

God is Eavesdropping On You

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[0 : 00] Well, take your Bibles, if you would, and turn with me to the book of Malachi, chapter 3, and verse 13. You know that God is eavesdropping on you.

He knows everything you're saying. He knows all the things you're thinking. He is involved in every part of our lives. And in Malachi, chapter 3, we're going to start up with this argument that's going on with God.

Obviously, God's in heaven, and they're here on the earth. And they've been talking about God. And this whole book is a story of how, when God would send a prophet to speak to them, he would say, this is what God has to say to you.

And they'd say, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. That's not quite right. And then God would say, yes, it is right. And so now we're ending the book. And as we end the book, end the prophecy, end the message that Malachi had, Malachi said, God says you guys have been saying some pretty stout things about him.

You've been saying some pretty ugly things about him. You've been arguing with God. And God says that you said these stout things. And they go, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

[1 : 12] What do you mean we've been saying stout things? What are you talking about? Because that's our normal line of defense, is to try to cover for ourselves and say it's not true. But God's going to answer them.

And basically in the story that you have here today, you want answers and they're coming. That's the idea. You want answers and they're coming. That's what's going to happen in this chapter.

So Malachi and the people of Israel are in this argument. And the people of Israel feel like God's not being fair. They've said a lot of ugly things to him. And so God says, I'm setting everything right.

I think you're here this morning and very likely you are often arguing with God. You don't really think he even pays attention, you know. You're like, I can't believe God does this kind of stuff.

I can't believe things work like they do. I don't know why God is not fair. I don't know why God doesn't do this. I'm not sure it does any good to serve God. I'm not even positive it's of any value to really be in church and all that stuff everybody talks about.

[2 : 12] And those things run through our minds and they run out of our mouths. And in this passage of scripture, you're going to find out God knows that's what you're doing. And here's an answer for you. Here's an answer for you.

So if you would, go with me back down to verse 13. Malachi chapter 3 and verse 13. And we're going to talk about these God fighters, these accusers. They're arguing with God.

They're accusing God. They're fighting God. And here's what the saying is. It says, your words have been stout against me, says the Lord.

You've said some pretty rough stuff about me, said the Lord. And they said, what have we spoken so much against it? Come on. We might have said a few things, but we ain't said anything that big and that bad.

God's calling out his people. His people are accusing him. This is his country, his nation. And the accusers are in denial. They want to say, we really haven't said anything.

[3 : 13] We really haven't done anything wrong. But God tells them exactly what they're accusing him of. And here's what they're telling him. You know, it's a waste to serve you, God.

It's a waste of my time, a waste of my efforts, a waste of my money. Just to be blunt honest with you, God, I don't get nothing out of doing stuff for you.

Look at the Bible with me. Go to Malachi 3.14. You say, they didn't say that. Look at what it says. You have said it is vain to serve God. It's worthless. It's empty.

It's empty. It's of no value to serve God. And then they said, what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances? What did we get for doing everything he told us to do?

We did all the stuff he said do, and we ain't got nothing for it. And we've even walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts. You realize how sad you've got to live to be one of us?

[4 : 11] You can't do all the junk everybody else does. You've got to be loyal to one woman. You can't be out on drugs and alcohol and porn. I mean, good night. We've been living this really tight life, and I got a question.

What's the good of it? That's what they're saying. That's what they're saying. They claim they obeyed God, and he didn't bless them. They claim they'd lived a sad life trying to please God.

They walked mournfully. You say, what did that mean? It means they walked mournfully. It means they walked around. They got sad faces. You know, they're Christians.

These are Israelites. But it's basically like we don't get to have fun. We don't get to enjoy life. I mean, we've got to do all this stuff, and we're not getting anything out of it. Serving God didn't do anything for them.

Then they said this. And not only that, God, you're unfair. No value serving you. We get nothing out of it, and you're not fair. Look, if you would, Malachi 3, verse 15.

[5 : 10] They said, here's what we say. We say the proud are happy. And they that work wickedness are set up. And they that tempt God are delivered. That's our three accusations, God.

No value, by the way, serving you. Just be clear. But worse than that, God. Worse than that. Here we are trying to do right. Trying not to do all the stuff we ought not do.

And we get nothing for it. But on the top of that, God, do you notice, God, what happens? The proud and wicked people, they got it made, and they're happy.

It don't make a lick of sense, God, serving you. They say the ones that do wrong are the ones that are getting the blessings. I love the words the Bible uses here. We call the proud happy.

Now, you know what proud is? Proud is I can do it on my own. Proud is I don't need God. Proud is I make my own decisions. Proud is I don't think about what God has to say about this.

[6 : 07] Proud is I'll decide if this is the person I ought to marry. I'll decide if this is how I ought to use my money. I'll decide if this is the way I ought to live my life. I will decide. And I'm not even worried about what you got to say about it.

You understand that? And they're like, that don't make a lick of sense. How are they the ones that are happy? We're the ones trying to serve God, and they're happy we're not happy. And then it says, look at it, the words that work wickedness are set up.

You got that in your Bible? They're like set up. It's like, man, they got it made. They're set up. It's like when you do wrong, he just takes care of you and sets everything up for you. Look at that. And then it says, and they that tempt God are delivered.

Those that do wrong on purpose, like God, you said not to do this. Watch me, and I'll see if I can get away with it. And they get away with it. And it's just not fair.

It's not fair, God. well that's where the story starts in the passage today and here's the question for you are we accusing god are you accusing god do you honestly feel like serving god leads to a sadder life i would like to say to you that i've never heard this before i would like to say to you that these israelites got really bad attitudes that people in 2017 don't have and don't express but in all the years of ministry i would say that these guys are right on target with what a lot of people even sitting in this room are probably thinking yeah we serve god it doesn't do any good and to be blunt we can't party like they get to party we can't enjoy life like they get to enjoy life and you're accusing god do you feel like god blesses wicked people more than he does you do you feel like you have to live a pretty sad and deprived life because you're saved and you don't get to have fun you feel kind of gypped that you have to do so much for god and his causes and you don't see real blessings come on now tell the truth isn't this about a description of you isn't it like god somehow pulled out what you've been thinking and what you've been saying and just put it front center and said let's think about that but then the scene changes now go into malachi chapter 3 and verse 16 the scene changes not to the god fighters but to the god fears to those who are god's people that love god that honor god and look at what the bible says in malachi 3 16 so you need to understand in israel there's this one group of people over here and they're kind of mad at god they're shaking their fists in god's face they're saying we don't appreciate it it's not worth anything to serve you and to be honest when you're bad people get away with good stuff with all the stuff they got a good life i've served you i got nothing i got nothing i do all this i get nothing look at them they got everything i'm tired of it but on this other side of the room there's this other group of people they love god they believe in him so read verse with me if you would in malachi chapter 3 verse 16 then they that feared the lord spake often one to another and the lord hearkened and heard it and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the lord and that thought on his name so here's this other group of people and these people you got your bible open underline it they feared the lord they feared the lord now to fear the lord here what fearing when you say god fearing i think in 2017 people don't understand it god fearing just means god loving god respecting thinking about what god would want out of something or somebody you see when you when you know when when i'd say most of us fear the police so like you know you're running down the you really fear the georgia state patrol you're running down interstate you're busting it breaking the speed limit and uh you see a cop car and boy can you figure out how to slow her down say amen you slow her down and if you're like me i use an app called ways and ways will say police car one mile ahead i'm like okay thank you slow right down till i see that it's not there or it is then i move back up because i'm a guy i'm a police fearing man because they'll give you a ticket uh and so so i'm showing some respect that's not real good respect to be honest but i'm showing some respect well a god fearing person this is what a god fearing person does a god feared person lives life like this i wonder what god thinks about this i wonder what god would have to say about this i wonder what god would say about the woman i'm about to marry about the man i'm about to marry about the way i'm about to spend my money about the job i'm about to take about the activities i'm doing i wonder what god

[10:56] would think because a God-fearing person has God on their mind and has what God thinks on their mind. That's a God-fearing person. So in the verse that you have in front of you, it says, they feared the Lord and they spake. So they talked and shared their love and their faith with each other. And here's what's really neat. So these God-fearing people, they're having conversations. And actually the Bible doesn't even say that they're praying to God. It just says they're talking about him. Look at it. You got the verse right here in front of you.

They that feared the Lord spake often one to another. See what happened? They're sitting around saying, boy, God's good, isn't he? Hey, by the way, you know, I think this is what God would like us to do. And they just talk about God. They just got God on the brain. They're just thinking about God. They're just talking about God. They're having a discussion. They're just sitting around chewing the fat and talking about this or that. And God just keeps coming up. And they're like sharing God with each other. Look at what the verse says. And he heard them. Look at it, underline hearkened. He heard them. See, God was eavesdropping. He heard those stout words that were said against him. Now he hears these guys talking good about him. So here we are sitting around in your Sunday school class this morning. And you talked about God. One of the men in our class, quite frequently, would like to make a statement like this. He'll say, I just want to thank God because he's so good. You know, he didn't say that to anybody but us.

But somebody else was listening. And he hearkened. And he heard that. He's like, I heard that. Go ahead and say that one more time. You ever done that? You ever been standing there just listening to a conversation, good or bad about you? And if it's good, you really liked it. Because you heard somebody say something nice. Have you ever heard that? Amen. One day, my wife was standing inside our house. We didn't have air conditioning. It was back when we were young. And our two kids, our two oldest kids were outside playing on the carport. And they were discussing getting a spanking from mama or daddy. Betty could hear every word. And they decided in their little discussion that it was far better to have mama give them a spanking than daddy because mama can't spank hard. And so if you got to get a spanking, see, and mama hearkened. She heard that. And she stepped out and said, I heard that. Next time I give you a spanking, I'm going to beat the little daylights out of you.

You see, sometimes people are over listening, overhearing your conversation. Well, God's overhearing it. And so they're talking about him. And then look what it says in the verse. Are you reading the verse from me? He heard it. It says he hearkened and he heard it. And he said, let me write that down. Let me write that down. Let me remember that. That sweet statement. My mother-in-law was at the funeral home in the casket and a three-year-old great-grandson of hers, Betty's brother's grandson, was in the arms and they walked by. And the little boy looked down and saw his grandmother and said, oh, she's pretty. Now, you know the family will talk about that. They'll be talking about that 30, 40 years from now. They're going to remember that. They're going to write that in the book. Here's what's happening in the story here. God said, I hear you talking. I hear you talking. I heard them talking stout words against me. Now I'm hearing y'all say sweet words about me.

Huh? He said, I'm going to remember those words. He said, look at it. Just keep reading. And the Lord hearkened. And he wrote a book that was written before him for them that feared the Lord, those that showed respect to him, that showed respect. That's the kind of respect that people used to have in the old days. When a lady walked in the room, you stood up or when somebody else needed a chair, you gave him. It's respect. That's what it means. God for you. And then look at this.

[14:50] You've got to underline this in that verse. He said, and that thought on his name, underline that. They thought on his name. So now he's even listening to what you're thinking. Huh? So they were talking on the one hand, they were thinking on the other hand, and God's listening. And these are the God fears and God's lacking what he's hearing. God's liking what the thoughts are. One group of people, one group of people is accusing him and fighting him. And, and, and the other group of people is praising him and loving him and thinking about him. And so God expresses his love towards them in Malachi 3, 17. Look at it. The Bible says, and they shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, and that day when I make up my jewels, I will spare them as a man spares his own son that serves him.

Look at that. Got your Bible open underline this. He said, they'll be mine. They'll be mine. I want those. They're mine. You understand how precious that is? You see, God's hearing those stout talkers over here. Now he's hearing those sweet talkers over here. And he said, those are the ones I want. They'll be mine. When you're a kid and you give a valentine that says, please be mine.

That's exactly what's going on here. When it's a 145 pound skinny little Tennessee hillbilly that meets a really fancy girl from Atlanta named Betty. And he says to her, will you be mine? That's what God said.

He said, they like to think about me. They like to talk about me. They'll be mine. And then he says, some other things are just crazy. In this verse, he says, when I make up my jewels, when I pick up what's precious to me, I don't like that word jewels, jewels, jewels are like little things that are of great value. They don't take up as much room, but they are valuable and they are precious. And he said, I, he said, y'all thinking about me, you're talking about me, you're going to be mine. And when I make up my jewels, I'll make you, I'll pick you up. You'll be a part of that.

And then he says, underline it in the verse, judgment's coming. Judgment's coming. A lot of people about to get hurt, but I'll spare you. Underline that in the verse.

[17 : 13] Underline that. He said, as a man spares his own son, believe me, I'll take care of my boy. He said, and I will spare you. You're mine. You're mine. Those God fearers, those people that are talking about him and thinking about him. He said, they're mine.

They're my jewels. And I will spare them and take care of them. And then he says in Malachi 3:18, look at the verse in Malachi 3:18. He says, and y'all see the difference. Look at, then shall you return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God and him that serves him not. Now look up this way. Remember the argument? You remember how it started? You're not very good.

You don't, it's worthless to serve you. Serving you just to be blunt. Honestly, we don't get no profit here. We're not making a dime on this deal. Fact is, we have to walk around sad all the time and it doesn't do a bit of good. Fact is, you let the bad people succeed and the good people go down and we don't like it. And there was this little group of people said, we're thinking on how good God is.

And then God said, all right, I'll let y'all figure that one out. You're fixing to know, look at the verse. You'll come back and think about that and you'll discern. You'll be able to figure out that I do know the righteous from the wicked. I do know those that serve me from those that don't serve me. You don't see the value. You don't see the value. I know it'll be obvious that God does take care of his people. He does take care of the ones he loves and love him. He does take care of his jewels. They're going to see what God will do for those that do not love him. And he does not love.

God always has a people and they're blessed. God always has a people and they are blessed. God saw what his people were doing and he remembered it. He remembers it. Maybe nobody at this church and maybe nobody in your family knows all you're doing to serve God, but he's keeping up with it and he's going to reward them. His answer to his accusers is watch and see what I'm about to do. Watch and see what I'm about to do. So go with me now, if you would, to Malachi chapter four, verse one.

[19 : 27] God's judgment is coming. You got it. This is a story and it's unfolding. And if you were watching a movie, you just saw the first scene. And when you saw the first scene, you saw the God fighters and the God accusers. And then the second scene we flipped over and we saw those that love God.

And now we're, we're really going to kind of look at God and God's going to say, that's it. I'm coming in judgment now. I said, I'm coming in judgment. Read with me if you would. Malachi 4, 1. For behold, look up, pay attention. The day comes when I'll make everything right.

And on that day, they shall burn as an oven and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble. And the day that cometh shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. So there's a judgment day coming. You see, right now we may look around and we may notice that the wicked seem to prosper and the proud seem to get away with it. And sometimes the good people do seem not to get it. And we can't figure out why all that's going on. And God's like, there's a day coming when I'm setting all this right.

There's a day coming when I'm setting all this right. I want you to go through the verse with me real quickly. Just look at the verse and analyze the verse. The day comes. So there's a day coming, he told Malachi. And on that day, it's going to be a day of fire. It's going to burn like an oven and the proud and those that do wickedly are going to be like stubble. Now, you know what stubble is?

That's like the dry straw grass that's been cut, has no seeds on it anymore. It's just the straw, the pine straw you're going to throw out on your yard. It's the straw you're going to put around something. It's just straw. If you throw a match to it, it's gone. He said, I'll tell you what's going to happen to those proud and wicked people y'all were talking about. It's going to be a hot burning day and they're going to be like that and going to burn up and it shall burn them.

[21 : 35] It's going to burn them so much that they won't even have a root or a branch. Nothing left. Nothing left. I need to stop here and tell you there's a good chance you're attending church and you're not saved.

There's a good chance you attend church and you go through all the motions and you pretend or show that you're saved and you're something in God, but you're not.

You do know he knows. He knows your heart. He knows your thoughts. He knows your speech when no one else is listening. He knows that all. And there is coming a day.

There is coming a day when the God of heaven will judge and it will all be made clear.

Now I know it's not popular to hear this today and I know it's not popular to say it but according to scriptures right here it's going to burn like an oven.

[22 : 48] Sounds like hell. Going to destroy and leave no hope of future. There will be no root or branch left. In other words no way out no fixing it.

You need to understand today that if you are not truly born again if you have not come to a place in your life where you have seen your sin repented of your sin and turned to Christ it doesn't matter how many times you've been baptized.

It doesn't matter how many churches you've been a member of. It doesn't matter how much money you've given. It doesn't matter how many good things you've done. It doesn't matter what kind of good neighbor you are.

It doesn't matter what kind of friendly person you are. what matters is do you know full forgiveness of your sins through Jesus Christ. The judgment is coming.

But even in the judgment Malachi chapter 4 verse 3 if you would. In Malachi chapter 4 verse 3 the Bible says that God's people will have victory. It says and you shall tread down the wicked for they shall be ashes under your feet under the soles of your feet in the day underline in the day that I shall do this.

[23 : 58] See God's judging. So right now today maybe you're kind of feeling like being a Christian is worthless but in that day you're going to think it was worth everything. Maybe today you think that decision I made to trust Jesus and believe him and follow him and you think maybe it didn't work out good and it seems like it's a lot of money I'm losing it's a lot of time I'm losing and it's just a waste in my life.

Maybe that's what you're thinking but he said in that day you'll figure it out because in that day in that day in that day there will be judgment but God's people have victory. The wicked will be burned up destroyed ashes under the feet there's a day of reckoning coming.

Do you recognize that God will judge the earth? Do you recognize that? Do you recognize that sin and wickedness may seem to prosper for the moment that lost people have it made but there's a judgment day coming?

There's a judgment day coming and it's horrible if you're not saved. You let a death happen in your family and watch how you think about death.

You need to understand you will not live forever and you will die a horrible death and you will spend eternity away from God if you do not trust Jesus as your Savior.

[25 : 29] So he pronounces a curse. Look at Malachi chapter 4 and verse 4. He calls on his people to remember pay attention remember you the law of Moses my servant which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all of Israel.

It's the living God who gave the Ten Commandments it's the living God who brought them out of the nation of Egypt it's the living God who brought them through the Red Sea it's the living God that's done everything and brought them here but they need to remember the law.

Now you need to listen to this you see the law of God is real clear if you obey you'll be blessed if you disobey you'll be cursed now when you obey you'll believe God you'll trust God you'll accept his free gift you'll be one of those God-fearing people and when you don't believe God there's a curse waiting on you and in Malachi chapter 4 he's flat out telling them the curse is coming I want you to look at a Bible verse with me go with me if you would to Galatians chapter 3 and verse 24 go to Galatians chapter 3 verse 24 you see he says remember Moses because you need to remember the law because in your mind you may not think you're a sinner in your mind you might think you're okay but when God gave all those laws in the Bible it was to weigh you and to show you that you had failed him nobody measures up so God gave the law for you to know this morning you're in trouble years ago my son has diabetes he's 41 he has diabetes but back then he was like 13 and I was the 40 year old and nearly 40

I was in my late 30s and we walked in to see the doctor and the doctor gave me the warning she said sir there are three characteristics of diabetics fat female and 40 two of which you have right now well thank you lady I guess you're calling me fat and 40 amen but you see here's what's going on I need that you need that we need that warning to know we need to do something about something so look at the verse here the Bible says wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith you need to understand that all those ten commandments and all those rules and all that stuff you hate about church because it's like there's all these rules those are great rules because they show you you're not perfect but that being not perfect brings you to Jesus who can save you and forgive you because you came this morning you're like

I don't know what to do with my life I don't know how to get this thing straightened out good the word of God take you to Jesus he can fix you he can change you he can give you new life so if you would at Malachi chapter 4 and verse 5 now he's sending the prophet behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord you need to underline great and dreadful do you understand what it says maybe you think that some Hollywood movie is going to take place when God comes back but can you imagine the awesome creator who lives in eternity and is not bound by time whose name is the great I am when he steps down into this time limited little place and he's the maker of everything and he knows everything and he knows what you're thinking and he knows what you've been doing and he steps down and says I'm here let's talk that would not be a pleasant day if you don't know Jesus that would be a scary day hey the cop just pulled you over you might not even been speeding but you're like okay what in the world does he want you're already nervous hey you're driving down the road you're in your car and you aren't doing anything wrong and a cop pulls up behind you you start getting nervous can't even keep it in the road you're just wobbling back forward he pulls you over being drunk he said you've been drinking he said no but you just followed me scared me to death well let me tell you he said the coming of the Lord is a great and terrible day because religious people are going to go to hell and

[29 : 58] Baptist people are going to go to hell and Methodist people are going to go to hell and Catholic people are going to go to hell and Buddhists are going to go to hell and Hindus are going to go to hell only those who know Jesus will be able to go to heaven a great and terrible day it's a day when every out of word and every thought will be brought to mind it's a day when men will be judged by their actions their actions that you saw and the actions no one saw it'll be a terrible day a terrible day the call in Malachi chapter 4 and verse 6 was for them to turn from themselves to their children and to their fathers and to get their lives right with God time to get off of a possession focused existence to a God focused life time to focus on things that really matter faith that turns your heart from you to your family have you come to see yourself in need of someone outside of you have you come to see that you need somebody to make a difference in your life you were never meant to live up to the law of

God you were to see your sin turn from your sin and turn from yourself and turn from your failure and turn to God there's only one way to successfully stand at the time of judgment that is by knowing that your sins are forgiven last thing I want to show you this morning curse actually leads to grace I need you to look at Malachi 4 6 and I want you to circle one word curse and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers lest I come and smite the earth with a curse the end of the Old Testament last book in the Old Testament look at it curse because that's where every man stands this morning under a curse we're all going to die and we're all going to go to hell if we have not met Jesus

Christ and had his forgiveness we're all going to die we're all going to go to hell if we've not met Christ we've not met Jesus as our Savior it ends in a curse the next thing that will happen in the scriptures there will be 400 years of silence Malachi said curse and close the book but that curse 400 years pass man knowing he needs what only God can do the whole reason the Old Testament was full of a sacrificial system was a symbol of what would happen because in just 400 years Matthew's book will be the bridge that takes us into the New Testament and shows us grace you see the law brings a curse it just shows us who we are but Jesus brings salvation so you came this morning and you've heard some pretty rough servants out of Malachi you've been attending here we've been week after week you're like man can we get out of

Malachi you need the curse you need the curse to get to the grace you need the curse to get to the grace you need to know you're a sinner to get to salvation it's not about joining a church it's not about getting baptized it's not about being a church member it's about knowing you're a sinner accepting that acknowledging that the songwriters say stuff like this a worm like me you're like I'm never going to admit I'm a worm I'm never going to admit I'm a sinner I'm never going to do that I can't do that I'm a good guy no you're a guy under a curse you're a woman under a curse but Jesus Christ offers salvation I'll give you one verse Romans 6 23 for the wages of sin is death curse death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus

Christ our Lord Jesus said if you're well you don't need a doctor it's the sick that need a doctor do you know you need a doctor this morning do you know you need to be saved this morning are you ready to trust Christ you need to trust him so I don't like that message good good because if you don't like the message you can have the antidote salvation through Jesus Christ God and sob what is God just me and God the what roads once come in by the old love switch like the way I did in