

Listen and Learn or Be Judged

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[0:00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Take your Bible, if you would, and turn with me to the book of Malachi. And we are going to go through chapter 2.

You need to understand, this is a dark book. In a lot of ways, because Israel and Judah and God's people have walked away from Him.

They're not doing right. They're not trying to serve Him. The priests, the preachers, the spiritual leaders, they're not doing right. The people aren't doing right. Their homes are falling apart.

It's the end of the time before God will set the Jewish people aside. You know that after the book of Malachi, you're going to have 400 years of silence where God won't be speaking to His people.

[1:03] And then all of a sudden, we'll break into John the Baptist coming on the scene. And so, as you read this passage of Scripture and as you go through this passage, I think it's very fitting.

We are in last days ourselves. We believe that Jesus will return to the earth. We believe that there will be judgment. And we believe all of that. And if we look around, we realize preachers and men of God are not doing right.

They are honestly causing people to sin. They're doing things that are causing people to stumble. We know that preachers aren't preaching the book anymore.

And that's really what He's going to address here. We know that church people aren't living out who they are anymore. And we know that God's going to bring judgment on that. We know that marriage is falling apart.

And we know that people need to be called in to look at that. And so, as you go through Malachi chapter 2, it may have been written about Jewish people many, many hundreds of years ago for you. But at the same time, it is so applicable.

[2:07] So, I challenge you to listen and realize we're in a very similar set of circumstances. We're in a time when God's people need to be called to listen.

Let's have a word of prayer and ask God to bless as we go through this passage. Father, I love you and I pray that you would bless today. I pray you would save the one who is not saved here today.

And I pray, dear God, that you would call us as a church and as a people to love you and live for you and honor you. I ask you to call us to strengthen our marriages and keep our word that we gave to our spouse in our young age.

I pray, God, that your name would be glorified. And I will give you grace and honor and glory for all you do. In Jesus' name, amen. Well, go with me, if you would, to Malachi chapter 2 and verse 1.

And the first thing we see is that he is going to be speaking to the preachers, the men of God. That's who he's speaking to. So look at Malachi 2.1. The Bible says, and now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.

[3:14] Now, so the next part we're going to read is for the priest. And so you're probably thinking, well, I could take a break here. You're the only guy he's talking to, you and the pastoral staff, and that's who he's talking to. But I think you'll find there's some very biblical, applicable things.

The first one that he tells these priests is he's tired of being ignored. God is tired of being ignored. Look at verse 2. This is like a crazy verse, but it is so applicable to today.

Look what it says. If you will not hear, and if you will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, says the Lord of hosts, I'll send a curse on you.

I'll curse your blessings. Yeah, I've cursed him already, because you do not lay it to heart. But look at what he says, if you would. If you will not hear, why don't you all listen to me?

You will not lay it to heart. You come, and even if you listen, you don't do anything with what you hear being said. He ends the verse with, you do not lay it to heart. God says, I'm calling on you to hear me and take it to heart.

[4:18] God's people, God's men, are refusing to listen to him. They won't recognize God for who he is. God wants to be honored, and he will be honored, or people will suffer the consequences.

You do understand, this isn't really optional. We'll really figure out that God is the creator of the universe. He is the owner of the universe. He is the judge of the universe.

He is the savior of the universe. You can't just play with God. The second thing is stated here in chapter 2 and verse 3 is he says to them, I'm going to spread dung on your face.

He said, I'm tired of you guys, and so I'm going to take the feces from the animals that are in the offering place, and I'm going to rub that on your face. In other words, I am going to embarrass you.

I am going to humiliate you. I am going to bring curses on you, preachers on you, priests that don't honor me, and I'm going to bring this wicked stuff to happen to you.

[5:25] You understand, if anybody ought to be standing up and talking about God, it ought to be these priests. If anybody ought to be calling the people to do right, it ought to be these priests. If anybody ought to be doing right in this situation, it ought to be the priests.

But they're not doing it. And so he says, all right, I'm going to bring it on you. I'm going to corrupt your seed. I'm going to bring trouble on you. Now, you heard that, and here's what you're thinking.

You're thinking to yourself, well, that's not very nice. Why would God, I thought God was a good God, and why would God curse? So I want you to take your Bible and go back with me, if you would, to Deuteronomy chapter 28.

Deuteronomy chapter 28. Deuteronomy chapter 28. And here's what happens in Deuteronomy chapter 28. And I will just slowly walk you through some of this.

I want you to understand that when he said he was going to curse them, it was a no surprise to them. If they were the men of God, and they knew what the Word of God said, and they had the book of Deuteronomy, which is the books of the law, the Pentateuch, the books of Moses, and they had them, then they should know what God's going to do.

[6:31] So in Deuteronomy chapter 28, here's what he says, starting off, you need your Bible open there, and you need to mark it. Because this isn't a curse where he's going to send them to hell. This isn't a curse where they're going to lose their salvation.

That's not happening. It is a curse where I was going to bless you big time, but you want to mess with me, and I'm going to take away my blessings. I'm going to take away my blessings, and I'm going to replace them with curses.

Look at Deuteronomy 28, 1. And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently, if you'll listen closely under the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all the commandments which I command thee this day, the Lord will set you high above all nations of the earth.

God's got big things for you, Israel. You're now following him. This is Moses' book that he's written. They haven't even gone to Egypt. They haven't even gone to, they've come out of Egypt.

They haven't even got into the promised land yet. And God is saying, hey, I am going to bless you guys big time. If you had your Bible open there to Deuteronomy chapter 28, he said, blessings will come on you in verse 2, and they will overtake you.

[7:41] I mean, you're just going to be running down the road, and blessings are going to run faster than you. They're going to catch you. That's if you'll listen to me, he said. In verse 3, he said, I'm going to bless you in the city. I'm going to bless you in the field.

In verse 4, he said, I'm going to bless the fruit of your body and the fruit of your ground. I'm going to bless the fruit of your ground. I'm just going to make you rich. You're going to have a lot of kids. You're going to have a lot of plants and crops that will grow.

You're going to have a lot of animals. I'm going to bless your baskets and store. In verse 5 and verse 6, he said, you're going to be blessed when you come in. You're going to be blessed when you go out.

Man, I'm going to be good to you. I'm going to pour it out on you. He said, fact is, if enemies come against you, they'll come in one way. They'll run out seven ways. They'll run like rats leaving a sinking ship.

I'm going to be good to you. In verse 8, he said, I'm going to bless everything you touch. In verse 9, he said, I'm going to make you a holy people. But in verse 9, he said, that's if you keep my commandments and if you walk in my ways.

[8:38] In verse 11, he said, I'm going to make you have a lot of stuff. And down in verse 13, he said, that's if you hearken to my word. And you hearken to my word and obey my commandments.

Now, stop and look. You see, when you read Malachi, you've got to put it in context. Because every Jew knew that all the way back with Moses, Moses stood up and said, now listen, this is what God's saying to you guys.

If you'll do right, he is going to pour out his blessings on your country. Now, he's talking to a country. I'm not talking to individuals here, though individuals are going to receive that.

But he told them, if you do right, I'm telling you, I am going to make your country the land of plenty. I'm telling you. In fact, I didn't have time to show you. He said, you'll not borrow from anybody.

Everybody will borrow from you. I'm going to make you prosper beyond what you can imagine. That's the blessing. But on that same day, he said, but you need to understand, if you don't listen, if you don't listen, and if you don't honor me, I'm going to bring curses.

[9:43] Go with me if you were to verse 14, Deuteronomy 28, 14. It says, and thou shalt not go aside from any of these words. Don't you dare leave what I'm saying, which I command you this day.

Don't you go after other gods and serve them. And in verse 15, he said, it shall come to pass, if you will not listen, if you will not hearken, if you will not pay attention to the voice of the Lord thy God to do all he's teaching you, that all these curses shall come upon you.

So he basically said under Moses, he said, now let me explain something to you guys. God wants to bless you big time. He's going to bless you so many ways. I mean, it's going to take a whole sermon just talking about how good he's going to be to you.

But if you decide to not obey me and not respect me, he's going to bring all the opposite on you. And so in verse 16, he said, I'll curse you in the city and I'll curse you in the field.

And in verse 17, he said, I'll curse your basket and your store. And in verse 18, it's all I'll curse your kids and your animals. And he said in verse 19, I'll curse you when you come in and I'll curse you when you go out. Verse 20, the Lord shall send upon thee cursing and vexation and rebuke in everything you put your hand to do until you die.

[10:59] Until you die quickly because of the wickedness of your ways and because you left me. And I'll send pestilence. I'll send locusts and I'll send crazy things to happen to you until you're consumed and you will perish.

perish. You, verse 24, will be destroyed. Verse 27, he said, the Lord will smite you with a botch from Egypt.

The things he did to them, he'll bring that on you. He'll leave you in bad shape. Verse 45, he said, these curses shall come upon you and shall pursue you and overtake you till you're destroyed.

Why? Because you hearken not unto the voice of the Lord thy God to keep his commandments and the statutes which he gave you. I want you to look this way a second. That's dark.

First part was really good. First part was really good. I mean, he's going to bless you when you're coming in, when you're going. He's going to bless your kids, bless your animals, bless your plants. He's going to bless everything you're doing. You're going to be just walking down the road and blessings going to catch up with you and run you over.

[12:04] You're just going to be blessed by it. But, if you don't honor me, I'm going to destroy your country. He's talking about a country. He's talking about Israel. He's talking about the nation of Israel.

But you need to understand here, and I'm not trying to apply this to America. You can apply it to America if you want to. But I'm just telling you that when Malachi stands up and says, God's had it with you guys and he's going to curse you.

You're reading that and you're going, well, that don't sound very nice. Well, you got to get the context. The context is they knew full well if they do right, God would bless them. They also knew full well if they did wrong, God would curse them.

It's kind of like this. Son, daughter, you do right, we're going to go get some ice cream and pizza. You do wrong, I'm going to whip your little fanny. That's a blessing and a curse.

And then your kid comes in there and you say, all right, you didn't do what I told you to do. I told you to clean your room and do your homework. You didn't do that. So I'm fixing to fan your fanny. And the kid looks at you and says, why are you cursing me?

[13:06] Why are you so mean? Well, the truth is, every parent in the room knows, I'm really not mean. I tried to be good. And you wouldn't let me. And so in Malachi, when you hear this as like some bleak and bad thing going on, you need to understand they were clear warned.

And their men of God should have opened the Bible and said, this is what God said. But the men of God weren't doing that. And so Malachi says, you priests better listen to me. You hadn't been telling people what God says.

You've been acting like sin's okay. You've been acting like they don't have to worry about me. And I'm just telling you, that ain't the way it works. So in Malachi chapter 2 and verse 4, he said, wake up and realize that he's trying to bring spiritual revival.

Do you remember when God brings his warnings to people that that's a good time to repent? It's like repent or else, turn or burn.

It's like get right with God. When he told Nineveh that, Nineveh said, we're going to repent. When he told these people here, they're like, we don't give a rip what you say. We don't care what God says.

- [14:14] We're ignoring God. He said, you shall know that I have sent this covenant. Now see, what happened was Levi, who's the guy that's being mentioned here in the passage, he and God got a really special relationship.

It's a tribe of people. It's a group of people. You remember back in Exodus chapter 32 and verse 26 when Moses was up in a mountain and Aaron was down there and Aaron made a golden calf.

And he told them, this is the God that brought you out of Egypt, which was a lie, which would cause people to stumble, which would cause people to do wrong. But he needed to keep the attendance up in his church.

He needed people to like him as a preacher. And the real man of God had gone named Moses. And so he's going to say something positive. Let's have a party. Let's worship the golden calf I've made and praise the Lord for what he's done.

And Moses came down out of the mountain. And when Moses got down out of the mountain, he saw them and he heard them. And Moses, man, he blew his stack. And he broke the commandments. He shouldn't have done that, but he did.

- [15:17] He was mad. Some preachers could get mad when they ought not. He broke the commandments. And then he ground that calf up. And he burned it. He ground it up. And he made them drink it in water.

And then he said, these people need to figure out God don't like this. So who's on the Lord's side in this group? If you're on the Lord's side, you come here and stand by me.

Bring your sword. You're going to kill your friend. You're going to kill your mama. You're going to kill your sister. You're going to kill anybody who's not on the Lord's side. Get over here. And the Levites walked over and said, well, we'll be on God's side. And the next thing you know, there's a whole bunch of people dead.

It was a horrible day. But God is like, at least one group of people wanted to do what I said. At least one group of people wanted to do what I said. And so now Malachi stands up and he preaches and says, me and Levi, we've had something going here.

Levi's been doing right. I've got a covenant with him because he's chosen me. Going me to Malachi 2.5. He said, God promised and he had given great blessings on Levi and on his people.

- [16:18] And so read the verse for me. My covenant was with him of life and peace. And I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me. Change that word fear to respect.

Write it in the margin if you want. See, it's not like you think of fear as scared to death and trembling. What it means is awesome respect, awe and wonder.

It's like God is great and I believe in God and I will honor him in whatever he wants. Because fear is what your kids do to you. They honor you. They fear you.

And by the way, they do fear you. So the word's not that far off. All I have to do to a kid that's doing something they ought not do is say, you want me to talk to your parents? And it's amazing what the kid does.

It's like, oh, I love my mom and dad. They'd never do anything to me. I'll just keep kicking people if I want to. That's not what they do. They go, oh, okay. They get a little fear in there. Right? That's what the verse is saying. He said, they feared me.

- [17:14] They honored me. They respected me. That's what he says. And I keep reading. And they were afraid before my name. They bowed their head. They honored me.

They respected me. That's who Levi is. Look at Malachi chapter 2 and verse 6. Not only did they do that, but all the way back there in Levi's day, the wall of truth was in his mouth.

You know what he talked about? What the word said. So when old Levi came up to you, he'd say, it's what God says in the book. In the book. Let me tell you what God says. And he said, I like that. He did that.

He said the law of the truth was in his mouth. And iniquity wasn't found in his lips. That's a twisted, perverted transgression where you know what God wants and you just flat out say something different.

Like these preachers today that would say things that they know God doesn't believe in. And they know it's not what the word of God says, but they figure out a way to say it. He said, no, they didn't do that. He said, and also Levi walked with me in peace and equity.

[18:17] And he did turn away many from iniquity. You know what happened when Levi got around people? They got saved. You know what happened? When they got around Levi, they turned from their sin and turned to serve God.

And God said, I like Levi. He's my man. But y'all aren't doing that at all. Look at Malachi chapter 2 and verse 7. See, Levi. These guys are descendants of Levi.

But look what he says. The priest's lips should keep knowledge. You're not doing it. You should know this book and you should be talking about this book, Mr. Priest. You should be telling people what God says, Mr. Priest.

Your lips should keep knowledge. You should seek the law at his mouth. People should go to the preacher and say, I just want to know what God says. But that's not what's happening here nowadays, buddy. That's not what's happening here nowadays.

Because the priest is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. The man of God ought to be able to say, this is what God says. That's not a political answer. Not what everybody wants to hear. It's what God says. He said, it's time for y'all to start doing what you're supposed to do.

[19:17] You should be teaching truth. Look at verse 8. He said, but that ain't what y'all doing. That ain't what y'all doing, you preachers. Verse 8, he said, you have departed out of the way.

That means you're not doing what God wants you to do. You preachers are not really men of God. You may be called preachers. You may be called priests. But you're really not because you've gone out of the way. Not only that, you have caused many to stumble at the law.

You have gone to people and said, don't obey God. Don't respect God. The Bible's not the word of God. You've done everything you could to get people away from that. Caused them to stumble. You have corrupted.

You have broken our agreement. The covenant of Levi. You quit serving God. You're causing people to fall into sin. And so I'm going to judge you.

You see, preachers that won't do right need to be judged. Priests need to be judged. Look at Malachi 2.9. Therefore, because of everything I just said, have I also made you contemptible and base.

[20:18] That means nobody respects you. There was a day when Elijah walked through town or Elisha walked through town or a Levite walked through town and people, there's a man of God.

There's a man of God. We respect him. That's what they thought then. He said, well, not anymore, buddy. Nobody's going to respect you. Nobody's going to honor you. They're going to treat you like commonplace and nothing.

According as you have not kept my, since you didn't keep my ways, that's what's happening. I'm going to see to it. You've been partial in the law. You just, you thought, you treated the word of God like it was a, was a, was a line at the cafeteria and you could pick and choose.

And since you've done that, I'm not going to let anybody respect you. I'm going to take away all the respect and all the love that you should have. That's point one. But I want to bring it home to you now before I go to the next thing.

You know, all of us are spiritual leaders in a way in this room. I am the guy who's been shot at the most in this passage. I mean, it started off and basically chapter two, verse one, basically said, oh, Austin, I'm after you, buddy.

[21 : 23] But did you realize that you are a spiritual leader in your home? If you're a dad, you're a spiritual leader. If you're a mom, you're a spiritual leader. If you teach a Sunday school class. So I want to ask us some questions here.

Am I listening to him or am I ignoring him? Now you should answer that question. Because in Malachi chapter two, he's saying, I'm tired of being ignored.

Why don't y'all pay attention to me? Why don't you get in my book? Why don't you tell the truth? So I'd want to stop right now. If I were you and I'd give the invitation. Here it is. Are you listening to him? Are you bringing people to Jesus?

Are you causing them to stumble? That's what the passage is about. Do you speak truth? The word of God. Am I in danger of being embarrassed because of my failure to be faithful to him?

Will I lose the respect of my family and those that I minister to? Because I could lose their respect. I could lose their respect. That's what the first nine verses are about.

[22 : 24] Now go with me to verse 10. We're coming closer to home now in verse 10. In verse 10, basically what verse 10 says is, We're all the same dad, not just the preachers.

We're all out of the same group. We're all out of the same team. And we've been doing wrong. Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother? By profaning the covenant of our fathers.

Now, we were talking about Levi. Now we're talking about you. He just moved from me to you. And I'm with you. Because I'm one of you too. I'm just a brother here at our church.

And he says, Now let's talk about them. He moves the message to regular people, not just spiritual leaders. The people have been doing wrong. The people were mistreating their brothers in the faith.

They were violating the covenant. They knew what God wanted, not just the priest to do, but what he wanted the people to do. But they are not doing right. Would you just stop a second and realize, it's pretty easy to set in judgment on preachers, and I don't blame you.

[23 : 25] But could you look in the mirror and say, Am I, as a Christian, as a child of God, as a servant of God, as a member of a church, am I living out my faith? Because we're all his people.

Chapter 2, verse 11. You're not going to like this. So I'm just going to go ahead and tell you. Somebody asked me this morning when I could get out of Malachi and get to a more positive book.

Somebody asked the old-time preacher. They said, Do you ever say anything positive? He said, I do. I'm positively against sin. And so look at what it says in chapter 2, verse 11.

Judah hath dealt treacherously. You need to underline dealt treacherously. You ought to go through the whole chapter and underline dealt treacherously. Because you know what the agreement was, and you have violated the agreement.

You have committed treason against the agreement. Dealt treacherously. An abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, for Judah has profaned the holiness of the Lord, which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange God.

[24:29] Uh-oh. Here's what happened. God's people were supposed to marry God's people. Because you want your family loving God together.

But they married the daughters of a strange God. Underline that in a verse. They married daughters of a strange God. That was something God hated. These strange women of a strange false God would lead God's people not to serve him and not to love him.

And they had married those kind of people. This is the story of Solomon. It's the story of Solomon. Do you remember Solomon? Solomon was the wisest man Israel ever had.

The wisest man in the world, according to the Bible. And yet he married strange women. He married women who loved other gods. And because his women loved other gods before long, he was building temples to other gods and worshipping other gods.

And he had gotten off track. And now the nation, we're in Malachi, and everybody's doing that. Everybody's marrying women that don't love God. And so what's going to end up happening when they get to the house?

[25:35] When they get to the house, they're going to get to the house, they're going to have a discussion. And is it about your God this week or about my God? How about we go to the temple of God this week and the temple of the devil next week? Which Sunday school are our kids going to get raised in?

Which religious belief are we going to teach them? That's the question here. He said they married strange women that didn't love God. They didn't love God.

Go with me if you would to. Before I leave it, God doesn't want his people to have divided hearts. You see, let me just say this before I move on.

It ought to be that in my home, daddy and mama love Jesus and talk about Jesus. And our kids grew up saying, Jesus is important to daddy and mama.

There are women who have to come to church without a husband because the husband decided not to love God. And the kids are confused. And as soon as they get old enough, they'll quit coming because they're going to follow what daddy's doing.

[26:37] Or maybe mama won't come and daddy will come and so they won't come. And here was his whole problem. Why are you marrying somebody who loves a false god? So at the house, you realize what's happening over here?

We're worshipping Jesus. And over here, we're worshipping Buddha. That's what was going on. Now, you wouldn't say that's going on right now. It might be right now that you're worshipping sports cars and Jesus. But the whole point was he wanted them to have an undivided heart, to be in love with God.

He wanted us to raise kids like it. It's going to say that in the verses if you hang on. Verse 12. The Lord will cut off the man that does this. He'll quit blessing him. He'll pull his blessing from him.

He won't work with him. It doesn't matter if he's a master or a scholar. You're cutting him off. And so when that happened, they must have been Baptists because they all started crying.

They're like, oh, this is a mean message. Look at verse 13. And this have you done, covering the altar of the Lord with tears and with weeping and crying out in so much that he regards not the offering anymore or receives it with goodwill at your hand.

[27:46] So what happened was they got all upset and they all started crying. And they went to the altar and they just covered the altar in tears. But they weren't tears of repentance. You're going to figure that out in these next verses.

They weren't tears of repentance. They were tears of, oh, God's not fair. Seems to me like God's trying to rule my life too much. It's like God thinks he's God or something and I don't like it.

I don't appreciate it one bit. I mean, I really want a God that kind of goes along with me. I don't want to go along with him. He said, y'all covering your tears so much I don't even want to listen to you. Cover my altar with your tears.

I don't even want to listen to you. They were crying because God was angry and because they couldn't get what they wanted. These weren't sincere tears from repentant people.

This was crying because my life ain't going the way I want it to go. Now go with me to Malachi 2.14. Better put your seatbelt on. As I prepared this message, I even thought to myself, I'd rather not say this.

[28:52] But it is what the passage says. They just couldn't understand what was wrong with their marrying these women of a strange God. So look at what it says in verse 14. Malachi 2.14.

And yet you say, Wherefore? God, why? Isn't that what we say? God, why? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth against whom thou hast dealt treacherously.

Yet she is thy companion and the wife of thy covenant. Why, God? Why are you so mean?

Why are you upset about me taking this woman that don't love Jesus? Why don't you like it? I don't get it. And here's what he says in verse 14. Did you underline dealt treacherously?

Have you got your Bible open? There it is again. He said, Because you're breaking the covenant. You're breaking the agreement. You sign saying you do something, but you're not doing it. You mistreated the wife you made your promise to.

[29:53] Look at verse 14 with me again. The Lord has been witness. You know, he's the silent witness at every marriage. He's a silent witness at your house. He knows if you're really what you ought to be or not.

He said, He said, He said, He's been witness between you and the wife of your youth. And you've dealt treacherously. Yet she's your companion and the wife you made your promise to.

On August the 18th, 1973. Fellowship Baptist Church in Rome, Georgia. A skinny little guy, 18 years old, stood by a beautiful lady at that church that day.

And we made promises. And I didn't see God there anywhere. But he was there. He was there. He's the witness. He's the witness.

He said, I'm watching how you're treating this woman you married. Tell me if I'm reading this right. He said, Between you and the wife of your youth.

[30:57] I'm 62 years old right now. And my wife, I married her when I was 18. That's a youth. That's quite a youth. And he said, You dealt treacherously.

You say, What? And he said, She's your companion. She's your companion. She's the wife of your covenant. It's like they got older and they decided to not be fair with their wife and to marry a strange woman.

They went through a midlife crisis and had to get a lover and they married her so they'd at least have the appearance of doing right. The Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth.

Marriage can't be taken lightly. Verse 15. We're getting close in the chapter so you can start breathing in just a second.

Verse 15. God wanted them to stay faithful to their spouse and raise godly children. Look at what it says. Did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of spirit and wherefore one.

[32:12] You know, God was big enough and he could have made you a lot of women if he wanted to make, sir, he could have given you a multitude of girls. But he, as big a God as he is with plenty left over, he made one.

Because he wanted you to marry one. He wanted you to marry one. He didn't make a replacement. You know, when you got that little bag of parts and you put that thing together that said some assembly required, it didn't say in there there's extra pieces.

You're supposed to, you're supposed to use them. So look, he wanted you to have a godly seed. Underline that. Look at it. That he might seek a godly seed.

How you get a godly seed? Well, daddy's over here teaching the family let's love Jesus and serve Jesus. Watch daddy. Daddy prays. Daddy reads the Bible. Daddy's faithful to church and daddy does what's right because daddy loves Jesus.

Well, watch mama. Mama loves Jesus and mama's faithful to church and mama reads her Bible and mama prays it. Mama and daddy are just the same and that's all you get to see, buddy, is a mama and a daddy in love with Jesus and that kid will probably grow up saying, man, I really like this.

[33:16] At least that's our experience. It worked at our house. But they didn't do that. They dealt treacherously. And so what they ended up doing is divorcing their first wife and marrying this strange girl.

Malachi 2.16. They divorced their wives that did love God and chose women of the world that hated God and didn't love God and God hates divorce. That's what this passage says. Read it with me.

16. For the Lord, the God of Israel, says that he hates putting away. I put a circle around putting away, draw a line over the margin and write divorce.

If I put my wife away, that means I get rid of her. And what is happening in marriage? He's covering violence with his garment.

What's really funny is this garment here, when they got married, they didn't give rings. They covered their partner with a part of their garment.

[34:24] So it'd be like, come under my covering. Come under my garment. You remember when Ruth goes to see Boaz and during the night he wakes up and she says, cover me with your garment. What that meant was give me a ring.

Marry me. But what's happening is they've turned marriage into violence. Husbands abusing their wives.

Wives abusing their husbands. Talking from the man point here, but still goes the same way. And he said, he said, you're using marriage as a way to cover up your violence.

To hide your sin. To do wrong. Look at your spirit. Look at the verse. It says, take heed to your spirit. I'm just reading the chapter, guys.

Look at your spirit. Are you not doing wrong? The first picture here is how God would treat his people. See, in the story in Malachi, it's really about God and Israel also and how God loves Israel and God says, Israel, I've loved you and I've saved you and I've done everything for you but you have abandoned me.

[35:33] You don't love me and you've gone after other gods. But the other part of this passage is about wives and husbands. It's time to ask ourselves about our relationship and our marriage.

It's time for me to think about my relationship to God too. Did you fall in love with God and then slowly grow cold and drift away? Is your heart in love with God but you're still flirting with other gods?

That's what he doesn't want. Love him. How about your wife? Are you faithful to your spouse or are you flirting with another one? Are you faithful to your spouse or are you flirting with others?

That's a sincere question. You don't want to deal treacherously with your wife. This is not a popular message.

I feel like I'm going to be stoned. But it's the truth. Don't you think my wife ought to get to know I'm going to be faithful to her? I'm God's man. I'm going to do right by her. Say amen if you believe that.

[36 : 39] And women ought to feel that. Men ought to get to feel that too. Are you thinking about dealing treacherously with your wife? With your spouse? Are you angry with God because you don't like how he teaches you to live?

It's kind of ridiculous. I've been married for 43 years. I think it's about time you get a replacement. God, why did you make me have to live with her so long? God's like, I told you.

This ain't a game. I want to pause so you don't. God hates divorce. God hates divorce.

He loves you even if you're divorced and you're messed up. But let me explain something to you. Right now today you should make a commitment. I gave my word and he was a witness at my marriage and I am not going to do it again.

I'm going to be faithful to my spouse. Amen. Amen. You should decide now. I know God hates divorce and I know God's a witness at my wedding and I'm going to be faithful to my spouse until the Lord takes me home.

[37 : 52] Last verse. Time to quit. Malachi 2, 17. The accused God. Verse 17 said, You have wearied the Lord. That's funny to me. God's tired. You have wearied the Lord with your words.

You say, Well, why are we wearing him? When you say everyone that does evil is good in the sight of the Lord and he delights in them or where is the God of judgment? God was tired of hearing them whine about getting what they wanted.

Their attack was that God was blessing the wicked and making his own people suffer. That wasn't making sense to them. They were using immoral people to justify their own evil lifestyle. It is wrong for you to think, Well, I have not been as bad to my spouse as I've seen other people do.

At least I hadn't killed mine. At least I hadn't done this. At least I hadn't done it. That's not the way we think. We don't think at least I hadn't. We think I'm trying to serve God in the way I treat my wife or my husband. Amen. They said God wasn't fair.

Are you accusing God instead of examining your own life? You see, the sermon's ending and right now some of you are, you know, they say that this is a good sign that you're defensive.

[38 : 59] Maybe you're sitting there going, I don't like this a bit. I'll be glad he gets through. We get out here. I don't like this kind of church. Let's go to another one. I don't blame you. I'd like another one too. Let's go to a church that says whatever will be, will be, whatever does, does and we can do whatever.

Are you on the defensive because the message made you uncomfortable? Are you wanting to say this passage can't be true for today that it doesn't fit your lifestyle? Are you whining before God because he doesn't treat you like you feel like you deserve to be treated?

Today is a good day to realize that you can repent and be saved. Can I just tell you, God is not going to change.

He wants us to change. He wants us to realize that we're not handling our marriage right. He wants us to realize we're not treating him right. He wants us to realize that preachers are not preaching right and people aren't living right.

And he wants people to say, you're the God of heaven and here I come. If you're here today and you've never been saved, he loves you. And maybe you heard all this and you're like, this is pretty rough.

[40 : 07] It is rough. The Bible said, all have sin that come short of the glory of God. The Bible said, there's none righteous, no, not one. But God loves you and Jesus died for you on the cross at Calvary and you can be saved.

You can come to know him as your personal Lord and Savior. If you'll look at him and say, I sinned, I don't deserve to go to heaven but I want to trust Jesus today, he'll save you and I invite you to be saved.

So in a minute, I'll give an invitation, I'll give you that opportunity but I'm going to tell you this, families, I think husbands ought to take their wife's hand, find a place at the altar or sit in your seat and hold hands and hug and say, you know what, I'm going to let this work in my marriage.

I'm going to be the husband I ought to be. This passage of scripture did get our attention today and I'm going to honor God. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information and more audio and video recordings.

[41 : 12] Thanks.