go.

God called us here... and listen... I love it here because we see God show up in dramatic ways.

Our calling is to reach the weak of this world, the outcast, those who cannot repay, widows, orphans, and the destitute, even strangers...

It is not a lucrative ministry model...

And we do come to hard times...

Not too long ago, Jess and I were praying, "Lord, we have the neighborhood kids coming to church, we have the Embrace Grace moms, the single mother ministry, we are mission-minded, we are raising the next generation to take this ministry even further..."

We were wondering if we were doing what He asked us to do; why was He not providing abundantly for the work... It was a tight month...

It was only a few days after that that God sent a man into the church office here to drop off a bag; well, there was \$90,000 in it...

Now, I will say this: there could have been \$10 in the bag, because it was the words of the man who dropped it off that meant the most...

His words were a direct answer to what Jess and I were crying out to God... He said, "I want to invest in the kingdom work here. I see the kids from the

neighborhood, the next generation being raised, the work being done with those single mothers, and the missions work, and I want to be a part of something like that.”

It was as though God was speaking directly through him, saying, “Yes, I see, keep moving and trusting Me.”

The principal works... and I have been in ministry long enough to know that those families who are faithful tithers, well, they know the blessing of giving to the storehouse, your church, the place you're fed and would come to for help when you are in need.

Others have struggled throughout their Christian walk because they cannot hand this part of their lives over to God...

The money is mine!

Look what God says in verse 10... “Try Me now in this!...” God promises to open the windows of heaven to pour out for you such a blessing that there will be no room enough to receive it.

I don't know of any other place where God says to test Him.

Typically, we don't want to presume upon God... but here He invites the test...

Jess and I learned to do this early on in our marriage, and still to this very day, we see miracles in our finances...

We don't see riches... We see God's faithfulness...

How much are we to give? Well, the real question is "How much do you want to receive?"

2 Cor. 9:6-9 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

The only place your money goes into eternity with you is the money you generously give to the Kingdom Work...

How much you reap will depend on how much you sow.

I heard a pastor tell a story of a man who came to him for help.

He said, “Since I got this new job, I am having trouble tithing. When I made \$200 a week, it was easy to give \$20. But now that I make \$1000, I just can’t let go of that \$100.”

So the pastor prayed that the man would return to his old position at \$200 a week, so he would remain in God’s Will and enjoy the blessing of giving.

The man didn’t like that...

But we can give according to our income, or God can make our income according to our giving.

God tells us to test Him... those of you who have found the blessing and security of tithing, know the blessing that comes with generosity...

Notice God says, bring “All” the tithe into the storehouse... this is where Ananias and Sapphira got it wrong...

They may have had good intentions... Look Lord, we said this amount, but we know there are needs in other ministries, we want to give to them...

Don’t withhold as though God cannot see...

And when He sees your faithfulness, notice in verse 11, He will rebuke the devourer for our sakes, and our lives will become fruitful.

Some of you have been in an all-out war your whole Christian journey with the devourer, because you cannot relinquish this aspect of your lives.

God is faithful to protect the person who makes this principle a part of their walk... continually, it is not a one-and-done...

If you young couples could learn this early on, as Jess and I did, commit to setting your ten percent aside for the work, for your storehouse...

You avoid so much heartache and so many problems that you have seen in the generations before you.

The tithe protects us from selfishness, and reminds us that it is God who cares for our lives.

It is an act of worship... I cannot wait to put that check in the box each week... I like to write out a little worship in the memo, just thanking God...

It is a joyful act of worship...

Well, we will notice they thought the prophet's words were harsh...

The people plead their innocence here... Verse 13...

The People Complain Harshly

13 "Your words have been harsh against Me,"

Says the LORD,

"Yet you say,

'What have we spoken against You?'

14 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?

15 So now we call the proud blessed,

For those who do wickedness are raised up;

They even tempt God and go free."

The people here only cared about what they might get out of it.

They thought, "Well, it doesn't pay to serve God."

The Jews had concluded that to serve God would get them no earthly reward...

Many people refuse to serve in ministry today because they look at the immediate, earthly rewards, which are little to none, and they forget that faithful obedience to the Lord goes with them into eternity.

Ministry is a cost; we must die to self... Man, you help hurting people, and they just hurt you.

There are seasons Jess and I ask if it is even worth it... because it can get brutal...

But the answer comes here in verse 16....

A Book of Remembrance

16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another,

And the LORD listened and heard *them*;

So a book of remembrance was written before Him

For those who fear the LORD

And who meditate on His name.

17 "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts,

"On the day that I make them My jewels.*

And I will spare them

As a man spares his own son who serves him."

18 Then you shall again discern
Between the righteous and the wicked,
Between one who serves God
And one who does not serve Him.

It is important to remember that God has His own record in heaven.

He has recorded everyone who is saved in the Lamb's Book of Life.

At the Great White Throne judgment, all those who did not want to come through Jesus's Blood will have their own books open...

What a terrifying thing to stand before a Holy God based on my own good deeds.

No, we want to be in the Lamb's Book...

It is fascinating that Malachi mentions another book, the Book of Remembrance.

You think God does not see that secret act of kindness, unrewarded good deed, your generous giving, but He does.

This is one of the reasons we like to keep the giving structured the way we have it here...

In some places, you walk to the front of the church and give your gift or pledge for all to see... There is your reward...

Some churches believe people will not give unless there is some ploy that appeals to their selfishness so that others can see them.

But we believe that your giving is between you and the Lord...

Those who understand there is this Book of Remembrance will be able to give with that generous heart, without man's oohing and aweing.

God is recording it all, every time you served, every act of love, and all those sacrifices you made for others; they will be rewarded one day by the One who recorded it all.

Paul said in **1 Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**

God assures the Jews He will make them into His jewels...

There will never again be a thought of what is right and wrong...

The plight of the righteous will be blessed.

In Glory, the reward for doing the right thing will come... and it will come when it matters...

Let's get into the final chapter here... Look at verse 1 now...

The Great Day of God

4:1 "For behold, the day is coming,

Burning like an oven,

And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.

And the day which is coming shall burn them up,"

Says the LORD of hosts,

"That will leave them neither root nor branch.

2 But to you who fear My name

The Sun of Righteousness shall arise

With healing in His wings;

And you shall go out

And grow fat like stall-fed calves.

Does it pay to serve the Lord, to do justly, to walk humbly with God in this life?

Well, yes, because Jesus will return to judge the wicked, and the righteous will shine...

The Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings; and the people of God will be blessed.

In Revelation, Jesus is called **Rev 22:16 ...the Bright and Morning Star**

As the church, we are now waiting for this Star to appear, and receive us in the sky, just before the Day of the Lord dawns.

Jesus raptures the church before He judges the world.

As the star that appears before He appears as the Sun.

Once that morning star begins to fade, the sun comes forth; the Sun of Righteousness will appear and consume the wicked.

The outcome for every person will depend on their character when the light comes.

The wicked are seen as trees in the desert, brittle and ready to burn.

Those who fear the Lord are like trees planted by the waters; the Sun will only stimulate their growth.

Malachi will now tell us that the Sun of Righteousness, when He comes, will bring healing, bring growth, triumph over enemies, and restore broken relationships.

We see here in verse 2, healing in His wings...

Growth, because like stall-fed calves, Jesus supplies us with our every need.

One pastor says, “And note, Malachi isn’t speaking of grazing cattle. When will we, as Christians, learn that it’s not up to us to graze? It’s not our responsibility to wander through the fields of life in search of satisfaction and blessing. God promises to bring us the blessing. When we commit to only feeding from the Lord’s trough, He’ll fill it with all the feed we need. You don’t have to comb the bars to find the right babe. You don’t have to hop from job to job. You don’t have to jump onto the latest fad to be fulfilled. Just fear and trust the Lord. Stay in the stall, abide in Christ, rest in the Lord, and He’ll bring blessings right to you. Fear the Lord, wait on Him, and get bloated with blessings.”³

Look now at verse 3, the third blessing...

³ <https://www.sandyadams.org/sermon/malachi-3-4/>

3 You shall trample the wicked,
For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet
On the day that I do *this*,
Says the LORD of hosts.

4 "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,
With the statutes and judgments.

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of
the LORD.

6 And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

Jesus will cause those who fear the Lord to trample
under their feet their enemies.

We can have victory...

God doesn't want us to survive this life merely, but to
thrive in it.

He can break the chains that bind you tonight.

Those habits that continually bring you down, the things that make you stumble, God can give you victory.

Learn to fear the Lord, and nothing can stand in your way.

The fourth blessing was a restoration of broken relationships.

God promises to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and those of the children to their fathers.

When the fear of the Lord motivates your life, you cannot hold a grudge or unforgiveness...

God can restore broken relationships.

In verses 4-5, Malachi also prophesies that Elijah will come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah; also, Elijah stood with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration at His first coming.

And the prophet Elijah will have a prominent place in the Second Coming.

Consider that even today the Jews keep a table ready for Elijah at the feast of Passover.

It represents their hope in his coming to pave the way for the Messiah.

I believe he will be seen as one of the two witnesses that preach for 1,260 days in the Tribulation.

So, to conclude tonight, Malachi's main message is to fear the Lord.

Don't take for granted His Word and warning.

Malachi would be the last voice to speak until the voice in the wilderness came forth 400 years later, calling people to repentance and preparing the way for the Lord.

We don't want to be ignorant today... Jesus is coming for His Church... may we live as though we believe that.

The Old Testament ends here with a curse, whereas the New Testament ends with...

Rev 22:21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

The cross of Christ ends the curse, and now God pours out His Grace on all who would believe...

Come to Him tonight if you have not already... Allow Him to rule over your life... experience the best life, one in full submission to the Son of God and in receiving His Grace.

Amen...

Let's pray...