

# Messenger!

## A Journey Through the Burden of Malachi

### Malachi 2:10-16

#### 9- The Burden of Treachery Among God's People- Part 2

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October 13, 2019

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10 "Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously each against his brother so as to profane the covenant of our fathers?

11 "Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord which He loves and has married the daughter of a foreign god.

12 "*As* for the man who does this, may the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob *everyone* who awakes and answers, or who presents an offering to the Lord of hosts.

13 "This is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts *it with* favor from your hand.

14 "Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

15 "But not one has done *so* who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did *that* one *do* while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth.

16 "For I hate divorce," says the Lord, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the Lord of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

To the Glory of God

Now, last time, I told you that Malachi was raised up to be the last Prophet, who operated under the Old Covenant. And the "Burden"

he received from the Lord in this Passage includes God's Condemnation of "Treachery". And we will see that this "Treachery" manifested itself in the lives of God's people in three different ways:

1. Treachery Between Covenant Brothers (Verse 10)
2. Treachery in God's People Marrying Unbelievers (Verses 11&12)
3. Treachery in Divorce (Verses 13-16)

Another way of understanding Malachi's Burden would be to see that God's people were being *faithless* and *deceitful* in their Relationships with one another, faithless and deceitful in falling in love with pagans, and faithless and deceitful in Marriage.

Now, last time, we looked at the first Issue of Treachery, and today, I want to examine what Malachi taught in the other two manifestations of this faithlessness and this deceitfulness.

## 2. Treachery in God's People Marrying Unbelievers

### Malachi 2:11&12

**11 "Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord which He loves and has married the daughter of a foreign god.**

**12 "As for the man who does this, may the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob *everyone* who awakes and answers, or who presents an offering to the Lord of hosts.**

Here God says that believers marrying unbelievers is categorized as being two things:

1. *Dealing treacherously* with God
2. An Abomination

Now, back in Malachi's Day, in spite of all that God had said and done for His people in separating them from the other pagan nations of the world, it was *common* for a circumcised Jew to throw all of that away and go to find himself a Wife among the pagans. And then this Jew would add insult to injury by bringing this lost woman back to the Promised Land to live with him. But since this Woman had not been

converted, she would also bring her pagan practices, and her idols, her idolatry, and her barbaric worship into the Land and into the Home of the Jew, who had the outward Sign of the First Covenant in the foreskin of his flesh.

And, many times, *because he loved her more than he loved God*, the Husband would either *tolerate* his Wife's Idolatry, or he would even engage in the worship of false gods himself. So, in the name of the sweetest commodity on earth, "Love", a believer would go against his Salvation, disobey the inspired Words of the First Covenant, and deal treacherously with God by either *tolerating* his Wife's false religion, or he, himself, would embrace the paganism of the lost world. And God called that "Sin".

We need to remember that the wisest man in all the world at that time, Solomon, who is famous for building a very elaborate Temple to God, built more temples to the false gods of his many wives, all because he had fallen in love with unbelieving women. For six thousand years, men have abdicated thrones, thrown away fortunes, risked their own lives, and turned away from serving God all because they allowed their hearts to fall in love with the wrong Woman.

There are countless people, all along this beautiful Gulf Coast, who lay claim to be saved who *cannot* serve God, they *cannot* give to God, they *cannot* obey the Bible, they *can't* go to Church, and many of them *cannot* even discuss the Truth, all because they allowed their hearts to fall in love with an unbelieving Woman. And so, they live their lives in silence and misery because they married an unbeliever. Now that would be bad enough. But God says here that this Sin does not merely affect the believer negatively, but it also dishonors God.

I can't tell you how many Women have sat in my Office crying their eyes out because they are married to a Man who does not love Jesus, and who does not want them to love Him either.

And even though the Bible is crystal clear about this, amazingly, many within the modern, visible church actually teach a man-made and unbiblical concept called "Relationship Evangelism". This false Teaching says that if you will just become friends with lost people and just casually hang out with them, that over time they will see how you live your life, and they will want the Savior that you love.

This concept is based on the false notion that Thomas Aquinas brought to the Church almost 800 years ago that says that people can

become saved through "Human Reasoning" and by observing Nature, without hearing and believing the Gospel, and, many times, without repenting of their Sin and turning away from wickedness. And Aquinas' false Teaching has become encapsulated with the preposterous Statement:

"Preach the Gospel to everybody. And, if necessary, use words."

Now it is true that the way that saved people live our lives gives the Gospel that we preach *credibility* in the minds and hearts of the unbeliever. Because if saved people don't think enough of the Gospel to obey it, why should the lost? So, that much is true.

But we must understand that the way that saved people live our lives does NOT make the Gospel to be true. The Gospel is true *regardless* of how many people (who lay claim to be saved) disobey it or live contrary to it. But, the Bible is clear, nobody is saved unless they hear the Gospel, believe the Gospel, repent of Sin, and unless they put all their Hope and Trust in Jesus personally and in His finished Work. So, the Gospel cannot be preached except by words.

The Reality is that "Relationship Evangelism" has been an unmitigated disaster for the Church for many centuries. It is almost a *universal* failure and, fundamentally, it is an Act of Cowardice, because it puts pressure on the believer to not speak the only Words that actually have the Power to save the soul of the lost, the Gospel. And that would be bad enough. But this false Teaching is being used today with such frequency that for anyone to disagree with it, or to rightfully condemn it as wholly unbiblical, they are met with accusations of "Legalism", "Authoritarianism", "Hard-heartedness", "Dictatorial Oppression", and a lack of Mercy.

Now you can argue with me about this all day long. And you can say that I'm just wound too tight, or that I am trying to get people to live like they did back in 1950, or that I am just flat out wrong. But God spoke through Malachi, and said:

### **Malachi 2:11**

**"Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord which He loves and has married the daughter of a foreign god.**

... and I told you last time that the word "Abomination" is only used 46 times in the entire Bible, and it is reserved for a Sin that God has an "intense Hatred" for. Now the most widely talked about "Abomination" is found in **Leviticus 18:22** that says:

**You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.**

... and most everybody knows that one. But here, God *hates*, He *despises*, He *abominates*, believers *dealing treacherously with Him* by marrying the daughters of a foreign god.

The problem exists because as soon as the saved person begins to tell the lost person why he acts the way he acts (the Hope that lies within him), the lost person is either going to become convicted and repent and believe, or else he is going to stay away from the believer. But unless God is sovereignly drawing an individual, the last thing they *want* to hear is the only thing they *need* to hear, the Gospel.

**And the believer knows this.** And so, what happens in the *overwhelming majority* of the cases is that the believer simply *compromises* his position, and he *refuses* to ever bring up the Gospel because he knows as soon as he does that, the lost person will leave. So, in the name of "not offending the lost person", the saved person hides the *only* thing that will cause the unbeliever to be saved, the Gospel.

But the Reality is that Hell is going to be *infinitely* more offensive to the unrepentant sinner than any of us could ever be. And unless they hear the Gospel, they will never repent. So, the best way to demonstrate Love to an unbeliever is to preach the Gospel to them. But what is usually going on is that the believer would rather the lost person like them, and be friends with them, and not separate from them than the believer wants the lost person to be saved. And that means that the personal relationship with the lost person is actually MORE important to the saved person than this lost soul being saved. And that is horrible Sin.

But a normal, personal relationship is powerfully *exacerbated* when we are talking about boyfriends and girlfriends, because now the human heart is involved. And the last thing a man or woman wants to do is offend the person they love. And so, they *rationalize* to themselves (read: deceive themselves) that if they just quietly "live the life", and, by

all means" do NOT say *anything*, and then hope and wait, that their Relationship (all by itself) will bring about a glorious Conversion. And my Question to all of those who have tried this or who are currently involved in "Relationship Evangelism" is this:

How is that Method working out for you?

Here is what the Apostle Paul was "moved along" by God the Holy Spirit to pen down about this very Issue from **2 Corinthians 6:14-18**:

**Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.**

Now this is a Concept called "Christian Separation". And, even though this was a *primary* Doctrine that was taught and preached and practiced for many, many centuries, it has fallen on hard times in our day. This Biblical Truth says that because we have been called and chosen by God for Salvation, we have to be "holy". And to be "holy" means that we have to be "separate", "different", "unique", and "set apart" from the lost, unsaved world around us.

Now the reason we are to be holy is NOT because we are stuck up, or self-righteous, or better than the other people. We're not. But we have been chosen by God to live our lives to the Glory of God. So, how we talk, and what we wear, and where we go, and how we handle money, and how we raise our children, and what we believe about politics and nations, all stems from our understanding of the 66 Books of the Holy Bible. So, we have developed, and are developing, what is called a "Biblical Worldview". We desire to know and understand, and then put into practical action what the Owner and Creator of the Universe has infallibly spoken in Scripture about the important and serious and eternal Issues of this Life.

And so, by definition, we simply don't "mesh" with those, who live for no other reason than to "do what is right in their own eyes". Outside of peripheral Issues that don't matter, we have nothing in common with people who live to please themselves. Those who "love Darkness rather than Light" do not look at the Issue of Life in the same way as those, who have "beheld the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ".

So, precisely *because* we have been sovereignly and wondrously and miraculously "**called you out of Darkness and into God's marvelous Light**" (1 Peter 2:9), we simply *cannot* live the way we did when we were a part of the Darkness. And so, to even try to "get along" with the pagan world makes us to be "spiritually schizophrenic". Here is what Jesus said in **Matthew 6:24a**:

**No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other....**

... and that is true, whether we are talking about material wealth, or worldly friends, or unsaved spouses.

Now the Argument that many people give concerning this Issue is that if we would simply "loosen up" and allow our children to date and marry unbelievers, then the unbeliever will eventually see how Christians live and act, and they will want what we have, and God will use that to save them. And that *might* happen. God *might* use that, and the lost person *might* see how Joyful we are, and how much Love we have among ourselves, and they just *might* want what we have. But they might *not*.

Dear friends, we have been chosen and called out of darkness *not* merely so that we may escape the Damnation of Hell. We have been rescued from the Wrath of God (by what God alone has done for us) so that we may prove to an unbelieving world that:

1. Jesus is better than *anything* this world can give to us.
2. Jesus is better than *anything* this world can take away from us.

... and that means that we genuinely believe that it is better that we never marry than that we marry an unbeliever. Because to marry a pagan loudly and clearly testifies to the entire world that Jesus is *not* good for His Promises, and that unless we "take the bull by the horns"

and "do what is right in our own eyes" and completely ignore what the Bible clearly says, we will never be happy. And in the words of Samson's Father:

**Judges 14:3b**

**... Is there no woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?**

... my beloved, I beg you, this morning, to not "deal treacherously" with our sweet and precious Savior, Jesus Christ.

### **3. Treachery in Divorce**

**Malachi 2:13-16**

**13 "This is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts *it with* favor from your hand.**

**14 "Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.**

**15 "But not one has done *so* who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did *that one do* while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth.**

**16 "For I hate divorce," says the Lord, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the Lord of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."**

... and this third Issue of Treachery can be summarized by what God said in verse 16:

**I hate divorce**

The inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of the living God declares that God Almighty intensely *hates* Divorce. God *despises* Divorce. God *abominates* Divorce. So, why would anyone, who has experienced the miracle of the New Birth engage in something that God hates? Are we not supposed to live our lives to God's Glory? Did we not stand before God and many witnesses and make sacred Vows? *"Yea, Brother Blair, I*



*know what this says, but things happen. I mean we married young and we just sort of fell out of love. Anyway, you have no idea about my Wife. And, look my Husband was not faithful to me. So, what do you expect me to do stay in a Marriage that is not bringing me happiness?"*

My brothers and sisters, I don't expect you to do *anything* other than what God said for *all* believers to do, because I didn't write this. But this is either just as much the Word of God as **John 3:16**, or we need to throw out the Bible and just do the best we can. So, my response to those Statements is, *"What about what God says here? And if the people of God and the Church of the First Born is not going to uphold Marriage, who will? Joe's Bait-Shop?"*

When I hear Justifications and Rationalizations like this, I weep. Because these kinds of Statements are designed, on purpose, to do nothing but allow God's people to categorically *disobey* the Bible, and to engage in something that God says He hates. And that tells me two things:

1. The people involved are *amazingly* Self-centered.
2. They have no idea why God created Marriage in the first place.

... and, whereas, I can somewhat understand why lost and unsaved people would talk like this, it is entirely unacceptable for a genuinely saved person to say things like this.

We have to remember that Marriage was all God's Idea. Adam and Eve didn't just "hook up" and decide later on to "jump de broom". The only Reason Marriage exists in the first place is because God wants there to be a visible, tangible, earthly, and temporary Sign, or Manifestation, of the amazing Mystery of the Divine and Eternal Relationship between Jesus Christ and His Church. *That* is why Marriage exists.

That is why Jesus Christ *commands* the Wife to come alongside her Husband and *support* him, and *devote* herself to him, and to *pray* for him, and help *implement* his Vision for their Family. This gives the broken world a Sign or a Manifestation of how the visible Church is to love and support her Head- Jesus Christ.

And this is *why* Jesus commands all Husbands to *care* for their Wife, and to *provide* for her, and *protect* her, and *lead* her, and *teach* her, and *wash* her with the water of the Word. And this is why He

*commands* them to treat their Wife with kindness and compassion and gentleness. And that is why the Scriptures expect *all* Husbands, *every one of them*, to *sacrificially* love his Wife so that this fallen world will get some idea of how *deeply* and how *eternally* Jesus Christ cares for and loves His Church.

So, *primarily*, Marriage is NOT about merely two people staying in love. *Primarily*, Marriage is NOT about how much, or how little, one person “completes” the other. It is also NOT about being a perfect “50/50 split”, because the Roles of both the Husband and Wife have been clearly and repeatedly spelled out, and any deviation from those already defined Roles is Sin. In fact, Marriage is NOT *primarily* about many of the man-made definitions that people have come up with over the years. *Primarily*, Marriage on earth is about keeping Covenant.

*Primarily*, Marriage is about the Wife, struggling against the lusts of her flesh, by the Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, to live in glad and humble support of her Husband and his Plan for the Family, so she may love and respect her Husband, even as the Church does with Her Head, Jesus Christ. Marriage is about the Husband, struggling against the lusts of his flesh, by the Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, to gladly and humbly love and lead and provide and protect and teach his Wife, and to help her to *flourish*, even as Jesus does with His Church.

Listen to the Vows we make at Weddings. Those Vows are Promises. They are *Covenant* Promises that are made to three different entities:

1. To God
2. To each other
3. To the witnesses

... and that means that, on a fundamental level, a Divorce is a Lie. A Divorce tells the world that there are *exceptions* to the Covenant between Jesus and His Church, even though the Bible says there are not. But it's is far worse than just that. Because let me say to those of you who *support* Divorce (**for any Reason**), to be consistent, you have just *eliminated* the “eternality” of your own Salvation.

Every single person on earth, who has been truly born again and adopted by a sovereign and glorious Act of God (even though you may not realize this), God has sovereignly and miraculously and wondrously

placed you, as a living stone, into His Body, which is the Church. So, by virtue of you experiencing the Miracle of the New Birth, you are now part of the One, Holy, Universal, and Apostolic Church that Jesus is building and over which Jesus is the one Head.

But the Church exists by Covenant. The Reason that the New Covenant is infinitely superior to the First or the Old Covenant is because, while the First Covenant was between God and Man, the second or the New Covenant is between God and all three Persons of the Trinity!

So, God the Father made a Covenant with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit to display the Glory of God's Grace by *rescuing* unworthy sinners from His Just Wrath by what He alone did for them. That is the only Reason you are saved.

But you did NOT place *yourself* into the Church. You are a part of the Church of Jesus Christ not by some choice you made, but because God, all by Himself, with absolutely no regard for your Plans, with absolutely no consideration for your Ambitions, *interrupted* your life and *inserted* Himself into your life to *choose* you, and *call* you to Salvation. And you are in the Church only because God the Holy Spirit took every single elected sinner and, effectually, *dragged* them to Jesus. And you are in the Church because Jesus loves His Father, and so, Jesus will receive every sinner that God the Spirit draws to Him no matter how evil they have been. Jesus will not reject any that God gives Him.

And you are in the Church because Jesus will love these wicked sinners, and Jesus will wash them in His Own Blood. And God the Father will impute the spotless Righteous of Jesus to them (by Faith alone), and God the Holy Spirit will come inside of them to lead them and guide them into all Truth and intercede for them. And the sinless Lamb of God has made a Covenant with His Father to never lose a single one that God chose to save.

A Divorce screams to the fallen world that the Love and the Covenant between God and His Church is NOT eternal, and that it CAN (and will) be broken. But the Covenant can't be broken without those who have been caught up in the Covenant are thrown out and forsaken. A Divorce testifies loudly and clearly that there is a point where Jesus will *abandon* those who were chosen by His Father, and

there is a point where the Church will *abandon* Her Christ. And that, is a horrible and terrible and evil Lie.

Now, before I go any further, I want to repeat something that I always try to say when I talk about this Issue. I'm not naive or living under some bubble. I understand that Divorce is a very present part of our daily lives here on earth. And it is NOT my intent this morning to simply find fault or to cause any pain or hurt to anyone who has, at some point in the past, or who is currently going through a Divorce. Divorced people are some of the most hurting people in our Culture, and they deserve our Prayers and Mercy, NOT our Condemnation.

I have written and spoken much about Marriage and Divorce and Remarriage that is simply too much to put into a single Sermon. And so, you may want to get copies of some of those Teachings. But I truly believe that I have struck a correct "balance" between condemning the Lie of Divorce, yet allowing people, who have fallen underneath its sting, to have great Hope that Jesus is Merciful, and that, by God's Grace, *all* our Sins can be put under His Blood. So, before you just get offended at what I am saying this morning, I invite you to read the *totality* of what I believe and teach about this very important Subject, and then be a Berean and test these things out, and see for yourself if they are true and Biblical.

Malachi's Burden here is the Treachery that God's people are engaging in, in three areas of our Relationships. And so, in this Passage, he tells us God's Will for our Relationships, in general, and then he gives us three Reasons why we should be eager to order our lives so we can be *obedient* to God's Will:

1. Have we not all one Father?
2. Has not one God created us?
3. Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the Covenant of our fathers?

So, the Will of God for His people is plain from this verse. God wills that we not be faithless or deceitful to each other. This word for "be faithless" or "break faith" or "deal treacherously" is used in all three of the sections of this Passage:

Verse 10: **"Why do we deal treacherously each against his brother "**, referring to general untrustworthiness in our personal Relationships.

Verse 11: **" Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed. . . and has married the daughter of a foreign god"**, in reference to the marrying of unbelievers.

Verse 14: **" the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant "**, in reference to Divorce.

So, the Sin that runs through each of these areas of Life is this failure to "keep a trust", the failure to "keep a commitment", the failure to keep Covenant". It is the breaking of an Agreement or a Covenant or a Contract or a Promise.

## **1. Malachi 2:10, Breaking Commitments**

So, what Malachi does with this key word is to show that "community life" is supposed to be ordered by the faithful fulfillment of Promises and Contracts and Oaths and Vows and Covenants and Commitments. These things matter. But this godly Order has given way to the sinful *Disorder* that comes when people give in to the Power of "Self-centered emotional Impulses".

In other words, by consistently using this little Hebrew word *bagad*, and tracing Faithlessness through in all the Relationships of this Passage, the Prophet makes clear for us two alternative ways for people to try to live in a Community.

One way is what you might call "Covenantal Order". And that exists inside what the OT means by the word "*Shalom*". All Relationships are made "Peaceful", and they are kept "Pure" by the *fulfillment* of Covenants and Promises and Oaths and Vows and Contracts and Commitments. But it is also understood, inside this word, that there can be no Peace and no Purity unless those Commitments are fulfilled.

So, the Commitment of Children to their Parents, and Parents to their Children; Husbands to Wives, and Wives to Husbands; Employer to Employee, and Employee to Employer; Citizen to State and State to Citizen, the Peace and the Prosperity and the Joy, the *Shalom*, of the entire Community is held together by the deep, strong, spirit of

Covenant-keeping that pervades the Community. The very fabric of the Community is the *trustworthiness* of its people. Do they keep their Commitments?

The other way for people to try to live together in Community is the opposite of "Covenantal Order". And it's what you might call the "*Disorder of Self-Indulgence*". In this Community the spirit of Commitment-making and Commitment-keeping has been replaced by a spirit of emotional and physical Impulse. The moral Fabric of Faithfulness to Covenants and Promises and Contracts and Vows is unraveled, and what's left are the individual strands of private, selfish Gratification.

Let me give you a quote from a secular sociological Study of our own day to show you how the ways divide between these two forms of "Community Life".

"A woman finds herself pregnant and wants to abort, or a man feels bogged down by commitments to job, spouse and children, and wants out. A person's aging parents are interfering with his pleasures, and he wants someone to take them off his hands. A man wants to sleep with his secretary, or is tired of making a living and desires relief from his Commitments. How we, as a society and as individuals, view the decisions made about fulfilling these Desires is the crux of the Problem."<sup>1</sup>

Malachi's Burden to us this morning could hardly be more relevant or more needed. Five times in this text he warns us not:

**"to act treacherously"**

... or to put it positively, he urges us to make Covenant-making and Covenant-keeping the very fabric of our life together. He warns against the "pseudo-freedom" of individualistic Self-indulgence, and he tries to help us see the Strength and the Beauty and the Joy and the Peace (*Shalom*) of being faithful in all our Relationships and in all our Commitments.

And the three Reasons given in verse 10 are:

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Yankelovich, *New Rules*, p. 248

**We have one Father:** "Have we not all one father?" (v. 10). In other words, when we betray a Trust, we betray the Family of God. We deceive our own flesh and we dishonor our Father.

**We have one Creator.** "Has not one God created us?" (v. 10). If I am faithless to you, and break my Commitment to you, I act as though you and I are accountable to two different Creators. I act as though my Creator lets me function on one set of terms- like Self-indulgence, that ignores my Commitment to you, while I expect your Creator to hold you to another set of terms, like respect for my Rights, and stay off my case. But if we are both utterly dependent upon and accountable to one and the same Creator, that double standard will not be present.

The third reason we should not break faith with others is that

**Unfaithfulness profanes the Covenant of our Fathers.** "Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?"

So, what was this Covenant? It was God's Personal Commitment, His Promise to be Abraham's God, and to work for him, and to bless him, and to give him life and hope. But not only to Abraham, but to all his true offspring, including you and me in Jesus Christ, the Seed of Abraham. In other words, whenever you or I lie or fudge on our Duties, or betray a Trust, we act as though God is not able to take care of us and protect us and give us a fulfilling Life if we keep our Commitments. And when we act as though God cannot or will not give us what is best for us on the path of Faithfulness, we *dishonor* Him, and we *profane* His Covenant. We act as though what God has promised is untrustworthy and worthless.

Those are Malachi' Arguments: we have one Father, one God created us, and His Covenant with us, in Jesus Christ, is the *Guarantee* of His Help and Friendship. Therefore, we should be a people of radical Integrity and Faithfulness in all our dealings- whatever it costs!

## **2. Malachi 2:11–12, Marriage to Unbelievers**

In verses 11&12, Malachi moves from Relationships, in general, to the specific issue of believers marrying unbelievers. God regards this as another instance of being faithless or breaking Trust. And He calls it an "Abomination". Why is that? Let's read verse 11:

**"Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary [literally the "Holiness"] of the Lord which He loves and has married the daughter of a foreign god.**

Now the primary Issue here is that the Woman that the man of Judah was marrying did not love and trust and follow the true God of Israel. She was not a daughter of the true God; she was a daughter of a foreign god.

And the point of the verse is that when we claim to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and then we willfully choose to unite ourselves with an unbeliever in the most intimate personal union on earth, we profane the very Holiness of God. We act as though our emotional drive for Human Intimacy is infinitely more important than affirming the Preciousness of God's Holiness and Nearness.

God calls this choice an "Abomination", and he says, in verse 12, that those who walk into it with their eyes open are asking for God to turn His Back on them.

**" may the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob *everyone* who awakes and answers, or who presents an offering to the Lord of hosts."**

But be careful that you don't hear *more* than this Passage is saying. This does NOT say that it's impossible, in every case, for an unbelieving spouse to be converted. It is not impossible. We have seen it happen, and **1 Peter 3** says that we should live so as to make it happen. It is not saying that if you are married to an unbeliever, you should get a Divorce. Five hundred years after Malachi, some believers in Corinth drew that conclusion, and the Apostle Paul wrote them (**1 Corinthians 7:12&13**) to tell them precisely *not* to Divorce over that.

Rather what this is saying to us clearly this morning is this: if the choice of Marriage still lies in front of you, settle it in your mind right now that you will *never* marry anyone that does not love the Lord Jesus with all his or her heart. You are not too young to do this. From the time I was 16 years old, this was one of the settled Convictions of my heart: I would guard myself from the rising of all romantic affection for any girl who was not a true Christian. And, by the Grace of God, I was



not only spared a life of tragedy, but I have been given a Marriage and a Family as *peaceful* and as *satisfying* as any I have ever known.

### 3. Malachi 2:13–16, Divorce

Finally, Malachi turns to the third and final instance of acting Faithlessly, which is divorcing a Spouse. Verse 16: **"For I hate divorce," says the Lord, the God of Israel,"**

Now there is a lot to say, but I am going to simply draw out three simple and clear Reasons from verses 14 and 16 for *why* God hates Divorce and why Christians should *never* seek to nullify their Union with a living spouse.

#### 1. Marriage Is a Covenant

In verse 13 we learn that God *refuses* to accept the Offerings of the people. In verse 14, they ask, "Why does he not?" And the answer is given:

**Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously [bagad], though she is your companion and your wife by covenant**

So, the reason that Divorce has kindled God's Wrath is that Marriage is a Covenant. The life together is rooted not in the sands of emotional satisfaction, but in the solid Rock of Covenant Commitment. And two things in this Passage clarify what sort of Covenant that is.

#### 2. It Is a Covenant Before God

One is in the first part of verse 14: "The Lord was witness [to the covenant] between you and the wife of your youth."

"I, Blair, take you, Rhonda, to be my Wife, and I do promise and covenant before God, and these witnesses, to be your loving and faithful Husband as long as we both shall live, or until Jesus returns."

**"COVENANT BEFORE GOD!"** That is the very Essence of Marriage. And when God Himself stands as Witness to the Covenant Promises of a Marriage, it becomes more than a merely Human Agreement. God is not a passive Bystander at a Wedding Ceremony. In effect, God says, *"I have seen this, I confirm it, and I record it in Heaven. And I bestow upon this Covenant, by My Presence and My Purpose, the Dignity of being an Image of My Own Covenant with My Wife, the Church."*

### **3. He is the Lord, the "God of Israel"**

And we know this is true from **Ephesians 5**. But there is a Pointer to it in verse 16, and this is my final Observation from the Passage. Verse 16 says, **For I hate divorce," says the Lord, the God of Israel.** Now this is the only time in the whole Book where God calls Himself the "God of Israel." I don't think that is an accident. Because the root Reason why God hates Divorce is that it is fundamentally a *Contradiction* of His Covenant with His Wife; His people, His Church. He is the God of Israel. And so, while the sweet Fellowship may be periodically interrupted by instances of Sin, and while there may be Exile and Separation, and while there may be Anger and Tears, the Covenant remains, the Anchor holds, and the Union is there. And this dynamic is encapsulated in **Isaiah 54:4-8**:

**Fear not, for you will not be put to shame; And do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced; But you will forget the shame of your youth, And the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the Lord of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth. For the Lord has called you, Like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, Even like a wife of *one's* youth when she is rejected," Says your God. For a brief moment I forsook you, But with great compassion I will gather you. In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment, But with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you," Says the Lord your Redeemer.**

Our God has sworn an Oath that He will *never* nullify His Covenant with the elect. Christ will *never* forsake His Bride, the Church. Our great God is NOT merely a "Covenant *Maker*", He is also a "Covenant *Keeper*". And *that* is the meaning of Marriage.

So, wherever you are this morning in your Relationships (and none of us is precisely where we should be), remember these Words of the New Covenant from the very Lips of Jesus Himself:

**John 6:37-40**

**All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.**

So, I invite you to turn from all Sin. Cast yourself on the Mercy of God. And in the Security and Freedom of His unbreakable Covenant don't back out on your Commitments, don't marry an unbeliever, and don't divorce your Covenant Wife.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.