

“A Call to Love God Completely”
“God’s Unchanging Love” — Part 3
Malachi 2:1-16

1. Love God by honoring His Name.

“And now this admonition is for you, O priests. If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor my name,” says the Lord Almighty, “I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honor me. Because of you I will rebuke your descendants; I will spread on your faces the offal from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it.”

Malachi 2:1-3

Application: We must make it our ambition to bring glory to God, and that glory will only come when we seek to honor Him as Lord in every aspect of our lives. The chief end of man both in that day and our day is to glorify God.

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

2 Timothy 3:1-5

2. Love God by proclaiming and living His Word.

“And you will know that I have sent you this admonition so that my covenant with Levi may continue,” says the Lord Almighty. “My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin. For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction— because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty. But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,” says the Lord Almighty. “So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law.”

Malachi 2:4-9

Special note: Levi is used here in the sense of the Levitical priesthood. It is not the specific son of Jacob that is in view, but the whole priestly class as represented by Levi.

The Lord said to Moses, “Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites; for he was as zealous as I am for my honor among them, so that in my zeal I did not put an end to them. Therefore tell him I am making my covenant of peace with him. He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites.”

Four aspects of proclaiming God's Word:

It must be true—2 Timothy 2:15 and 2 Peter 1:16

It must be bold—2 Timothy 4:3

It must turn men and women away from iniquity—Daniel 12:2

It must be impartial—Deuteronomy 10:9

Application: Spiritual leadership can have devastating or life giving consequences. The priests were turning their backs on the “way” of life taught in the scriptures. The result could only be tragedy in their own lives and a corrupting influence in the lives of others.

3. Love God by loving God's people.

Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another? Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the Lord loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god. As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the Lord cut him off from the tents of Jacob even though he brings offerings to the Lord Almighty.
Malachi 2:10-12

When God's Word is proclaimed in error by the teachers, we can expect an outbreak of problems in the congregation.

Disunity in the nation

Disloyalty to the spiritual family

Unfaithfulness in individual family relationships

Application: What we do and how we live affects not only our life individually but the lives of all those around us collectively. Don't be responsible for introducing that which could disrupt and destroy the church.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

4. Love God by loving God's gift of your spouse.

Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not [the Lord] made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard

yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. "I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith. Malachi 2:13-16

The wife of your youth—implies the memories, the romance, and the fun you once shared.

Don't cast her off like an old shirt.

Your partner—implies harmony, a desire to work together to achieve life's greatest goals while sharing all the hardship, the pain and the joy.

The wife of your marriage covenant—implies that your sin against her is a sin against God.

When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the [temple] messenger, "My vow was a mistake."... Ecclesiastes 5:4-6

Application: A complete and total love for God will demonstrate itself in seeking first God's glory. It will exhaust every ounce of energy to teach only what is true and faithful to God's Word. It will enjoy God's people and seek to build them up and it will make every effort to preserve the covenant of marriage to which God was a witness.

"A Call to Love God Completely" is third in a series titled, "God's Unchanging Love," November 2, 2014. All verses taken from the New International version.