

Malachi #4: The Ways, Faithfulness, and Glory of God

by Ed Miller

The sermon explores the heart whispers of God's people, specifically about God's ways, faithfulness, and glory, and how the revelation of Jesus is the key to understanding and purification.

Duration: 1:03:12

Scripture: Psalm 139:23-24, Malachi 2:17 - 3:6

Topics: "Faithfulness Of God", "Glory Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the book of Malachi and how God addresses the dangerous whisperings and doubts of his people. The sermon emphasizes that serving God is not about what we can get out of it, but about bringing glory to Him. The preacher highlights three important topics: the ways of God, the faithfulness of God, and the glory of God. The sermon encourages believers to stay faithful to God even when they don't hear from Him and reminds them that God will come to His temple and fulfill His promises.

Transcript

It is so neat to remember the Lord in His table. Our brothers point that the Lord so greatly desired it, continues to desire it every time we gather, and how much is included in that great remembrance. The thing that touched my heart about that gathering that night, when our Lord Jesus gave thanks, when He thanked His Father for the bread, for the cup, that was not a table grace.

He knew the infinite significance of all that was about to take place, and He thanked His Holy Father God for the privilege of dying for us. It was such a thanksgiving, and we need to remember, and He does so desire to meet with us. As we come, brothers, to the Word, there is a principle of Bible study that is absolutely indispensable, and that is total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit.

I am going to ask you to turn to Ephesians 1, just to set our hearts in the right direction as we apply that indispensable principle. These precious verses in Ephesians 1, verse 16, He says that we do not cease to give thanks for you while making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, and then He tells us what He longs that we see.

That verse, that wisdom and revelation, that Greek word you are probably familiar with, unveiling one of the prayers I pray very often as I apply the indispensable principle is that the Lord would take the veil away. And I get it from that verse, that He would just unveil. On the level of earth, in order to see, we need three things.

We need a healthy organ called an eye. You can't see if you didn't have eyes. And we need light.

And we need something to look at. We need an object. And that is exactly the reality.

The eyes of your heart, that is the organ. The spirit of revelation, that's the light. And the knowledge of Him, that's the object, that we might know Him.

So let's ask the Lord to take the veil off our heart, shine His light upon us, rather, His light upon Him, in order that we might behold Him in a fresh way. Let's pray. Our Father, once again, we thank You for Your provision in Christ Jesus that we might go forward in a heart knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we would ask You, Lord, to take the veil away, enable us by Your light to see our Lord Jesus Christ. We know He is the living Word. We know the Bible is also the Word of God.

It's the sword. But it is the sword of the Spirit. And You must wield that sword.

And so we would ask You to take this written Word now, and by Your goodness, by Your grace, unveil the living Word to our heart, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Well, brothers, we come now to our last look at our wonderful Lord Jesus through the book of Malachi. In my heart, I've prayed in my preparation, and while here, that verse that's at the top of the notes I handed out, Psalm 139, 23, 24, Search me, O God, know my heart, see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. When you quote that, when you pray that, don't forget to finish it.

Otherwise, you're going to get into some morbid introspection. See if there be any wicked way in me, period. No, no.

And then lead me in the way everlasting. All of that searching is positive, and it's that He might take us forward in the everlasting way. Very little review.

We've got some ground to cover this morning. In this book, God sits His people down, as you know, and in a very personal, in a very intimate way, He begins to discover to them some dangerous whisperings that had been going on in the depths, some stirrings that had been going on in their deepest heart. When a person, or a corporate group, goes for a season, for a time, for a long time, without hearing from the Lord, and when, at that same time, there are no outward pressures to drive us to the Lord, there is the temptation then to slip, to drift, to cool, to become legal, and formal, and regimented, and to depart from the living God.

That was the situation in Malachi's day. They had experienced the Lord, but that was a long time ago. They hadn't heard in quite a while from Him, and so in the depths of their hearts, as they went through the motions, they began to hold God's love in suspicion.

They began to grow weary with His work. They began to have problems in relationships with one another, with the brothers and with the sisters. They began to question the ways of the Lord, presume upon His faithfulness, not regard His glory.

All of those things God heard. They didn't say them with their lips, but they said them with their hearts. And God who searches the hearts, He heard that, and He did not want to close the Old Testament until they had very clearly seen those things that were most precious to Him.

It's very important to God that you know He loves you. Very important to Him. Very important to the Lord for us to know that it's His work and He does the work.

Very important for us to know that God has made us one, and that we are to receive one another as God in Christ has received us. Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out, no matter how weird, no matter how strange, no matter how rebellious. We've got to have our hearts open.

And we've been looking at some of those things. In the book, you know, God took His people aside, discovered to them these secret whisperings, proved to them that it was so, and then gave each of them the perfect answer in each case. As you can see, there are three more whisperings that we'd like to touch this morning.

And you can imagine how important these are to God. This is the ways of God, the faithfulness of God, and the glory of God. It's almost criminal to crowd this into one message.

Just the topics themselves. My normal method, I don't follow it always, but I like to follow the idea, state, illustrate, apply, and clinch. I don't always state, illustrate, apply, and clinch, but I try to do that this morning because we've got a lot of material.

Let me state and clinch. By way of introduction, the next two whispers of the heart, the ways of God and the faithfulness of God are sort of intimately connected. They're organically connected.

They both have to do with money. They both have to do with material things, material possession. It's a slightly different aspect in each case, but because they're connected, I want us to also see, so I want you to mark.

We're going to turn to 1 Timothy 6. I understand 1 Timothy 6 to be God's full statement of the Christian's relationship with material things. Every principle is included in that wonderful chapter. And so in these two heart whispers in Malachi, God takes those same two heart whispers in 1 Timothy 6 and gives us His full explanation.

So we'll see it in seed form, but I also want us to see it in fully developed form. So you mark 1 Timothy 6 and turn back to Malachi, please. Chapter 2, v. 17-36, the inward thoughts of the heart concerning the ways of God.

They had whispered about His love. They had whispered about His work. They had whispered about the people of God.

Now v. 17, chapter 2, you wearied the Lord with your words, yet you say, how have we wearied Him? In that you say, everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them. Or, where is the God of justice? This verse, chapter 2, v. 17, I won't get on it, but it's one of my hobby horses, how they broke up these chapter divisions. This is one of the unfortunate chapter divisions in the Bible.

In my thinking, one of the worst. There's plenty of bad ones. Praise God for Cardinal, I forgot his name, whoever did the chapter.

They're very helpful. But every now and then, oh my! Anyway, what is this whispering? This inner murmuring that made the Lord grow weary? Don't read that chapter 2, v. 17, and think that it's a problem of ethics. It's not a problem of ethics.

It's not a matter of morality. They're not saying evil is good. Good is evil.

It's good to sin. They are not endorsing sin. The heart whispers more serious than that.

They're whispering against the Lord Himself, against God, against His ways. When they say, everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He, God, delights in them. When they say, God is unjust, what they're saying in effect is this, it looks like, with these eyes, just by observation, it looks like He favors the evil, that it pays to be bad, that He seems to be blessing the unjust.

It looks like He delights in them more than He delights in us. He sets His favor on the ungodly. As we get into this, we'll see that they're judging by outward prosperity.

They're looking on the outside, on the material blessing, and when they observe the ungodly, to save time, it's very much like Psalm 73, you know, with Asaph, and he looked out and he saw the arrogant, and he saw the prosperous, and he saw the wicked in the world. He said, their eyes bulged with fatness. I look outside, I see them.

They're always at ease. They're increased in wealth. And he said, my heart became envious when I saw how the ungodly were living so ungodly.

And yet, things seemed to fall in place for them. And we're the children of the Lord. And it wasn't the same way for us.

And they said, it seems like it pays to be bad. It looks like God's blessing the evil. And they began to entertain the notion, the idea that that's not right.

God's not right. His ways are not right. And God heard that whisper.

Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord. He delights in them. That's the essence of their whisper.

That God is blessing the unjust. He's not blessing His own children. Hadn't He promised in Proverbs 3, 9, and 10 that if anybody honored the Lord, their barns would be filled, and their vats would overflow? See, they hadn't understood the spiritual nature of that prosperity promise.

And they looked at their barns. And they looked at their vats. And it wasn't that they were empty.

But there was barely enough. God was providing their needs, but just about. And then they looked out their window and their neighbor had ten barns.

That was the problem. And their vats flowed like a river. And they looked at that.

That's not right. Not right. These ungodly people, they don't care about the Lord.

Look how they live. How come they get all the breaks? And they began whispering about that. It's not that God wasn't providing for them.

They had a car. But their neighbor had three cars and a yacht. That's what was going on here.

It looked like He was blessing the evil. It looked like He was delighting in them. Brothers, this inner sigh is not uncommon to the people of God.

Way down deep we get the idea that it's just not right. The godly struggle and struggle and barely make ends meet. And the ungodly seem to have everything fall.

Well, He gives the perfect answer. Chapter 3, verses 1-6. If the Holy Spirit enables us to face this honestly before Him, it will put out that whisper like water will put out a fire.

The key to the passage, I believe, is in chapter 3, verse 1. The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple. Now apart from the context of that, that's also a principle. The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple.

Let me read some of these verses, please. Verse 1, chapter 3. I'm going to send my messenger. He'll clear the way before me.

And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple. And the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, He's coming, says the Lord of hosts. Who can endure the day of His coming? Who can stand when He appears? He's like a refiner's fire.

He's like fuller soap. He'll sit as a smelter and a purifier of silver. He'll purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness.

Then the offerings of Judah in Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old, as in former years. And I'll draw near to you for judgment. I'll be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, and against those who swear falsely, those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow, the orphan, those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me, says the Lord of hosts.

For I, the Lord, do not change. Therefore, O sons of Jacob, you are not consumed. Now those who study these verses have noted that there seems to be a blending of all the comings of the Lord.

They look at this and say, now that's a passage on His first coming, His incarnation. Some say, oh, no, look at it carefully. That's a passage on His second coming.

Some say, no, look at it carefully. That's a passage on His spiritual coming every time He comes. When you study the Bible and He appears, that's a picture of that.

You look at it, it looks in chapter 3-1 like He's predicting John the Baptizer is going to come and prepare the way before Him, and that's the first coming. And then He'll suddenly come to His temple. Is that when as a little baby He surprised Simeon? Was it when He went in to the temple and cleansed the temple? What's He talking about in these wonderful verses? Don't get all sidetracked about, is this the first coming? Is this the second coming? Is this the spiritual coming? Is that John the Baptizer? Did that happen in Simeon's day? Was that when He cleansed the temple? Second coming, He's going to come to judge.

It doesn't say judge. It says to cleanse Levi. To purify.

Is that going to happen in His second coming? What is He talking about here? Let's not get wrapped up in all of that and miss the perfect answer to the heart whisper. Get back to the heart whisper. God's not fair.

That's not right. They're being blessed. I'm not being blessed.

And the truth that is presented here, no matter what position you take, on is He talking about this or that or both and blending or whatever it is, here's the principle. When the Lord Jesus comes, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven, that revelation will bring with it a purification. And in the light of that purification, you will understand that He's not unjust.

That's the principle that's taught here. When Jesus appears, you'll be changed. And when you're changed, your heart whisper will no longer say, His ways are not right.

You'll begin to understand that. Chapter 3, verse 3, when He purifies, they'll present to the Lord offerings in righteousness. Everything is measured by this transformation, this change, this holiness.

We sang before, that's what I want. Holiness. That's what I need.

Righteousness. That's what I need. The key to all of this is the Lord that you seek will suddenly come to His temple.

Let me make it real simple. This passage deals with two things. Righteousness, which is produced by a revelation of Jesus, and riches.

Material things. Mammon. Let me ask you this, brothers.

When you came to the Lord Jesus, did He promise to save you from sin or from poverty? I'll tell you. God is not in the business of saving people from poverty. He has set Himself to save His people from sin.

To make us like the Lord Jesus. To make us holy. And the whole issue in this thing and God's answer to this heart whisper has to do with righteousness or riches.

Can a Christian have both? He can have both, but he can't seek both. The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple. He may have both, but he cannot seek both.

And that's the heart answer that God is giving us. These things the Gentiles seek. Matthew 6. Your Heavenly Father knows you have need of these things.

The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come. We must seek Him, His kingdom, His righteousness, and what? Say it. That's God's heart.

All these things will be added unto you. You cannot make it your goal. Your goal must be Him.

Your goal must be the Lord. Your heart must be set on His kingdom, His righteousness, being transformed to Him. And when He comes, when He suddenly appears, and when He comes, you will understand all of this.

See, that's what happened to these dear saints. It had been such a long time since they encountered the Lord. They began to look out the window and see others, and they got envious.

They were prosperous, and I'm not prosperous. They said, His ways are not just. Brothers, let the unsaved have their riches.

It's all they have. That's all they have. Let us set our hearts to seek the Lord.

I'm going to ask you to turn to 1 Timothy 6. I just want you to see it there. Verse 6, Godliness actually is a means of great gain accompanied by contentment. We've brought nothing into the world, and so we cannot take anything out of it either.

If we have food and covering with these, we shall be content. But those who want to get rich, that is those who will to get rich, that is those who seek it, those who seek it, fall into a temptation and a snare, and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, pierced themselves through with many griefs, flee from these things, you man of God.

Pursue righteousness. The whole idea here is, what are you seeking? What's your goal? Where's your heart? If He's your treasure, seek Him. And all these things will be added unto you.

As I said, God may engineer your life that you have both, but He will never allow you to seek both. You can't seek God and mammon. You've got to set your heart to seek the Lord.

Pursue righteousness. Take hold of eternal life. And so the cure for this whispering is the revelation of Jesus, the Lord whom you seek will come.

And once He comes, and once you see Him, and once He changes you, you won't look out your window and say, I envy that. You'll say, I was like a beast before Him. When I went into the temple of the Lord.

When I saw their end. May God help us with that. Look please quickly at the outline, the little sheet.

This is closely connected with that. They also had inward whisperings about the faithfulness of God. This is a wonderful passage of Scripture, and I am so sorry that it is so familiar.

This is probably the most familiar passage in the book of Malachi. 3.16, the book of Remembrance. People know about that.

They know about the Son of Righteousness and Elijah at the end. There are other prominent passages, but this is so familiar because it's this passage on tithing. They call it storehouse tithing, even though there is no storehouse in the New Testament.

The main point of this passage is not tithing. We need to see the heart of God. We need to see the principle here.

The last heart whisper had to do with money, and it had to do with seeking it as a goal. This is also a heart whisper. In each case, God seems to dig down deeper and deeper.

And man is shocked. He denies this. I would never do this.

This couldn't be in my heart. Chapter 3.8, God begins, Will a man rob God? Yet you're robbing Me. Just for interest, anybody here ever been robbed? Quite a few.

The first day I ever set foot in Chicago, I was going to be a student at Moody Bible Institute. And I arrived at the Greyhound bus station. I had no clue where... I get lost coming out of my driveway.

And I had to go find... I was in a blue suit. I had my suitcase. I'm a Bible student.

And where's Moody Bible Institute? And I walked up a street. If anybody knows Chicago, I walked up Clark Street. It's not a good street.

And some guy said to me, Hey, come here. That was it. Boom.

They hit me. I was all over the place. And opened my suitcase and threw it all over and took my 35 cents.

I got to the school. I was all beat up. My suit was ripped.

They handed me a handbook. Said don't go down Clark Street. We got robbed in Newport too.

We had a little house that was right across from a housing project. They had a gang over there. They were on drugs.

They would flick lights. All the neighbors. Everybody.

We could tell when they were on the prowl. They kicked our door in so many times. One time they kicked it in.

We came back home. They should have known the first time. There's nothing there.

But they probably thought it was well hidden. They're going to find it. But they went through that how it was upside down.

Everything was turned over. The dressers were turned over. Mattresses.

Pictures off the wall. You can't picture it. It was funny because I was following Lillian up the stairs.

And she was all shook up about this because they had broken into our house and they had robbed us. And when they went up into the bedroom and the bed was upside down. The dresser was down.

The drawers were all upside down. And the policeman turned around and he said to Lillian, Did they do this? And she said, No, this is the way I keep house. Anyway, the shock of God coming down to people and said, You robbed me.

You robbed me. And you can understand that response. How have we robbed you? How is it possible to put a gun in the ribs of Almighty God and rob Him? And of what? He doesn't need anything.

I want you to look with me please. Let me give you the full development of it and then we'll come back. Turn to 1 Timothy 6 again if you would.

I believe everything God says about a Christian's relationship to material things is in this beautiful chapter in 1 Timothy 6. And if I'm reading it right, a Christian will only ever have two problems in all his life in terms of material things. One problem we already looked at. Malachi mentions it.

1 Timothy 6 mentions it. And that is the problem of setting our heart on it as a goal. Seeking it.

But there's another problem. He must not only seek it. Look at verse 17.

1 Timothy 6, 17. Instruct those who are rich in the present world not to be conceited or to fix their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. And you can read on.

It goes on. The first problem has to do with desiring it. The second problem has to do with trusting it.

Putting your hope in the uncertainty of riches. Don't seek it. And if God gives it to you, don't trust it.

That's the great issue. And sometimes I honestly think God's people are more plagued with the second one than the first one. Trusting it.

Now let's get back to Malachi, please. After God works the miracle in their heart not to seek it, He listens again and there's another heart whisper. When we read this, how have you robbed us? And He says, in tithes and offerings.

Tithing comes to us as such a radical thing. But back then, that was not a radical thing. They heard of that forever.

That was the talk of the ancestors. Way back with Melchizedek, they had the tithing. Evidently, this or something close to this was the situation.

If you're getting \$1,000 a week, tithing is not an issue. That's easy. Alright, I'll set it aside.

I can take a portion of that. If you're getting \$10 a week, you've got a problem. Because now you have responsibilities and you have a testimony as a Christian.

I've got all these bills coming up and I anticipate this and I anticipate that. Does God expect me to tithe \$10? I've got another problem. See, I think that was the issue.

Because remember, this is the context now. The devourer had come. God had sent in the devourer and had eaten the funds.

And so the people said, alright, so what are we going to do? God, His faithfulness has not seen us through, so we'll have to trust. That was the idea. We'll have to trust the little bit we have because God let us down.

You know He doesn't let you down. That's the idea of God is unchanging. He's faithful.

He's not going to let you down. If He failed you, He'd lose a whole lot more than you'd lose. He's not going to fail us.

He's not going to fail us. He's faithful. But that seems to be the issue here with verse 11, the devourer had come.

Now you need to understand the principle of the tithe. He's not saying 90% belongs to you and 10% belongs to God. He doesn't need your 10%.

He doesn't need your dimes and your nickels and your dollars or mine. That's not the point of that. This is a principle that He wrote all through the Scriptures.

See, our confession is, every day is the Lord's. God said, alright, I'll tell you what. Let's take one day and set it aside.

Your profession, your claim is, every day is His. I'll give you an objective test so that you might know. I don't need it.

You need it. I'll give you a test so that you tell me, is every day mine? How do you spend the one day? And so He had another law, and He said, the law of the firstling. And so in your barn, you get a little animal born.

And God said, give Me the first one. I don't need the first one, but I want you to dedicate the first one because your claim is, all My animals are God's. They're all His.

He said, alright, let's just see if that's true. If you have struggled giving the one, you tell Me everything. It's so easy to say.

I'm surrendered. It's all His. Then they had a little law called the law of the first fruits.

And you go out in your garden and there's the first fruits of your garden. God said, give Me that. I want that.

Give Me the first fruits. And so you get the first carrot and the first bean and the first potato, and you give it to the Lord. Because your claim is, all My fruits are the Lord's.

And then they had a little law called the law of the firstborn. And in a special way, you take your firstborn and you dedicate your firstborn. Why? Because He loves the firstborn more? No, because your confession is, My family is the Lord's.

The whole family. All the kids. Everybody.

The principle of the tithe was the principle of surrender. It was the principle that everything belongs to the Lord. It was an objective test designed for the person that he might know that he's not just speaking in unreality, but that his confession is real.

When I say I'm surrendered and it's all His, and He says, You robbed Me in the tithe. You claimed you were surrendered. You claimed that everything belonged to Me.

And so God has laid down all of these laws. Brothers, everything belongs to Him. We're not our own.

Every moment is His. That's why you're to pray without ceasing. And everything in your life is His by gift.

And that's why in everything you are to give thanks. And every duty and every responsibility and every act of your life is His. That's why you're to do all for the glory of God.

And every person that ever comes into your life, every relationship, by blood, by covenant, by appointment, by choice, it's all from Him. It's all from Him. Everything comes from Him.

Every task is under His government. And they began to whisper, God's not faithful. He hadn't provided.

I don't know what I'm supposed to do. I've only got a little bit. And God says, You are robbing Me.

I don't know what is so hard about understanding that God is faithful in everything. But we divide our lives up into, this is my spiritual life and this is my physical life. And God's going to provide everything spiritual, but I'm going to have to work for the physical side and the material side and all that kind of thing.

That's a fundamental error. In the Old Testament, God laid down time after time the principle and taught His children that He wanted to be trusted for everything. He was faithful in everything, not just some spiritual thing.

Everything. That's the idea of Deuteronomy 8. The manna. He provided the manna in order to test them and teach them that man shall not live by bread alone.

That's His plan. That's His desire. God says, You've robbed Me.

How did they rob Him? They take His money? They take His gold? What did they take from God? I'll tell you what they took from Him. He wanted to be their provider. And they stole His privilege.

God wanted to be the one that would meet all of their needs and they robbed Him. They took away His right. They took away His privilege.

They took away His honor. He said, I wanted so much to be your Father, to provide all of your needs. But you robbed Me by lack of surrender.

That's the tithe. Not by your 10%. By lack of surrender because you didn't surrender to Me.

Then He gives this perfect answer. I am faithful. I want to provide.

And now watch this perfect answer. Chapter 3, verse 10. Bring the whole tithe.

That's full surrender. That's the principle. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse so there may be food in My house.

Not your house. My house. Test Me now in this, says the Lord of hosts, if I'll not open for you the windows of heaven, pour you out a blessing until it overflows.

Then I'll rebuke the devourer for you so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground. That's the full answer. God says, stop robbing Me of My privilege.

Try Me. Test Me. Trust Me for everything.

Not just spiritual things, light, guidance, support, grace, but physical things. Trust Me for your rent. Trust Me for your health.

Trust Me for your groceries. Trust Me for the fuel in your car. Trust Me for everything.

That doesn't rule out that we work in man's part and all that kind of thing. God says, I want to be trusted in everything. I am faithful.

And if you'll trust Me in everything, He said, test it. Try it. I'll open the windows of heaven and I'll pour out a blessing.

Now that first part where He says, I'll pour out a blessing that you won't receive it, no matter what the televangelists say, that's spiritual blessing. I know that's spiritual blessing. You say, how do you know? Because the next verse talks about physical blessing.

I'll also rebuke the devourer. I'll also provide your physical blessing. But He first talks about this.

If you would only surrender. If you would only trust Me for everything and not put your faith in the uncertainty of riches. Don't seek it.

Don't trust it. Trust Me. And you watch what I will do.

Stop robbing Me of My privilege of being your provider. Oh, Malachi is a marvelous book. And God's heart is so burdened because He wants them to know He loves them.

He wants them to know He'll do the work. It's His work. It doesn't have to be a burden.

It can be a joy. He wants them to know if they're right with Him, there's going to be this beautiful unity in the body. He desires that they know that.

He desires that they know that His ways are right and just. He desires to be the provider. He says, just trust Me.

Watch what happens. Test Me with full surrender. Don't answer this, brothers, because it's not my business.

It's between you and the Lord. Have you ever tested Him with full surrender? I tell you, He'll open the windows. He'll rebuke the devourer beside.

Stop robbing Him. It's breaking His heart. He longs to be your provider.

He longs to be faithful. He's not hurting you. He's not against you when He withholds.

He just doesn't want you to seek that. Seek Him. And watch Him open the windows of heaven.

And so God gives the perfect answer. Once again, look at My Son. Let Me do the work.

Get right with Me. Seek Me alone. Trust Me.

Let Me be your provider. Do you see any common denominator ground here in this perfect answer? One final whisper. We'll wrap it up.

May God help us. The whisper, I call it against the glory of God. Chapter 3, verse 14, You have set its vein to serve God.

What profit is it that we've kept His charge that we have walked in mourning before the Lord of hosts? Let me get right to the problem. They have altogether lost their focus. What profit is it for us? That's the idea.

What do we get out of all this serving the Lord? It's us. It seems like it's so empty. I should have a happiness in serving the Lord.

There should be a contentment. There should be a joy. There's so little in it for me.

And they began to whisper. Now this is a little different than when they complained about God's work. Because when they complained about God's work, they had taken God's work to be their work.

But it was still their work for God. It was still in that direction. But now it's a little deeper and the whisper is a little more subtle.

Now it's all about me. Why should I serve the Lord? I don't get much out of it. I'm not very much appreciated.

I've got to stand alone in my school and I've got to stand alone on the job and I've got to stand alone in the neighborhood and I've got to even sometimes in the fellowship of God's people, I just feel like I'm so alone. I'm standing all alone. It's not worth it.

And what am I getting out of it? Let me show you God's perfect answer. And as He comes to the close of the book, He becomes more and more gentle. That's one of the things you'll observe as you go through Malachi.

Each time He deals, but each time He just gets more and more tender. And here, if that were me, I speak as a fool, and they said, it's not worth it. What am I getting out of serving you? I would say, dear child, it's not about you.

It's about me. What's wrong with you? He touched me. Oh, He touched me.

That's how I would have known it. But God doesn't deal that way. Chapter 4, verse 1. Watch as He unveils His heart.

He'll finally come to the truth that it's not about you. That's the idea. It's about Him.

It's about His glory. Chapter 4, verse 1. Behold, the day is coming. Stop there.

That's the first thing He tells them. They're saying, oh, it's so vain to serve the Lord. They seem so happy.

What are we getting out of this? It does nothing for me to serve the Lord. So little appreciation. I don't see any fruit.

What's the point of all of this? And He begins, the day is coming. It's not now. It's down the road.

The day is coming. You're looking for a fulfillment of your ministry and your service. Verse 2, you who fear My name, the Son of Righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.

You'll go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. You'll tread down the wicked. There'll be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day I'm preparing.

Say, I don't get anything out of it. Hang in there. The day is coming, says the Lord.

And when that day comes, you will frolic like a calf out of its stall. You'll gamble like one of your sheep in the field and just bounce around. You may not even believe in dancing today.

The day is coming when that's all you'll believe in. You're going to dance. The day is coming.

That's the first thing He says. That's part of His perfect answer. Not only the day is coming, look at verse 16.

Those who feared the Lord spoke to one another. The Lord gave attention and heard it in the Book of Remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord, who esteem His name. He gave a fresh word.

You see, their complaint was, nobody's listening. Nobody regards. Nobody pays attention.

Nobody cares. Nobody appreciates it. It's vain to serve the Lord.

What's the point of the whole thing? I'm not accepted. No, you're not because the world hates you. What do you expect? I remember going to a Bible conference at Sandy Cove.

Are you familiar with Sandy Cove? It was right after 9-11. And a dear sister. I'll never forget.

She's a little taller than I am. An aged saint. One of these who knows Jesus.

And you just want to get close to her just to touch her because she's touching Him. And she's just such a sweet, sweet Christian lady. And she's stronger than I am.

And she is a little bigger than I am. And when she saw me, this was after 9-11, she ran to me and she hugged me and she embraced me. And it got embarrassing because she wouldn't let me go.

And I'm so stupid, I don't know what to do. And I'm just... I don't know what to do. And so I whispered something in her ear.

I said, there's a lot going on in our world. She grabbed me by the shoulders. She put me out in front.

She was in control. And she shook me. And she said, it ain't my world, honey.

And she grabbed me back again. I tell you, it ain't my world. I'll show you my world.

316. Those that feared the Lord spoke to one another. Do you see the difference in this book? Up till this time, they had been speaking back to God.

They're not speaking back to God anymore. There's a new world now. I know this is going to sound stupid, but I want you to play along with me, please.

I want you to turn to your right, turn to your left. Whoever's on your right or left, I want you to look at them. But usually we just look at people.

I want you to look in that brother's eyes. Just look in that brother's eyes. Turn the other way.

Look in that brother's eyes. Unless you're in the back row, turn around, look at him. Turn around, look at somebody's eyes.

That's your world. The body of Christ. That's the saints.

Do you understand what he's saying? They say, it's in vain. Nobody's listening. He says, hang in there.

The day's coming. Everybody's rejecting me. No, not everybody.

Look around. This is your new world now. The people of God.

The body of Christ. That's your family. And that was so precious.

They did not pray together. They didn't study the Bible together. It said those that feared the Lord talked to one another.

That's all they did. They talked to one another. God looked down from heaven and He wrote it in His diary.

He said that was so precious to Him just to see Christians fellowshipping together. He wrote it in His diary. He wrote it down in His book of remembrance.

And then He says, it's not about you. What does it pay to serve the Lord? Hang in there. You wait.

The day's coming. And you'll know. But everybody's against me.

No, they're not. You've got another world. That ain't your world, honey.

This is your world. And then He says in verse 17, They will be Mine, says the Lord of hosts, on the day I prepare My own possession. I'll spare them as a man spares his own son.

It's vain for us to serve the Lord. It's not about you. It's about Me.

And in that day, they'll be His jewels and His possession and real ministries unto Him and to be a pleasure to His heart and to satisfy Him. And so He quiets that whisper by just reminding them there's a day coming. It's not now.

It's later. And there is a new family now. And those that fear the Lord ought to gather together and more so as the day approaches.

And brothers, it's getting close. To encourage one another and to lift one another up and to speak to one another and then to remember it's not about us. It's all about Him.

And so all of these whispers, as I understand, this is the message of the book. This is the message of the book. Now let me just close the way He closes.

Chapter 4, verses 5 and 6. I'm going to send you, Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to the children. The hearts of the children to their fathers so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.

The book closes with a principle. God promises to send His Malachi, His messenger to prepare for His coming. I prayed before I got here.

I pray now. I hope in some small way I have been the Lord's Malachi to prepare the way for Him. He has promised He'd always send the messenger before He came.

There's a perfect answer. Let me summarize the perfect answer. And I think chapter 4, verse 2 is a perfect clincher for the whole book.

This is the all-inclusive perfect answer to every whisper He's mentioned and every whisper that will ever rise in your heart or mine. For you who fear My name, the Son of Righteousness will rise with healing in

His wings. That's a present foretaste of future glory.

He's promising a new day. I don't know how you were when you arrived here, what whispers were going on in your heart, but He's promised that the Son of Righteousness, S-U-N. The S-U-N is the S-O-N.

The Son of Righteousness will rise with healing in His wings. I'm not sure what that mixed metaphor means. Probably swiftness.

That's my guess. That the Son of Righteousness is so anxious to heal you that He comes with wings. Maybe it's comfort.

I don't know what the wings are. But I have this idea that it's His desire to rise on each brother as a Son with healing in His wings. Do you doubt that you're loved by the Lord? May the Son of Righteousness rise and heal you of that.

Have you struggled with the work of God? Been a big burden to you? May God turn your eyes to the One who does the work. May the Son of Righteousness rise and heal you of that. You got a problem in a relationship? May the Son of Righteousness rise with healing in His wings.

You got problems with the ways of God? May the Son of Righteousness rise with healing in His wings. Think He's not faithful? He doesn't know your problems and your debts and your hardships? He can be trusted. He challenges you.

Bring the whole tide. You watch what I'll do. Don't rob Him.

He wants to be trusted. May the Son of Righteousness rise with healing in His wings. It's His glory.

It's about Him. It's not about you. Ten million points and a poem.

Time for the poem. When the days are short and the green hills snow, when the dews are frost and the north winds blow, when the branches bear and the streams don't flow, Son of Righteousness, shine on me. Shine on me till the healing ray breaks through.

Shine on me till my heart is refreshed anew. Shine on me till the Savior is all I view. Son of Righteousness, shine on me.

Melt the mantle that winter has thrown on me. Let the fresh buds burst. Set the flowers free.

Let the songbirds sing in festivity. Son of Righteousness, shine on me. When my heart is cold, my spirit's dry.

When my doubts control and I question why. When the storms of life only terrify. Son of Righteousness, shine on me.

Shine on me till the healing ray breaks through. Shine on me till my heart is refreshed anew. Shine on me till the Savior is all I view.

Son of Righteousness, shine on me. Come and visit us with a quickening ray. Drive our winter gloom by Your light away.

Spring will come, I know, when He's on display. Son of Righteousness, shine on me. Father, thank You for this book of Malachi, for all that You've inspired it to mean.

We know the perfect answer for every whisper of the heart is to have the Son of Righteousness shine on us. We just pray that every brother here would leave this fellowship, this conference, this retreat in a brand new day with the Son of Righteousness shining and leave with perfect healing. We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

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