



## Fresh Faith: “Bring God Your Best”

(Malachi 1:6-14)

Pastor Derrick Shields

We continue our 4-week series in the book of Malachi to stir *afresh* our relationship with God. (Derrick challenged us to commit to reading Malachi 2x/week over these 4 weeks. It’s a short book, just 55 verses.)

- Malachi is one of the Minor prophetic books. A love letter from God, full of hope and encouragement, **but** God is frustrated with the complacency of his people.
- If the U.S. President were coming to your home for dinner, I imagine you would do some serious “sprucing up” of your home, break out the good china, and prepare a fine meal. You would surely NOT serve left-overs, on paper plates, in your cluttered den. You would bring out your finest; give your best!
  - What about God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Lover of our souls - does HE get our best or left-overs? left-over time, attention, energy, affection, treasures?
- In **Malachi**, God is addressing this “left-overs” attitude in His people who are deliberately bringing Him second-rate sacrifices – defiled food, the Lord’s table is contemptible, blind animals for sacrifice, crippled and diseased animals ... not even fit for a [human] governor.” (**vss 7-8**)
- Their complacent, disrespectful posture is deliberate. They KNOW better! They know the law - the holiness and quality that God demands for their offerings because the weight of sin demands such.
  - **Leviticus 22:20-22; Deuteronomy 15:21**

- Before we judge them, we must examine our own hearts and actions.  
Do WE give God our *left-over* attentions, energy, affections, time, resources, etc?
- The Hebrew people likely rationalized their complacency - *“This is simply pragmatic! to keep the best animals for food/revenue and offer for the blemished ones for [non-productive] sacrifice. Just makes good economic sense. Besides, aren’t lesser sacrifices better than none at all?”*
- God answers (vs 10) – “NO! I’d rather you not come at all (“shut the temple doors”) than to bring me second-rate sacrifices. I do not accept your offerings.”
- (vs 11) – I want sacrifices that honor my “great name among the nations,” not ones that “profane” my name (vs 12)
- Vss 13-14 summarize God’s disgust – “You act as if bringing sacrifices to honor me is a burden. The one who has acceptable offerings and withholds them from my name is a cheat. Cursed is he! I am a Great King. My name will be feared among the nations.”

*“The quality of a gift indicates the value the giver places on the one receiving the gift.”*

(Ask any husband who has ever given his wife a kitchen apparatus on Valentines Day!)

#### Giving God Our Best:

1. We should give God our best in terms of COST.

**(II Samuel 24: 18-24, Luke 21:3-4)**

2. We should give God our best in terms of QUALITY.

**(Malachi 1:13)**

3. We should give God our best in terms of PRIORITY.

**(Matthew 6:33 – “seek FIRST the kingdom of God”)**

4. We should give God our best in terms of INTEGRITY.

What motivates our giving and service? Are our hearts right? Do we give out of a GENUINE attitude of worship, gratitude, and affection?

**(Acts 5:1-11 story of pretentious Ananias and Sapphira)**

Reflective Questions:

1. Are your offerings to God less than you would give to a human dignitary?
2. Do you believe God is not hearing/answering your prayers?
3. Are you simply going through the motions of faith? (empty religion)
4. Are you bored with worship and/or kingdom service?
5. Do you lack passion for sharing and proclaiming God's glory to the nations?

May these self-examinations be the beginning of a renewed heart *to bring God your best* – not out of fearful performance but rather out of joyful love and gratitude for His greatness and love.