

RELATED SCRIPTURES

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 09.21.25

2 Samuel 24:18–25 | Romans 2:17–24 | Romans 5:6–11

SUMMARY

Malachi, a prophet of God, continues with a strong word to the unfaithful people of God who seem to think, despite Malachi's strong words, that they are doing well, and that perhaps it's God who has forgotten them. After his opening statement professing the Lord's love for his people, the people responded with great audacity, "How have you loved us?" (v. 2). Malachi's statements continue, and the people's questions also persist. Malachi tells the people they have despised the name of the Lord, to which they respond with, "How have we despised your name?" (v. 6) and "How have we polluted you?" (v. 7). Malachi's response puts the focus on the offerings of the priests. Firstly, the priests of Israel were offering defiled sacrifices to God—sacrifices which included blind, crippled, and diseased animals on God's altar. This act might prompt the question, "Why is this bad if the animals are going to die anyway?" Malachi points out that they are offering God the animals no one else wants; not even their governor would accept such a gift (v. 8). Moreover, the priests' actions caused harm to God's people. If the priests despised God with their offering, the enemies of God would see this. Despising God causes others—even neighboring nations—to respond similarly, ultimately harming those under their care. If the Lord's priests are godly, the people of God will tend to be godly as well. Lastly, and perhaps most seriously, the priests refused to acknowledge their sins with responses of "How have we done these things?" This response is one of self-righteousness—a belief that they have been sufficiently righteous in pleasing a God who is holy. To respond to God with, "How have I sinned?" is a show of arrogance. The righteous person does not deny their sin when God reveals it to them. In Christ, there is no sin; he was perfectly and totally righteous. Yet Jesus bore the sins of his people—even in their arrogance, "while we were still sinners" (Romans 5:8). In his righteousness, we can see our sin and repent and learn daily to walk in his footsteps. Lord, help us see our sin and follow you!

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Malachi 1:6-14.

What is a defiled offering in the context of Malachi's message? How can this apply to a modern context? What do our offerings communicate about our faith?

How do we as individuals and the church at large engage in the sin of self-righteousness? How can we avoid falling into this sin's trap?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.