

Offering our worst to God

A stingy farmer owned a cow that gave birth to two calves. He said to his wife, "I am going to dedicate one of these calves to the Lord."

Knowing his miserly ways, his wife was very surprised and asked which calf he was planning to give to the Lord. He said "I haven't decided yet, but I'll let you know."

A few days went by, and the wife again asked which calf he was going to give to the Lord. "I'm still thinking about it," he said.

Then one day, one of the calves got sick. It got worse and worse, until one night the farmer walked up on the porch with the calf in his arms and said to his wife, "Honey, I've got some bad news. The Lord's calf just died."

Why do we tend to give God our worst when He truly deserves our best? What place do we give God in our lives, where does He fall in priority?

Malachi 1:6-13

Opening Prayer

Just to refresh your memory of what's going on here, Malachi is addressing Israel some time after the Babylonian captivity. The Israelites had once again fallen into a lethargic or lazy form of worship. They were not doing as they had been commanded. Even the priests that took care of the services at the temple had fallen into an attitude of drudgery. Malachi is God's messenger to the nation to show them the error of their ways and of God's displeasure, he is harsh and blunt but he gets the point across. Throughout the book of Malachi we can see him making an observation about the people, the people question the observation, such as saying how did we do this or why would you say that, and then Malachi explains why he said what he said.

What I want us to take home from this is how much are we like the people of Israel? How are we continually falling short when we are thinking we are doing just fine? If we believe God exists, and that He sent His Son to this earth to die for our sins, why do we do like the stingy farmer, **why do we offer God our worst instead of our best?**

V6 God is speaking here thru Malachi, and basically says a son honors his father, a servant honors his master, if I am the Heavenly Father of Israel where is my honor?, where is my respect? Where is the fear? Why do you despise my name? And the priests answer, how have we despised your name?

You'll see all the way thru this book, the accused questioning God's accusation. And God almost says, I'm glad you asked that, and then goes on to explain why He says what He says. God answers the priests' question by saying in **v7** you have offered polluted bread. What was happening was the priests were offering sick, lame, blind animals on the altar to the Lord. This was in direct defiance of God's commandment *De 15:21 And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God.* Look in **v8** *And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?* And in **v13** *Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.* The people were giving what they didn't want or need and keeping the best for themselves, when God had commanded they should offer the best. God asks in the last part of **v8**, would your governor be

satisfied with such an offering and the answer is a resounding no. Would any of you be happy receiving a gift that's broken, used, dirty, worthless?

So my question to you is, do you offer your best to God or your worst to God? Its been said if we treated other people like we do God we would be divorced by our spouse, disowned by our family, fired from our job, kicked out of school, our friends would abandon us and we would lose our citizenship. How sorry we are when it comes to giving God what He truly deserves. How pathetic are our attempts to bring Him glory and then we say "hey God look at me, look what I done, aren't you proud of me, hey God are you watching?" We get so wrapped up in ourselves and forget who we are truly worshipping, who we are truly serving, we are serving a holy and righteous God and our righteousness is described in *Isa 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;*... Do you know what that word filthy means? It means covered in human waste. **Our best is as a dung covered rag to God, so what does that make our worst?** I think a lot of the problem is we have lost our focus, lost sight of whats important. We're on the go every minute and take no time for our Creator. We roll out of bed in the morning and maybe utter a few words of prayer or mumble some thanks over breakfast and then rush out the door never to think about God until the next day. Now we come to church too tired to listen, to tired to pray, too tired to care. Our attention is elsewhere when we do get to church, thinking I've gotta do this or that, with the attitude I'm here and now I'm ready leave. Or I'm hungry, or I'm sleepy, or I...or I...or I! Our attitude about worship has become uncaring, weak, and an afterthought. Tell me, how many of us prayed for the service before we came today, how about earlier this week, how many of us prayed period? How many of us come to church, listen to the Word of God preached and taught then go out into the world and do exactly what we have been told NOT to do or not do what we have been told to do? If we are a Christian, if we are saved, we should know better and we should be doing better. We should be taking God seriously, He sure takes us seriously as well as our sins. How can we offer Him less than He asks and then expect to be blessed for it?

I thought about trying to find other examples of bad offerings in the Bible, maybe talking about Cain and Abel, or talking about Abraham willing to offer his son on the altar but God providing a better sacrifice. Then I thought, probably the best example I know of, of someone offering their worst to God, is myself. When I was saved back in September of 1984 did I really start giving my best to God? Did I grow like I should or did I let the world influence me more. Did I give God time or did I give self time? Even thru high school and college was I the example I should be? Was I the devoted Christian God wanted me to be? Even after getting married was I the husband God wanted? Did I live life as a servant to God or as a servant to self pleasure? Do I feel qualified to stand before you today as a messenger of God, absolutely not. Really, looking over my life its been a rare occasion that I offered my life as a sacrifice to God like I should, most of the time its been selfishness, pride, ego, arrogance and pleasure guiding me, and I bet if you are honest with yourself, you have not consistently offered your best to God either, not giving Him the time or praise or thanks that He truly deserves. But you know, God is a good God, and if we repent, if we turn back to Him he will forgive us because He loves us.

Look at **1:2** Israel asks God how has He loved them, and God then goes on to tell them they were a chosen people and He has preserved them since they were chosen, when they came out of Egypt, in the wilderness, during the conquering of the promised land and even thru the captivity. Tell me, how has God loved us? He created us, he gave us breath and life, he kept us from utter destruction when He could easily be rid of us, He preserves us each and every day and

then in *John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* God loved us so much He sent His Son to die for our sins, sins we should have to answer for but because of Jesus Christ we don't have to, **if** you accept His Son as Savior. Notice, the Jewish priests offered tainted offerings, and all we have to offer is filth, but God offers in our stead a perfect offering, a one time spotless, sinless offering. *1Pe 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:* God gave us the perfect spotless gift, and He gave it to the whole world

1Jo 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. God's love and His expression of that love is not just for me or you or one person, nor does it have to be shown to us again and again, Christ was a one time perfect offering for all mankind, for every person who ever existed or ever will. That's how God has loves us.

Look at Malachi **2:2** We are to **lay this to heart**, we are to hear what God is saying to us. That what we have been giving Him is not sufficient, our worship is lazy, our devotion is lacking, our prayers are weak, our faith is almost nonexistent. God tells the priests that He will and has already cursed their blessings. Do you think He will curse our blessings if we don't lay this to heart, if we don't take what God has done and what He expects seriously instead of taking it for granted? I say He already has cursed us. Look at this once great nation we live in. Land of the free, what freedom?, we can't say anything against homosexuality or abortion or false religion without having someone yell hate crime or some nonsense at us, or trying to bring a lawsuit against us, so its freedom of speech until we say something they don't like. We use to have a great education system, look at whats happening in our schools now, indoctrination of evolution, gay lifestyle, planned parent hood, premarital sex, so on and so on and the teachers have their hands tied behind their backs. We were founded as a Christian nation and now no prayer in school, separation of church and state, and if you work for the gov't you can barely show any religious allegiance without your job being in jeopardy. Our freedom is disappearing everyday and we're letting them do it, and we stand by and watch it happen, never lifting a finger. Because we have not laid to heart what God has said and done.

Look at **2:10-11**. Malachi accuses Judah/Israel of dealing treacherously with God, in not remaining a separate people. The Jewish men were marrying non-Jewish women, sometimes even divorcing their Jewish wives in order to do so. And this was no lawful reason for divorce, and goes against God's commandments, so God calls it treacherous. What they were doing was committing adultery against the wife of their youth by illegitimately putting her aside and marrying another that was forbidden. They had left their first love for someone else. Much like the Israelites had done when they turned to worshipping idols instead of worshipping God. Or like what Christ tells the church at Ephesus in *Re 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.* So do we deal treacherously with God? Have we lost the desire to serve like we once had when we were saved? Do we just use God as a spare tire only trying Him out when we are in dire straits? Have we grown cold in our worship? Or just luke warm? This kind of attitude is disgusting to God. *Re 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.* That word spue means to vomit. Do we sicken God with what we think is "good" Christian service and then feel good about it? Are we a traitor to who we profess to be and to who we claim to follow?

2:17 The people had wearied God with their words, saying the evil are blessed and they profit from all their evildoings, the sinful and wicked are rewarded, the evil go unpunished and unjudged. Why is this God? Whine, whine, whine. Don't we do that? Say look at them, they get away with murder while little ol me has to suffer. I'm a good Christian, I'm a good person, why don't I get rewarded? Why don't I get blessed? Well, first off, God doesn't just toss out blessings willy nilly, He gives them for specific reasons. Second, who told you you were good. *Ps 14:3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is **none that doeth good, no, not one.***

*Ps 53:3 Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is **none that doeth good, no, not one.***

*Ro 3:9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that **they are all under sin;***

*10 As it is written, **There is none righteous, no, not one:***

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

*12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is **none that doeth good, no, not one.***

What about **3:7-9**? The people had not been giving God His due, the verses are talking financially here, but how are we robbing God? After He gave His only begotten Son for our benefit, how do we show our appreciation of that, especially if we are saved? Its not something we can ever repay but Paul says in *Php 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.** 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* Works do not save us but due to the fact we are saved we should want to do what we can to further His kingdom here on earth, we should desire that others be partakers in this wondrous thing called salvation in Jesus Christ, we should "work out" our salvation by doing the good works of the Lord, for His glory not ours, to do good and be rich in good works.

Do we truly give our best to Him? Or do we try to slide by just showing as little effort as possible? How much do you study your Sunday School lesson? How much do you read your Bible? Do you live a life before the world to where they can see Christ living within you? Do we complain and mumble about going to church, or prayer meeting, or do we look forward to it as yet another opportunity to serve the almighty God?

3:13-14 Basically the people are saying its pointless to serve God. That there was nothing in it for them. How blind and selfish we are sometimes. We should only be serving God out of pure thanksgiving not some warped view of personal gain, of whats in this for me. We should serve and honor Him because of what He has done for us. We've already been given above and beyond anything any of us deserve, and yet we want more. What we should want is to serve Him, not look at living a Christian life as a job or task, but something that fulfills a desire to serve one who gave His life for us. We need to learn to put aside self and put God first. Paul says in *1Cor 15:31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily.*** Can we have that attitude, to let self die. We have to let self die so Christ may live in us, let self will go and let God's will take over.

Is there any wonder that after the book of Malachi the prophets remain silent for almost 400 hundred years, God does not speak again to Israel until John the Baptist comes on the scene

crying in the wilderness? Why would God speak what with Israel doubting God's love, offering impure sacrifices, not taking His words to heart and having their blessings cursed, in dealing treacherously with God, wearying Him with their words, stealing from God in the form of tithes and offerings and then just thinking that all of this service/devotion/worship is pointless?

So how do we stack up? How good is our service to God? Do we offer him a sick and lame offering with our service? Do we spurn the love God has given us? Did Jesus Christ die in vain? Do we take our life's worship to heart and take this seriously? Do we deal treacherously with God and leave our first love? Do we weary God with our words, our moaning and complaining? Do we give God His due or do we rob God of what He truly deserves? Do we think it's a pointless exercise to be a Christian or are we truly appreciative of what God has done for us?

I would say we all fall short, even the Bible says *Ro 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* but the thing is, we can change. Look in **3:16-18** a faithful remnant turned back to God. We too can be a faithful remnant in this day and age, we can turn to God and repent of our lazy service, of our insincere worship and HE will hear, it says "and the Lord hearkened, and heard it" He is a just God, a loving God, a merciful and gracious God and He desires a close relationship with us, not a distant, ho-hum relationship, but an intimate, up close and personal relationship, all we have to do is turn back to Him. So I'll end with this question, where do you stand in your worship to God, do you offer him your best or do you offer Him your worst?