

The Burden of the Word of the Lord in Malachi

(The last book of the Old Testament Scriptures)

Meeting 2

God loved us before the foundation of the world. His love never changes. Children may love their parents in the morning, not love them after being scolded by them in the afternoon yet love them again in the evening. Our human love is always fluctuating, but God's love never changes. This is wonderful and we need to realize it. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for the church (Eph. 5:25); whereas many who claimed to love the church, suddenly did not once trials, offenses or problems came along. If the Lord's love for us changed all the time, we would be in deep trouble. But praise the Lord, His love does not change!

Why did Lord choose us? Was it because we are best and most worthy people in the world? Definitely not! We consider Paul to be the chief apostle, yet Paul considered himself to be the chief sinner (1 Tim. 1:14). Paul never forgot the terrible things he did in the past – he caused many Christians to be locked up; he persecuted the church and was even responsible for the death of Stephen (Acts 7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1-2). But God loved him and chose him (Acts 9:15; 1 Tim. 1:12-17), just like He chose you and me. God told the people of Israel that He chose them and delivered from Egypt, not because they were a great people, but because He did it for His own glory and because He loved them (Deut. 7:7). He is God; He knows everything. He knows the future before it happens and knows everything in the past.

When God told His people, *"I have loved you,"* (Mal. 1:2), they answered *"In what way have You loved us?"* (Mal. 1:2). They did not feel like He loved them because they had so many problems. We also murmur and complain so much: "Lord, why me? Why is this happening?" Oftentimes, we neglect to feel the love of God. But God does everything out of love, including seemingly leaving us alone to suffer some trials. When my grandchildren's dog whines and cries, they do not pay attention to it – not because they do not love the dog or are neglecting the dog, but because they love her and are training her. It seemed to me as if they were mistreating the dog, but in fact they were training her to be an obedient and good dog. Many times, this loving Father of ours is training us, but we misunderstand Him because He is not helping us that instant, and we are so impatient. But that actually is the love of the Father. His people did not understand that. So, God reminded them that He loved them. There is not one moment that this wonderful God does not care for us. Do not think that if you are going through some sufferings that He does not know and does not care. He cares for you more than you care for yourself and knows what is best for you! How many times have we left the first love for God because we are distracted by many things? The more we grow and mature in life, the more we will understand Him and realize how much He loves us. As priests, it is very important to know the love of God.

***God Expressed His Love to His People Beginning
with the Story of Jacob and Esau***

How can God prove His love for us? His people asked, *"In what way have You loved us?"* God in His wisdom gave a very wonderful answer: *"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?"* (Mal. 1:2). God went back into history. Sometimes you must go back into your own history to see that He really loves you. When I look back, I must confess that He loves me: with the way I was, after so

many years, He never let me go and never gave me up. So, God went back into the history of the beginning of the nation of Israel. He started His plan with Abraham, Isaac and then Jacob. But why did God not begin with Abraham or Isaac? He did not do so for a very important reason. Abraham was just alone when God called him. The Bible does not say that God loved Abraham, just that Abraham was a friend (2 Chr. 20:7; Isa. 41:8). But then Abraham had two sons – one son was through Hagar and the other through Sarah. When God told Abraham he would bear a seed, Sarah was barren. God waited, but Abraham and Sarah could not wait to give birth to an heir and thought it was impossible. On Sarah's advice, they tried to use their own way to obtain an heir through the handmaid Hagar who was fruitful right away; and Ishmael was born very quickly. If you want to do a quick job to gain many people, you can use many ways like having a band for music or hiring a great preacher without even praying, fasting, asking the Lord and waiting on Him. But God clearly did not accept Ishmael, and He told Abraham that the seed must be through Sarah. When Sarah overheard the conversation that she would bear a child in the next year, she laughed, and God heard her laughing. But God waited until Sarah was at an age where it was no longer possible for her to bear a child; and praise the Lord, when the time came, she got pregnant and bore a child – Isaac, which means "laughter."

Paul saw the allegory clearly that Hagar, the handmaid, was of the flesh and signified the earthly Jerusalem, whereas, Sarah, who was by grace signified the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal. 4: 22-31). Ishmael was the firstborn of the flesh; he was strong and called a wild donkey who could not be tamed (Gen. 16:12). But God will never accept that which is born of the flesh: *"Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman"* (v. 30). God would only

accept that which was born of the Spirit. There is a very clear separation between the two.

Through Isaac and Rebecca, the third generation was born - twins, from the same source (unlike Ishmael and Isaac) - the firstborn was Esau and the second was Jacob. Isaac, the father, loved Esau the firstborn – that was his natural choice; and Rebecca loved Jacob. Whom would you choose? It is a very difficult choice. But it was God who made the choice even before they were born because He knew their end. He said, *“Yet Jacob I have loved; But Esau I have hated”* (Mal. 1:2-3). Those are very strong words. He did not say, “I did not love Esau,” but said, *“Esau I have hated.”*

Esau – the Profane, Natural Man – Despises and Sells the Birthright

Esau represents your natural man, the self. And yet Esau and Jacob are twins. The Lord wants to save your soul. But the soul after it fell became the natural man, the self. And this self will make you despise the birthright and steal your birthright. Esau despised his birthright just for a little bowl of soup to satisfy his hunger. He had just come back from the field training, hunting, and Jacob was there, cooking and preparing some soup. Esau wanted some soup. Jacob being a supplanter was not exactly a fine, honest and good guy. He asked Esau to pay, and Esau was so desperate that he was willing to pay whatever Jacob wanted. Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright.” Esau said, “I am about to die (although he would not truly have died)” and sold Jacob the birthright. The birthright is the most precious thing because with it, the firstborn gains the inheritance and blessings from God, the priesthood – he receives a double portion of the inheritance and gains the kingship. With the birthright, you will rule and reign. In the end when the Lord returns a second time, everything else will be burned away (2 Pet. 3:10-12) – wrapped up like an old garment

and thrown away (Heb. 1:10-12). If you do not have the birthright, you have nothing. Esau sold his birthright; he was profane (Heb. 12:16). The word profane means that Esau did not appreciate anything that is holy, that belongs to God and His temple. He was just for the satisfaction of himself. He despised his birthright, looked down at it. Be careful of your soul life, the ego! If you are so much for yourself, you will sell your birthright!

The Lord said, if you save your soul today by satisfying yourself with what you like, you may get what you like, but you will have to pay a price for it (Mark 8:35). “I like this, I’m going to get it right now” – what price will you pay for it? Outwardly, the price is in dollars, but in reality, it is your birthright. So just for a mere morsel of food, Esau sold his birthright – it was not even a birthday meal with ice cream and cake, fried chicken and steak. It was just for a moment of satisfaction. Is that worth it? We are so foolish – we gain satisfaction for our soul, but for only five minutes or maybe for one hour. You watch a player shoot an amazing basket from the middle of the court during the basketball game. Afterwards, are you happy and satisfied? What did you gain from it? Your team won but you may have lost your birthright, lost a part of your inheritance. The Lord said, *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?”* (Mark 8:36). That is what Esau would do. Esau, your twin brother who is so close to you, is you, and yet is not you, but the fallen you – the ego, the self, the natural man. We all need to see: God hates Esau because he is wild man. That is why Paul says the natural man of a Christian does not receive anything of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14). You may understand something of the Spirit, but you will not appreciate it. For if you really appreciated it, then you would want it and try to get it. So, this is not about the story of Jacob and Esau in the flesh, but about how it spiritually applies to us today.

Jacob – Willing for the Soul Life to Be Transformed by God

Was Jacob a good man? The name, Jacob, means “supplanter.” He is always thinking of how he can take advantage of you. He is a plotter plotting of how to get things. He is not really evil, but he is not good either. He is very subtle. But why did God choose him and love him? Because God’s purpose in Jacob is to change and transform this person. We are all fallen human beings. But God sees something that He can invest in you, and God will gain that investment by changing and transforming you. Esau cannot be changed – you must crucify him! That is why Paul says, *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ...”* (Gal. 2:20a). But we still live our self which is very hard to get rid of. That is why there is transformation, His discipline, His chastisement, His purifying and refining work. Your whole life is a life of refinement. You need to change! But there are so many who after many years of being a Christian have not changed. Yes, we were terrible to start with, but praise the Lord, that God will change us! Are you willing to be changed? God loves you and wants to transform you into the image of Christ. If you have been a Christian for so many years, yet your old habits, self and personality are still there, and you remain only as Jacob, then that is not good.

The good thing about Jacob is that he desired to seek after God. Jacob was very strong – he wrestled, argued and negotiated with God, and God was dealing with him. He made bargains: “If you do this for me, I will do this for you.” But you can never win against God. God used so many situations to change Jacob. Jacob thought he was very smart, but God put him with a smarter uncle who cheated him so many times, so that Jacob would be changed. That is amazing! Do not think you are so smart. God will put you in an environment that is smarter than you. God has wonderful ways to change us. Everything is used by God, so do not complain – learn

from the situation. Do not react, do not murmur. Paul said to do all things without complaining and murmuring (Phil. 2:14) because God is using that situation to teach you. And if you have not learned the lesson, you have to repeat it, until you pass it – just like in school. This is God's way. Therefore, He loved Jacob, because Jacob was willing and able to change.

It was through Jacob's process of transformation that he became Israel, especially the time when he wrestled with angel of God, who was God himself. After wrestling til dawn, God touched Jacob's hip joint, which must have been very painful. Then God told Jacob, *"Let Me go, for the day breaks."* But Jacob said, *"I will not let You go unless You bless me!"* (Gen. 32:26). This is a very good attitude. Do not let God go so easily. And God said, *"Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel"* (v. 28), which means "prince of God." God changed his name! In the Bible changing the name signifies transformation. This happened to Peter when he had the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Lord told him that he was no longer Simon, *"I also say to you that you are Peter,"* a stone for God's building (Matt. 16:18). It is good to have our name changed by God.

This whole process of transformation is proof that God loved Jacob, *"Jacob I have loved."* But that does not mean that God gave everything to him as a gift and that he did not have to go through anything. Right after Jacob got the birthright, he had to run away from home because Esau wanted to kill him for stealing his birthright and blessing. (But it was not actually Jacob's fault, because Jacob bought the birthright. It was Esau's fault for selling his birthright!) This shows that once we have the blessing, it does not mean that there will be no trouble. In my Christian life I have gone through much trouble. I used to hope for the trouble to stop but there was always more. Now, I tell the Lord, *"It is up to You – do whatever You like."* Jacob had so much trouble. In addition to

his uncle Laban, later his twelve sons and one daughter gave him headaches. His sons even sold his favorite son to Egypt and then told him that he had been killed. But praise God, at the very end of his life you can see his blessings to all his children, the 12 tribes (Gen. 49:1-28). This is how God gained His people. And this is the love of God.

Be Transformed (Not Only Having the Doctrine of Transformation)

We should not take for granted the process of transformation. Though many have been Christians over fifty years, they remained the same – there was no change, no transformation. This shows that their Christian life is dead. When you are dead, you become corrupted, decay and cannot grow or change anymore. This is not normal. If your child remained the same for fifty years, you would be concerned and wonder, “What’s wrong with my child?” You would consult the doctor to find out the problem. Children are always making progress as they grow from kindergarten through college. They are always changing, always learning new things. What about with God’s children – how can it be normal for there to be no change in them? Even in my old age, I still want to be changed, to go on. As long as I am still alive on this earth, I need more transformation. In the next four years, I need to be changed. We should be changing every day, every month, every year! We should be very concerned if we are not changing in our Christian life. If you are a Christian that does not change, you can never go on; you will be stuck and will not be able to practice the priesthood. You will continue bringing things to the Father according to old traditions. That is what happened to God’s people in Malachi.

The matter of Jacob being transformed is not a matter of doctrine. Forget the doctrine! This is about the Lord wanting to

see every single one of us changing every day, every week, every month, and every year. Be consistent with the Lord, “Lord, change me. I am not going to remain like this. I don’t want this to be in my heart. Get rid of it! Lord, show me the way to do it and strengthen my inner man.” Do not let the Lord go so easily; otherwise, you will not change. If you want to change, you need to cooperate with the Lord. At school, if you want to graduate, you need to work hard and study, or you may not graduate. We need to be those who want to be transformed to be more glorious. As we are changed, we will have more Christ, more glory, more expression, more reality and substance, so that even we ourselves and others can see the change. Paul told Timothy to let his progress be seen by all (1 Tim. 4:15). If people cannot see the change in you, then you are not changing. May the Lord burden us to be transformed.

When you read, *“Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated,”* know and understand that the Lord is talking about us. Don’t just think: “Oh yeah, I know about transformation.” So what if you *know* about it? The question is: Are you transformed? Let the wife tell her husband whether he has changed. Let the husband tell his wife if she has changed. Let parents tell their children whether they have changed. We in the church life need to see the change to more glory, not change for the worse.

This transformation is by His love and our love for Him. Love is a very important factor for transformation. If this factor of love is missing it is very difficult to change. Because of His love, He is constantly saving us to the uttermost, changing us, transforming us. Even today there are aspects in my life where I tell the Lord, “Lord, I want to change. You must help me to change. Whatever it takes, change me, until I am perfected.” We must be perfect as He is perfect. We must be saved to the uttermost and be sanctified completely spirit, soul, and body, to be holy and blameless at the

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5:23). I tell Him, “God, You have to do it – not after Your coming but before Your coming.” This is God’s love. Do not misunderstand His love. The priesthood needs to know the love of God. If you do not know God’s love, you will be offended and get mad, give up and leave. In your family, if you are scolded by your father, or if something does not suit you, do you just leave? If you are Esau, and are so much in yourself, and are easily offended, you might sell your birthright and lose your inheritance.

God Hated Esau

God specifically used quite a few descriptions of what he would do to Esau: *“But Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness”* (Mal. 1:3). His heritage became a place for the jackals, the coyotes, for the wild animals. Esau even said, *“We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places”* (v. 4a). Do not think it is so easy to get rid of the self and the natural man. God made Edom desolate, but they come back and rebuilt it quickly. Then the Lord said, *“They may build, but I will throw down”* (v. 4b). If they build ten times, the Lord will tear it down eleven times. *“They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness...”* The self, the soul life is wicked. It causes you to fall, and stirs up your desire for the flesh, covetousness, and the world. That is why John said to not love the world (1 John 2:15). *“They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, and the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever.”*

So, we better learn how to get rid of Esau through the cross. Paul learned the lesson: *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I...”* (Gal. 2:20). He said that he labored more than the other apostles, *“yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me”* (1 Cor. 15:10). Do not say, “I did this. I want that. I can do

this. I am the responsible one. I am the leading one..." Learn to say, "It is not I. I am nothing," because we are truly nothing. The "I" is described in Esau. Do not elevate yourself. The Lord said that if you want to be one who follows the Lamb wherever He goes, then you have to deny yourself (Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23). If you are a Christian who never learned to deny himself but is always living himself and speaking his opinion, then you are finished with your inheritance. That is why we keep the Day of Atonement, to afflict our soul – even if our soul is suffering, howling and whining like a little dog or a baby. You must learn to recognize that this is Esau. God hates Esau. We must deny the soul life. If we learn to deny ourselves, take up our cross, follow Him, and afflict the soul by keeping the Day of Atonement, then we will make it.

Then *"Your eyes shall see, and you shall say, 'The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel'"* (Mal. 1:5). After the work is completed, God, through the nation of Israel, will rule over the whole earth. His kingdom will go beyond the border of Israel. When the kingdom of the Lord comes, He will rule over all the nations. Will you be a partaker and rule with Him or will you miss it? To be a partaker you must love Jacob just like the Lord loves Jacob and go through the transformation process to become Israel. You must also learn to hate the self, the soul life, the I, the ego, the natural man. Learn to say "No, wild man, stop!" Otherwise, you might lose your birthright. Repent! That is why the Lord later told His people, *"Return to Me, and I will return to you"* (Mal. 3:7).

Return to His love

At the very end, as in the church in Ephesus, God's people left the first love and became insensitive to God's love. Do not be

insensitive to God's love. Return to His love. Let us read Romans 8:28-39 that each one of us may be encouraged.

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to [Jacob] those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew...

God foreknew – that is why He chose Jacob because He knew what would happen between these two brothers. It is not that He hated one, but He foreknew already. God is not biased, He knew. We must realize that we are fallen people. Once man was deceived by the serpent, sin entered, and we became little serpents, dangerous, creatures, a “generation of vipers.” That is something terrible.

²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

This is important. If you are Jacob, you must have a desire in your heart, “Lord, I want to be conformed to Your image. I refuse to stay the way I am! I am not going to let You go unless You change me.” God desires many sons who are just like the firstborn. There are fleshly Christians, natural Christians, and spiritual Christians, those who are conformed to the image of the firstborn Son.

³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

There is much work to be done to those whom He predestined. We not only have to be justified, but transformed, so that we will become glorious. It is a long process.

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Can the enemy stop God's work? No, we must trust in God that He will finish the job!

³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

He will give us all things that we need to reach the goal – freely!

³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect [Jacob]? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

He is making intercession for us as our great, heavenly High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

This was Paul's experience – in his whole life serving the Lord, He was like a sheep being slaughtered, not just once, but every day.

³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor

*things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from **the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is Christ Jesus our Lord! The love of God is mentioned so many times. If we leave this love, then we are already fallen. The many things we do will just be works without the love. Praise the Lord for this wonderful love! Never ever leave the best and first love, the love of God!

Note: The above content has not been reviewed by the speaker.