

Breaking Covenant through Blemished Sacrifices

Malachi 1:6-14

⁶“A son honours his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honour due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?” says the LORD Almighty.

“It is you priests who show contempt for my name.

“But you ask, ‘How have we shown contempt for your name?’

⁷“By offering defiled food on my altar.

“But you ask, ‘How have we defiled you?’

“By saying that the LORD’s table is contemptible. ⁸When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame 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.

⁹“Now plead with God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?” —says the LORD Almighty.

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. ¹¹My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations,” says the LORD Almighty.

¹²“But you profane it by saying, ‘The Lord’s table is defiled,’ and, ‘Its food is contemptible.’ ¹³And you say, ‘What a burden!’ and you sniff at it contemptuously,” says the LORD Almighty.

“When you bring injured, lame or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?” says the LORD.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.

Intro:

Have you ever made an embarrassing mistake?

- Video
- If you do it will end up on youtube these days...
- This young guy get very excited, picks up the fumbled ball ,
- he’s away he’s away... he going the wrong way... team mates like why?
- But don’t worry young man the professionals make the same mistake
- He’s at the 30-20-10 and not a touch down

In a time when Israel should have been scoring goal, hitting sixes, which ever metaphor you prefer

- They were running the wrong way.

Malachi, the last book in the OT, one of the 12 latter prophets

- 5 chapters at about 10:18 on the biblegateway audio bible
- That’s about 6 time through on the L90
- This Prophetic work is aimed at Jerusalem 100 after exile.
- So its at the very end of the OT period

Israel are sent off into exile under the Babylonians

- Because of their unfaithfulness to God

- And in a sense this is God wiping the slate clean so he can re-establish his people
- Then the Persians wipe out the Babylonians, and under the Persian King Cyrus
- The Israelites are allowed to return and rebuild Israel, particularly Jerusalem
- Where the temple lies in ruins and the city wall is rubble
- There is great hope that in this rebuilding the relationship with God and his people
- Will be renewed and improved, unify Israel, turn their hearts to God
- But the reality is quite the opposite
- The Faith of the people has become hollow.. completely empty of real spirituality
- It has become purely ritualistic... they perform the rituals of sacrifice and temple worship
- Without the slightest interest or thought about what they are doing and why.

Their sacrifices at the temple were just a formality and they had no desire to praise God

- V8A
- They would bring the animal about to die, that was riddled with disease, could be eaten or sold, to the temple for sacrifice
- Basically bringing rubbish to temple, sacrifices that were worthless,
- Which is a problem, because the whole point of a sacrifice is that it should be sacrificial
- If it has no worthy , it costs u nothing to sacrifice it.

Imagine if for amy's birthday

- I wrap up and give her a the broken blender that has been sitting under the stair for a year
- Happy birthday.... that gift is a slap in the face.
- I'm giving her something that should be in the garbage bin,
- and saying "that will make you happy"
- Well I would be sleeping on the couch with the dogs... and rightly so
- she would prefer nothing, because that gift is insulting
- A present you give says something about your relationship
 - o It shows that you know them, understand and appreciate the relationship.

V8B

Imagine you have Malcom Turnbull at your place, over for dinner

- There is cameras there it's a great photo opp for the PM
- And a great honour for yourself.
- And he sits down to eat you put in front of him a bowl of mouldy bread and last week chicken casserole left overs.
- While you serve yourself and family a nice roast lamb dinner.
- Could you imagine yourself doing that? How Malcom would feel?
- Or even how you might feel after you serve him up and see his face.

I like this analogy for 2 reasons

- One because it makes the point you would give a powerful person left overs
 - o So why would you do it for God
- But secondly when to give God left overs it feels anonymous.
- You don't have to do it to his face, it like you get away with it.

- You would give the governor leftovers to his face
- Because you know that you see you and he would respond
- So it is with Giving God the leftovers it might feel anonymous... but its not.

But this actually hints at the bigger problem

- That the Jews had no real idea about what the God they worshipped was really like
- They had lost a real understanding of who and what God is and was.
- Because the worst offenders are the priest's themselves

V10

- The priestly role is as a go between, between the God and the people
- The priest mediates between God and the people
- And even the priest's don't care what the people bring
- They could say, this sacrifice is not acceptable but they don't, because they don't care
- It was their attitude that was setting the tone in the temple... it came from the top down
- While the priests were accepting the blemished animals the Lord did not
- It would have been better if they just kept the doors of the temple closed,
 - o never lit the altar fires
- God would be less displeased with them, because their offering was so offensive to him.

V11 My Name will be known

- God doesn't need the worship of the Israelites ...
- he is not reliant on them to praise his name
- He will raise his name himself. He will do it with or without them.
- He is not dependant on their offerings... its not for his benefit, but theirs

What he means by my name will be great, isn't that he wants fame and adulation

- But knowing his name is connected with understanding his nature and character
- Jacob when wrestling the angle of the Lord, he want to know his name
 - o who this God is, how do I understand him and his character
- Moses asks God's name and he tell him I am who I am
- Call me the great I am, because I cant be defined by a word
- He wants his people to know his name, know who he is
- And in understanding who he is, his character and his nature
- You can come before his in reverence and praise....
- Because that is a natural response in the presence of the lord.

But as 21 century readers of this passage the question for us is.....

Do we give to God the leftovers? Only what we don't need for anything else?

- And is that what we want to be giving God

What does sacrifice look like for us?

- Its different from the OT sacrificial system....yet There are many ways we sacrifice for God

- Financially, in being obedient in our personal lives, in serving in ministry
- There are lots of ways today we are called to sacrifice.

The Jews would sacrifice the things they had no use for, things of no value

- The sick or lame animals
- Do we do that... do I do that? Do I only give God things of no value to me?
 - o Ill go to bible study if there is nothing better on?
 - o If I get a big bonus at the end of the year, then ill Donate to our neighbours or church.
 - o If I my uni time table or my work schedule is not to full
 - o Then ill serve in a ministry, help mops or lead a life group
- Sometime we give God just what is left Just the left overs
 - o The left over time , the left over resources
 - o Lets think about the logic of that for a moment
- If I believe God is sovereign over all and calls me to obedience and into his family
- The creator of the universe the one who puts air in my lungs
 - o And I think to myself "ill fit him in if I have enough time"
 - o That's totally irrational

Because I think we need to be proactive and battle being apathetic towards God

- I know of one guy that tithes his time...
- Actively looks and his week and plans in 10% to God, to God's ministries, his work
- I Know another who give his financial tithe, then regularly buys things for church so he doesn't really know what hes giving,
- "so that the right hand don't know what the left is doing"
- There are some that move to foreign lands, work as missionaries, start house churches
 - o Work translating the bible, help the poor and sick
 - o They give their best to God...
 - o They say here is what I have ...God what will you have me do?

Im a bit hesitant to name to many examples of how we give our best to God

- Because I don't want to be setting up a list of rules
- Because we are people of grace not people of Law
- But I want you to interrogate you heart... where in your life do you give God the left overs

I don't want this sermon to make you feel guilty but to inspire you to want to give God the best.

- Because as I think of my life I am reminded of How God deserves my best,
- He deserves the best of me, best of my time and energy, my creativity and my love
- Not what's left..... that's the truth I hold in my heart, God deserves the best
- And I just have to be proactive about making it a reality
- Not just thinking it but living it.

Finally God tells the Jews that he doesn't need our offerings

The Lamb on the alter never took away their sins, it never provided something for God to use

- It was a practise given to the Jews to help them God in relationship with their God
- ¹¹My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets.
- Giving God our best is what's best for us not for God.
- He doesn't need me to run youth group or a bible study
- He can do that without me, he can spread his name without me
- ... but it's for my goodhe want me to sacrifice for my good
- We tell our kids to eat the veggies, not because it makes life easier...
- In reality it make life's harder... but you do it because it's good for them and u love them
- As it is with God and his children