

THE BOOK OF MALACHI – “MESSENGERS OF THE LORD”

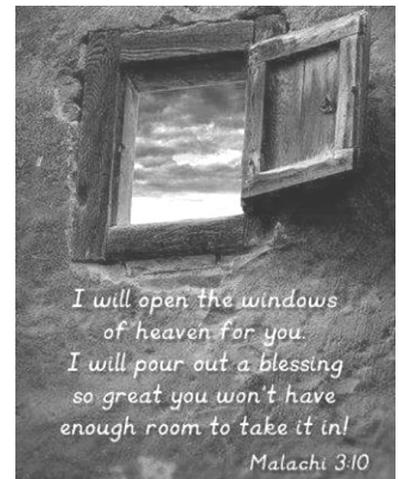
Trinity Lutheran Church – Norman, OK.

Date: 5-12-19 Lesson: 12

Theme: As messengers of the Lord:

- Then and now, proclaim to each generation
The Law and The Gospel
- Properly distinguished - but boldly spoken

A. THE TEXT: (Malachi 3:8-10)



(1) *"Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And **the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple**; and **the messenger of the covenant** in whom you delight, behold, **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 sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord.*

(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.*

(5) *"Then **I will draw near** to you for judgment. **I will be a swift witness** against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not **fear me**, says **the Lord of hosts**.*

(6) *"For **I the Lord do not change**; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. (7) From the days of your fathers 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 man rob **God**? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. (9) You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing **me**, the whole nation of you. (10) Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in **my house**. And thereby put **me** to the test, says **the Lord of hosts**, if **I will not** open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.*

(11) ***I will rebuke** the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says **the Lord of hosts**. (12) Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says **the Lord of hosts**. (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.'"*

(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**.*

B. STUDY GUIDE

“Will man rob **God**? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing **me**, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in **my house**. And thereby put **me** to the test, **says the Lord of hosts, if I will not** open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.”

The Old Testament and New Testament understanding of tithes and offerings:

Old Testament: Israel as a theocracy, church and state combined, the law of the tithe which supported both the religious and the civil realm.

(Ex 10:15; 22:29; 23:26; Lev 25:21; 27:30; Nu 18:21;
Dt 11:26; 28:3-68; 2 Ki 7:2; 1 Chr 31:10;
Neh 13:10-12; Is 44:3; 61:9 62:4; Joel 2:14; Ezek 20:6; Zech 5:3;

New Testament: The new Israel is the Church supported by free-will, cheerful, sacrificial, proportional, weekly giving of time, talent and treasures that flows from justifying faith in Jesus Christ.

(Matt chapter 6; Lk 11:42; 18:12; Rom 12:4-13; 2 Corinth. chapters 8 and 9;
Eph 4:28; 1 Tim 6:17-19)

C. LIFE APPLICATION: What is your understanding of sacrificial giving in your Christian life?

D. LUTHER'S LECTURES ON MALACHI chapter 3 – Vol. 18

6. *For I the Lord do not change.* “I do not lie. I do not revoke the promises I have made through so many prophets. So, have no doubt! Your unworthiness will not hold back My truth. I have promised freely. I will redeem those promises freely. It is for this that I brought you back out of captivity, to fulfill My promises. The entire matter, therefore, must be credited to divine goodness and not to any merits of any men, for you have always sinned against Me...”

7. *Return to Me, and I will return to you...* He says, “Return to obey Me, and I will return to you to bless you. I will be your kind Father of mercies.”

8. *If a man will rob God...* Here God is challenging the behavior of the entire human race. Everywhere they worship their gods with great care and never steal anything from an idol, except that among the Jews things are stolen from the true God...Now, although we ought to be giving to ministers of the Word and to the poor, we are more eager to get and to take away...He says: “In regard to those things which you ought to be giving to feed the priests, you inflict violence and theft on Me.” Certainly God does not say this as if He really cared about tithes, etc. Rather He says it to preserve the ministry of the Word.”