

Malachi 2:10-16 'Breaking Faith!'

Last time we looked at v8-9 of Malachi 2, as God continued to slam his wicked priests, who again, should have been those guiding lights of the Bible. But these were His words to them: "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 called 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." So by their actions and teachings they had caused the people to fall away and falter in their faith. They had brought contempt down upon the name of God and now He would do the same to them!

Yes they would be ridiculed they would be seen as fools. And I asked the question, can we find any such people around today? All we need do is switch on the TV in the early hours of the morning, and we will find those modern day frauds, who like those priests, peddle anything but the gospel, under the guise of the gospel! Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, and of course that guy who told us God wants us to have more stuff, just to mention a few. And they preach those lies, that the outcome of Jesus Cross for us is health and wealth. So yes you can have forgiveness of sin and eternal life, but there's more. You can even have heaven on earth. Whereas Jesus said in John 8:36 "My Kingdom is not of this world."

Such was the corruption of these priests, and better put by James in ch.1:27 their "pollution," having so completely cast their lot in the desires and lusts after the here and now, that integrity and justice were non-existent during those days in Israel. Let alone the sound preaching of God's word! And the ones who suffered the most with those who were least able to defend themselves. The "widows the orphans and the aliens," or strangers among them. Whereas God said through James "Religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this, to look after orphans and widows" yes, "and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." So they had lost sight of their duties. Integrity was a long lost memory and they were no different to the perishing world around them! The world was in the church, so they ceased to be the people of God. Which is what their modern day counterparts play upon so well.

But 2 Timothy 4:3-4 says "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine, instead to suit their own desires they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears long to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths." No, health and riches are not on offer. And even if they were, how they would pale into insignificance next to the true reward. The glory and riches of heaven with God, and eternal life!

Well, so to today's text: Malachi 2:10-16 'Breaking Faith!'

V10 "Have we not all one father? Did not one God create us?" Isaiah 63:16 says: "But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us, you, O Lord, are our father." In v10-16, Malachi rebukes the people. He condemns them, while at the same time he appeals to them, by way of this one profound truth. That not only is God the Creator of the universe, but He is also in the truest sense, Father to Israel. He chose and adopted them as it were as His people, even his own treasured possession. How can so much wickedness be among us? How can we be so vile and uncaring to those weaker ones, who God has put under our care? Malachi is saying, "Have we not all one father?" We're not strangers or enemies, we are of the same family. God Himself has gathered us to be His children. He created us to be His people, and yet look at who we are. Those

who are looking from the outside in are not seeing the character of God among us. Are you not ashamed?" Well, clearly friends they were not ashamed. And what people saw and thought of them meant nothing to them! In 1 Timothy 4:1-2 we read: "The Spirit clearly says that in latter times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such things come through hypocritical liars; whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron."

Now I know this speaks of latter times but there is no doubt in my mind that these things can be applied to the people in Malachi's day, and indeed to our own days! Those priests, were definitely "deceiving spirits and hypocritical liars," just like those televangelists which we looked at last time, (not all) but certainly the ones which I mentioned and a myriad just like them. They were cut from the same cloth as these priests. They have an agenda, but it's not freedom from sin's curse for sinners!

Malachi cries out to all the people in despair, 'Can you not see what we have become?' "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?" Now by "breaking faith," he simply means not keeping our word. And specifically, breaking our word when in relationship to God's covenant with His people to be their God, if they would but honour Him by obeying His code for living, as set out in Exodus at Mount Sinai. And interestingly, both examples which he uses are to do with marriage!

Matthew 5:37 says "Simply let your yes be yes and your no. no." And although the context of the Matthew passage is different to these words of Malachi, I believe it certainly can be applied here. Jesus is simply saying to be a man or woman of your word! The old Collins dictionary explains the word "profane" to mean: not sacred, irreverent, blasphemous, common or vulgar, unclean, to treat with irreverence, to desecrate, to pollute or defile. This is interesting because if you remember God said in v5, concerning his covenant with Levi, "My covenant with him was 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." And here in v10 Malachi asks the question: "Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?" So why do we treat God's Word with irreverence? Why do we treat this covenant as something which is common or vulgar? Why do we desecrate, pollute, or defile the very word of God to us through our fathers by breaking faith?

Again the two examples which he uses here are in regard to their attitudes and practises to women, in marriage and divorce! And these examples are given, because not only are they breaking faith with one another as a general practise, they break faith even in those relationships where God is called down as it were, to be that all seeing all knowing witness of those proceedings. Because in those cases, there is not just an agreement between 2, there are three involved in those covenants, those swearing's, those oaths, those giving's of their word to one another!

But before we look at these marriage examples, we need to understand that these words affect us in every relationship and at every level. As Christians, the manner in which we deal with one another, and also with non-Christians, as in the passage before us, is a clear indication and testimony not only of our integrity and sincerity in our relationship with others, but also and most importantly, a testimony of the integrity and sincerity of our relationship with God! One example, we shouldn't take one another for granted. Because to do so, (though it be the furthest thing from our minds) it gives little value to, and actually has contempt for, what one another does!

Now friends, although there are many times when I fail miserably, I really do try and remember to thank everyone for the things which they do in our church. All the things which Tom and Sue do behind the scenes, with the computer, and all that stuff during these difficult times. The ladies with

the morning teas, the readers, the preachers, Heather`s work, especially her teaching of children and keeping all the clerical work in check. Everyone involved when we have fellowship lunch. And the wonderful hospitality shown by our hosts, month after month year after year. It`s such a testimony to all who come, of God working in and through us. Yes we do need to encourage one another, and deal with each other with honesty, sincerity and consideration. Because these things are a reflection of the true nature of our faith, and of the way God is working in our lives. That is if indeed, He is working in our lives, or are we just pretending?

But let's be clear here, I'm not talking about perfection, because each of us is a work in progress. We are all on "the narrow road" but we don't get there this side of heaven! V11 "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." Now before we try and understand the significance of these words, we need to look back at what God said to the people of Israel, a thousand years before, and which they were called to abide in for all of that time!

In Deuteronomy7:1-6 we read "When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drive out before you many nations, the Hittites, Gergashites Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you, and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you This is what you are to do to them. Breakdown their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Ashareh poles and burn their idols in the fire. But you are people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession."

So do these things, and there will be consequences. There will be a division. There will be divided loyalties among you. Those false gods, those idols of the peoples around you will lure your sons away, and your families will be torn apart, and judgement will fall upon you! And in Deuteronomy 13:6-11, the consequences of these actions are even more powerfully stated, even brutally so we might think, as they would fall upon those, who fell into this forbidden category. "If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, 'let us go and worship other gods that neither you nor your father's have known, gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other, do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him. You must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. Stone him to death, because he tried to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again." Yes, you must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first in putting him to death.

So these things concerning marriage were not optional, they were imperative. And the whole idea behind this law was so that God's people would maintain that separateness, that set apartness, that holiness. So when we read that "Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and Jerusalem. Judah has desecrated, the sanctuary the Lord loves by marrying the daughter of a foreign God," Malachi is reminding them of their responsibility to the One Whom the people were in covenant relationship with through their fathers for these past 1000 years! These were not new things; these were not secrets which had been hidden. They were the foundational regulations

upon which the nation of Israel had been built. Exodus 20:2-3 "I am the Lord your God who brought you up out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me."

So None at all. You see the depth of the sin, lay yes in the disobedience, but even more so in the potential of the people falling into the worship of false gods, while being the people of the One True Living God. Can you see? Because it doesn't simply say they have "married the daughter" of a foreign nation, but "of a foreign god." It was the bringing into Israel of a foreign ideology, a whole foreign way of devotion and life. 'Don't have any part of it' God is saying, it will lead you down the road of a compromised devotion. The two like oil and water will never blend. It was as though they had taken a statue and walked down to the temple of the Lord, set it up on His altar, and then bowed down and worshipped it!

Now there were provisions in God's law when an alien or even a captive, found favour with an Israelite man, (if the woman gave herself over to the worship of God forsaking her former ways of idolatry) for them to be married. Ruth is the classic example. Though she was a Moabite woman, and a non-Jew, in God's Providence she would eventually go on to be the grandmother of King David. So it was not the foreign women so much, as it was that they were the daughters of foreign gods, which was against God's law!

So where do we as Christians who live in the 21st century in Australia find our modern day application of these ancient things? 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 says this: "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said, "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be there God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate", says the Lord. "Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters", says the Lord Almighty."

But before I explain this text, let's all understand that it is not saying that all non-Christians are heartless, uncaring, inherently evil humanly speaking, or incapable of love. It's not saying that. Paul is speaking from that same perspective as does God when He calls His people to be separate, holy. A people who live in the world but are not of the world, as I have quoted many times. We don't belong to the world because our allegiances belong to the King of another Kingdom. Of course the Lord Jesus Christ! "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers." So it's do not be bound, not married to unbelievers. And in some ways, this can be applied to certain friendships that are unbeneficial to our walk with God. And he basically gives the same reasons which God did in Deuteronomy 7. These couples, these pairings, have nothing spiritually in common, and are actually opposed to one another, because they are worlds apart! And it's not that there won't be love in the marriage, it's not that they won't be happy humanly speaking, but it's because eventually, the Christian's loyalties will be divided. Trying to love both their wife (or husband) and God. And this is a recipe for heartache, and more than likely spiritual disaster! Although Satan whispers in our ears and says that it doesn't matter, we love them therefore God must, He will change them, it's all a lie you see. Because God calls us to put Him first, and He, not the Christian's nonbelieving partner, will eventually take the back seat. Marriage is hard enough without having that extra life long battle of being from two different worlds, and being torn apart spiritually. And so many times, it will be the Christian who will bend and compromise their faith, even forgetting God altogether!

Now again, Paul is speaking from that holy spiritual perspective we need to understand, when we read 2 Corinthians 6:14-17. Let me read it again: "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For

what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said, "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate," says the Lord Almighty. "Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I'll be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters", says the Lord Almighty."

Now again, he is not saying that there won't be love, caring and affection, you may well be like minded in matters of the flesh, but you are worlds apart when it comes to God, and your life spiritually. So don't go there because heartache is what awaits you! And parents, strongly advise your children against it. They must seek out a life partner from among God's people because again, marriage is hard enough without having that added struggle of being pulled apart spiritually!

And notice v12 of Malachi 2: "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." So such was the danger of compromising their faith, through the introduction of other religions, false religions, that God is saying that those who did such things were to be put to death!

So what is the simple truth to take home today? Well Beloved, as far as it is in our power, we must keep our homes and families Christian. We choose for ourselves life partners from the household of God. We discourage relationships for our children with nonbelievers, while pointing them to Christian camps etc, in their search for marriage partners. And if our spouse is not a Christian, then we show them Jesus, (not by neglecting God and staying home from church on Sundays) but by pointing them to Him through how we live. And praying, that God will open their heart! But to knowingly marry a non-believer and presume upon God to make this happen, is a recipe for disaster and heartache, and may will take you down that road of indifference and estrangement from God yourself. Friends, we need to pray our children and grandchildren into relationships with believers, from the moment they are conceived. And we need to pray for our marriages so that we don't "break faith" with those whom we love. Our spouses. And that One (even God) before whom we did make that covenant for life!

Let's pray.