

GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

MALACHI: THE DANGERS OF HALF-HEARTED DEVOTION

SERIES THEME//

God called Malachi to declare a powerful message to his people: Beware of half-hearted living. God doesn't want the leftovers. He wants all that we are. He has called us to be a nation of priests, and our lives are meant to be a living sacrifice. In this, the last book of the Old Testament, we discover just how precious Jesus really is, because he has done everything we could not and empowers us for every good endeavor.

Malachi comes in the form of a *disputation*: God is leveling charges at Israel.

Disputation [dis-pyoo-tey-shuh n] *noun*

1. the act of disputing or debating; verbal controversy; discussion or debate.

SERMON; JUST THE BEGINNING | MALACHI 3:13 - 4:6

SUNDAY, February 26, 2017

SERMON THEME//

God uses the final dispute in Malachi to give us a warning, and a hope, as we wait for the one who will usher in the beautiful restoration of all things.

LEADER//

Acknowledge up front some ground rule. 1) Give space for everyone to share and interact. 2) Keep an atmosphere where everyone is comfortable to share not just their answers, but their lives and faith. 3) Challenge everyone to keep discussion away from the quality of the sermon and focus on the content of it particularly as it relates to what God would have us do in our lives with it.

OPENING UP//

Start with prayer

1. How many of the Sundays during this sermon series did you make?
2. Who can remember any of the disputations that were discussed? Pastor Ryan gave a quick review of each one today.
 - a. Which of the disputations (sermons) was most insightful, encouraging, or challenging to you?
3. Does anyone like sermons on "obscure" Old Testament books?
 - a. Why or why not?
4. Where have you been seeing God move at Peace or in your family recently?

LEADER//

Remember, the discussion is about challenging the self, and growing to trust God more with our resources and finances.



DIGGING DEEPER//

- o As we read this passage, we must ask ourselves: When and where have you questioned the importance of following/serving God?

MALACHI 3:13-4:6 (ESV)

¹³ "Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. But you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' ¹⁴ You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? ¹⁵ And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.'"

The Book of Remembrance

¹⁶ Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name. ¹⁷ "They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him.

¹⁸ Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

The Great Day of the LORD

⁴ ^[a] "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ² But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. ³ And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

⁴ "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules^[b] that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

⁵ "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."^[c]

Footnotes:

1. [Malachi 4:1](#) Ch [4:1–6](#) is ch 3:19–24 in Hebrew
2. [Malachi 4:4](#) Or *and just decrees*
3. [Malachi 4:6](#) The Hebrew term rendered *decree of utter destruction* refers to things devoted (or set apart) to the Lord (or by the Lord) for destruction

- o As we read this text, where did you see yourself or our world in this passage?



SERMON DISCUSSION VIDEO//

- As you watch the sermon discussion video, take note of what you found intriguing, insightful, and challenging as you consider how to take the *word preached* and make it the *word lived*.

DISCUSS THE SERMON//

LEADER//

While a fair amount of processing is necessary and helpful, remember that the point of this discussion is to take the word preached and consider how to make it the word lived.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Take the questions from “*What do you think about this?*” to “*What does this mean for your life?*”

- Were they any of Pastor Ryan’s thoughts that stuck out to you, or struck a cord with you?
- In the sermon, Pastor Ryan said, “*If we think evil is abounding, that shouldn’t cause us to grow weary of following God – that should remind us why we follow God.*”
 - What did he mean by this, or how was this thought fully fleshed out. How are you personally to live out this challenge?
- One of the quotes from the sermon was, “*Because they are looking through the lens of the their culture around them instead of God’s covenant with them, Israel has challenged God with their words, actions, and their attitudes and they don’t even realize it until God calls them out on it...*”
 - As you self examine yourself, What are some ways you look through the lens of the culture rather than God’s covenant when you think about serving God and following him?
- One verse from our passage says that, “**Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them...**”
 - What are some of the things that “those who fear the Lord” (the faithful) should be saying to one another?
 - How often do you say these things?
- The passage from this sermon says some pretty heavy things about distinguishing between the wicked and the righteous.
 - Spend a few moments reading back over this passage and discuss what the difference is between the wicked and the righteous
 - In how they act
 - In what they say
 - In how they view the world
 - In what they can expect of the future



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- One of the lines from Pastor Ryan's sermon was, "If your faith is running dry, ask yourself what it's been running on..." Is your faith running dry? If so, what lead do this?
 - Pastor Ryan said that Hope is the fuel of our faith. Do you find this true in your own life?
- This sermons closed each sermon with a section called "Living Devoted." In this section today, Pastor Ryan ended by asking one question: Does my life look like I'm preparing to die, or preparing for someone?
 - Spend the last few moments of your Growth Group pondering this question.
 - How would someone from the outside tell the difference?
 - What are some things you can do or welcome into your life that would help the world you're not just living to die, but that you're living for someone (Jesus)?

CLOSE IN PRAYER//

LEADER//

As you close in prayer, take some time to receive prayer requests from your group. Try to gather a number of these.

Then take the time to pray over two specific areas (and to facilitate a deeper sense of community, encourage everyone to pray.)

1. First, your time of prayer should be a time of lifting up each other's needs and prayer requests to the Lord.
2. Second, your growth group should pray to thank God for his Word and ask for his help as you seek to be *doers* of the word and not hearers only.

