

Belmont Exeter House Group Notes

w/c 7th July

Malachi 2v17 – 3v5

The book of Malachi reminds us of the character of God and why he is worth worshipping. It encourages us to respond with both repentance and a renewed commitment to serve him in our everyday life circumstances. It speaks to our hearts as well as our minds.

Our passage tonight is taken from the Morning Service on 7th July. If people were not able to be at the service, then please encourage them to catch up online via the talks page on the Belmont Exeter website. <https://belmontexeter.church/talks>

This outline gives plenty of questions for study of the text, as well as the outworking of these ideas into our everyday lives. There's more than you'll need for a single study so please do edit to a focus that is helpful to your group / study.

Resources which you may find helpful as you prepare to lead the study include:

- The book of Malachi summary video by the Bible Project, a great starting point to understand the flow of the book.
- Daniel and the Twelve Prophets for Everyone by John Goldingay, in just over 10 pages John takes you through the whole of the book of Malachi. It is very accessible and gives an excellent overview of the book.
- The Message of Malachi by Peter Adam, in depth commentary which focuses on our passage in chapter 6.

BIG IDEA: No one will escape God's justice. He will judge all people one day in the future.

WAY IN: What hopes and desires do you have for the future? How do our hopes and desires shape how we live now?

READ: The study will focus on Malachi 2:17 – 3:5 but you may like to read from chapter 1:1 to experience the rhythm and other dialogues in the book leading up to the passage we will focus on tonight.

DIG IN: Questions to discuss

- 1) Which part of the text (or sermon if you were able to listen to it) had the greatest impact on you? What puzzled you? Did you learn anything new about God? Jesus? You?
- 2) Why are the Israelites complaining to God? (Malachi 2v17)
 - What does their complaint tell us about the Israelites understanding of God's character and behaviour?
 - What have the Israelites forgotten about God's character from their own history?
- 3) How does God respond to the Israelite's complaints? (Malachi 3v1)
 - Who does Malachi identify as the messenger in Malachi 4v5?
 - Who do the gospel writers identify as the messenger? (Mark 3v1-12, Mark 1v2-8, John 1v6-8)

- Where else in the OT prophets do we hear of God sending a messenger. (Isaiah 40v3-5)
- 4) Note who God chose to purify first? (Malachi 3v2-4)
- Why do you think God starts with the priests (Levites)?
- 5) Malachi presents the Israelites with a list of sins in Malachi 3v5. Why do you think these particular sins were chosen?

Perhaps work in smaller groups for these next two sections.

LIVE IT OUT:

- 6) How does seeing the wicked prosper impact your own faith in God?
- Which areas of injustice make you particularly angry?
 - Would it not be easier if God judged all sins immediately?
 - What does God's patience with sinners reveal about His character?
 - Which verses in the Bible teach / remind us of God's patience with sinners?
 - Examples: Exodus 34 v 6&7, 1 Peter 3 v 9&15, Romans 2 v 1-4 1 Peter 3 v 20
- 7) Why is it so much easier to identify the injustice in other people than in ourselves?
- 8) What role can the church play in combating injustice in society and the world?

PRAY IT THROUGH:

Choose one or more of these ideas to pray through with your homegroup.

- Share and pray about areas of injustice locally, nationally and internationally.
- Share and pray about a part of your weekly pattern in which you'd like the 'fear of the Lord' to guide your thoughts and actions more.
- Share and pray about how you can be a messenger of God's love and justice in the lives of family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues.