

LEADING WITH FAIRNESS

LESSON SCRIPTURE: MALACHI 3

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: MALACHI 3:1-4, 6-12

Key Verse: For I the Lord do not change. Malachi 3:6

Malachi 3:1-4, 6-12 (NRSV)

Malachi 3:1-4

1 See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap;

3 he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness.

4 Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

6-12

6 For I the Lord do not

change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, have not perished.

7 Ever since the days of your ancestors you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, “How shall we return?”

8 Will anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing me! But you say, “How are we robbing you?” In your tithes and offerings!

9 You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me—the whole nation of you!

10 Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.

11 I will rebuke the locust for you, so that it will not destroy the

produce of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not be barren, says the Lord of hosts.

12 Then all nations will

count you happy, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts.

WORD POWER!!!

- **Covenant** – A promise.
- **Refine** – To purify; make better.
- **Statutes** – Laws.

GETTING READY!!!

What does it mean to be a leader? In the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, we learn about good leaders and unfaithful leaders. The leaders of Malachi's day had started to forget about God and even broke covenant by withholding their tithes and offerings. Malachi's message was very clear; turn back to God.

Did you know that YOU are a leader? Your friends and people you do not know watch how you act and respond to things that occur daily. As Christians we are called to be faithful followers of God and to obey God's laws. When we do our own thing or do something wrong, we are not being good leaders. However, even when we make mistakes, God still loves us! God wants us to repent, which means to turn around from our sin and follow God. Every day, we should strive to grow closer to God and live out God's word in our actions towards others.

Malachi reminds Israel of God's love for them and calls them to repent for their unfaithfulness. Malachi tells them that later a

messenger will come and prepare the way of the Lord. In the Lord's coming, the sin and unfaithfulness of the people will not only be judged, but made right. Being a faithful leader means to not only lead in fairness, but to follow God's laws. If you follow God's laws then others will see your example and hopefully do the same

INTO GOD'S WORD!!!

Take a few moments and read today's **Focus Scripture** with a partner. After you have read the passage, your teacher will read it again. As your teacher is reading the passage, draw a picture of all the things that come to mind while you are hearing the scripture read. Compare your picture with that of a fellow peer sitting next to you. Do you see anything on their picture and yours that is the same?

Being a good and faithful leader means not only following God, but also putting your faith into action. From Malachi's message, we notice that the people were being unfaithful leaders and even turned their backs on God. Though they had turned back to their wayward ways, God still loved them. God wanted them to repent and turn back to God. Malachi's message was important because it reminded the leaders to give of their best! God deserves our best because God gave God's best to us in the first place. It was because of the leaders' unfaithfulness and sin that they thought God had forgotten about them. Malachi told them that God had not forgotten them, but loved them. Though people change, God does not change. God remains true to God's character.

My Thoughts on Today's Scripture:

USING GOD'S WORD!!!

Have you ever taken something that didn't belong to you? Have you ever kept something you were supposed to give back? In the book of Malachi, we can see that some of the leaders' unfaithfulness to God even spread to how and what they were giving God. In those days, the priests were to give sacrifices unto God. However, they started to give not of their best sacrifice, but the things they really didn't care about.

Every good and perfect gift comes from God. Being a great leader means not only to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God, but to give of your best. What is something that you can give to God? God has given all of us gifts and talents that we can give back unto God as a testament of thanks. When we give back unto God, we are setting a great example for others to do the same. Name one thing that you enjoy doing. How can you use that skill or gift to positively impact others around you?

One of the wonderful things about God is that even though we all make mistakes and don't always give of our best, God

still loves us. When we repent and turn back to God and give the best that we have, God honors it. Every day, we should seek ways to grow closer to God and learn more about God's word. In this way, we will become more effective leaders who impact our churches and communities.

REMIX!!!

You are a leader. You are gifted. You are special. Even when you mess up, God still loves you. We change, but God does not change. God loves us with an everlasting love. All these truths are important. However, God also wants us to strive to be better every day. We can be more effective leaders by repenting, and sharing our faith with others. We must give of our best.

We are taught right from wrong and are expected to obey what we have been told. In today's scripture, Malachi reminds us that we are also supposed to give back to God our best – not our leftovers. This means that everything we have can be given to God as an offering of thanksgiving and praise. You would never give or want to receive a half-eaten plate of food if you were hungry. You want a full plate. We should give of our fullness to God and not just a little. When we give of our best, we are not only honoring God, but showing God that God can trust us with more.

QUESTIONS

1. Does God's love for you change?
2. Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. (True or False.)
3. What does the word *repent* mean?

PRAISE GOD!!!

We should thank and praise God that no matter what happens in our ever-changing lives, God does not change. God's love for us is constant and everlasting. Though at times we fail God, God never fails us! This week, find one way that you can show faithful leadership and kindness. Next week, share with the class what you did, and the impact it had on others around you.

CLOSING PRAYER

God, thank you for your love and kindness to each of us. Thank you that you never change. We are sorry when we do not always follow your rules and are disobedient. Please help us make wise choices and obey your commandments. God, thank you for giving us another chance to make a change in our actions. Help us to trust and obey you all the days of our lives. Amen.