

GIVING GOD OUR LEFTOVERS

Malachi 1:6-14

I. INTRODUCTION: 1,2

1. 3 Over and over we see things in the OT that are types or shadows of things in the NT (Heb. 10:1: *"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things,"*; Egyptian bondage and bondage in sin; Passover and the sacrifice of Christ; Israel and the church, etc.).
2. Another important type or shadow in the OT is the Levitical priesthood.
 - A. The priests were to be "sanctified" or "dedicated" to the service of the Lord (Ex. 28:41) and offer sacrifices to God (Leviticus).
 - B. The Levitical priests were a shadow of Christians (1 Pet. 2:5: *"holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices,"* 9: *"a royal priesthood...that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"*; Rom. 12:1: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice,"*).
3. In the book of Malachi we find the priesthood in a terrible state (give historical background, then read Mal. 1:6-14).
4. Note that these people were no longer rank idolaters in the sense of following false "gods"; no their sin was more sophisticated...they were offering God their leftovers (Review main points of text.).
5. In our Bible classes we have been studying the OT. We so desperately need to learn these important lessons! 1 Cor. 10:1-12; 1 Cor. 10:11: *"Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."*
6. Sadly even today many Christians try to serve God just like the priests in Malachi's day by offering God only their "leftovers." Let us examine ourselves to make sure we are not offering God our "leftovers."

II. DISCUSSION:

We may be offering God the leftovers in regards to our...

I. 4 Loyalty

- A. What are your priorities in life? Job, TV, recreation, family, pleasure?
- B. What is the order of your priorities? We have them whether we realize it or not. What is 1st? 2nd? 3rd? **Matt. 6:21**: *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*
- C. ** Offering God our leftovers is not acceptable for many reasons:
 - (1) Doesn't consider God's nature (**Deut. 4:24**: *"For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God."*), God wants all of you! **Matt. 22:37-38**: *"'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment."*
 - (2) Doesn't consider who God is (**Ex. 3:14**: *"I AM WHO I AM."*; Rom. 1:20; Jn. 1:1-3; Heb. 11:3; **Job 38:1-2ff**: *Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: 2 "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me"*),
 - (3) Doesn't consider what God has done for us (**Rom. 5:8**: *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*),
 - (4) Doesn't consider what is coming (**Rom. 14:11-12**: *"For it is written: 'As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.' 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."*).

(5) Doesn't consider what is at stake (Matt. 16:26).

- D. ** God requires **total** commitment! **Matt. 5:6:** "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness..."; **22:37:** "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."; **Lk. 14:26:** "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." **Requires a conscious commitment each and every day!** Matt. 6:33

2. 5 Time

- A. Other than our soul, time is our most valuable possession. But, we so often treat time as if we don't recognize its preciousness.
- "Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of."
Benjamin Franklin
- "Time passes irrevocably." Virgil
- B. Over and over again God's word teaches us to value time (**Eph. 5:15-16:** "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, *16* redeeming [“to buy up,” Thayer] the time, because the days are evil.”; **Psa. 90:12:** "So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.”; We have no guarantee of tomorrow! Lk. 12:16-21)
- C. How do we use your time? Working, eating, sleeping? TV, recreation, “vegging out”?
- D. Dwight Eisenhower once said this, “I have found that the most urgent things in life are rarely important and that the most important things in life are rarely urgent.”
- (1) It is so easy for us to get caught up in the day-to-day “urgencies” of life and procrastinate on the really important things!
- (2) But we must be vigilant not to let the day-to-day “urgencies” take control. **Management by crisis!** “When you’re up to your neck in alligators, it’s easy to forget you are there to drain the swamp.”
- (3) If we’re not vigilant in prioritizing, one day we’ll wake up and find we’ve wasted our lives on trivialities. ** “Life is what happens to you while you are making other plans.” –John Witt
- E. ** We must meditate on the vastness of eternity. We must consider how long we may bitterly regret it if we only give God the leftovers of our time! **Eccl. 8:5b:** "...a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment"; **9:12:** "For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them." **12:1:** "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'"

3. 6 Money

- A. Honest work is a critical aspect of being a Christian (1 Tim. 5:8; **Eph. 4:28:** Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.); but we must be very careful that “things” don’t control us! Lk. 12:15
- B. **Mal. 3:8:** “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.” Materialism may be one of THE easiest sin to fall into in 21st century America. None of us are immune! If we are not careful, money and “things” can become our “gods” (Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 6:6-11, 17-18: “willing to share”; Also working “overtime” and using it as an excuse to miss services, not to do the Lord’s work, Lk. 12:15)

- C. God's portion must come first, off the top, not off the bottom...not the leftovers if you will! **2 Cor. 8:1-3**: "freely willing"; **9:6-7**: "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."; **2 Cor. 8:12**: "willing mind"
- D. Have you examined your giving lately? **Mk. 12:41-44**: The "rich put in much" "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; 44 for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

4. **7 Energy & Ability**

- A. Many exhaust their energy and use up their abilities in their work, or hobby. Then, how much energy and ability do we leave for the Lord? Much or little?
- B. The so-called Protestant "work ethic" is often elevated as "godliness" when in actuality many use it to fulfill the desires of the mind and flesh! How much is enough? (**1 Tim. 6:6-8**: "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content."; **Matt. 6:24**: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.") Also, hear Christians boasting about their children's material achievements, but not a peep about what it is doing to them spiritually!!)
- C. Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30): Jesus applies this lesson to "the kingdom of heaven."
 (1) The lesson concerns the abilities God has given us in regards to our service in the kingdom.
 (2) That certainly includes "physical" things (1 Tim. 5:8; Eph. 4:28).
 (3) But, God expects a balance. We cannot "over utilize" our talents in the physical realm (i.e., earthly pursuits) and neglect the use of our talents in His kingdom (1 Tim. 6:6-8; Lk. 12:15).
- D. We need to realize we are going to be held accountable for how we use our energy and ability (Matt. 25:24-30; **Lk. 12:48**: "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more."); and stop giving God the leftovers! Examine your current use of your "talents." What will you hear?
 (1) Five and two talent men: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."
 (2) One talent man: "You wicked and lazy servant...cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
- 2 Cor. 12:15**: "...I will gladly spend and be spent for your souls"; **Matt. 8:20**: "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." → 1 Cor. 11:1

5. **8 Life**

- A. Someone once told me, "Religion is for women, children and old people." Many think they can wait to be "religious" when they are close to death. Many want to live their life for themselves, enjoy the world, then at the last possible moment turn to the Lord.
- B. What a wrong-headed attitude! Eccl. 12:1; Rom. 12:1; **1 Cor. 6:19-20**: "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."
- C. I expect a lot of people that go to a "Christian's" funeral will be surprised when a preacher gets up to preach: two former colleagues exchange shocked facial expressions.

D. It is true that “seniority” does not matter in the kingdom of God (Matt. 20:1-16); but how are you spending your life? 2 Cor. 6:2 **2 Cor. 12:15:** “...I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls”; **Phil. 3:17-21**

II. 9 CONCLUSION:

1. God deserves, demands, and expects more than the crumbs that fall from our table! He expects our best, not our leftovers! What are you giving? **2 Cor. 13:5:** “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves...”

2. **10** What is God’s response to offering Him only our leftovers? **Mal. 2:1-3**

“And now, O priests, this commandment is for you.

2 If you will not hear,
And if you will not take it to heart,
To give glory to My name,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"I will send a curse upon you,
And I will curse your blessings.

Yes, I have cursed them already,
Because you do not take it to heart.
3 "Behold, I will rebuke your descendants
And spread refuse on your faces,
The refuse of your solemn feasts;
And one will take you away with it.

3. Invitation:

Adapted from an outline by Titus Edwards, in “*Gospel Sermons by Three Generations of Preachers*”, 1997. Edwards Publishers, Bloomington, IN