

The Burden of the Word of the Lord in Malachi (The last book of the Old Testament Scriptures)

Meeting 5 (Additional Fellowship after the Feast)

The Holy Scripture – the Living and Abiding Word of God

The book of Malachi shows us that the matter of the priesthood is very serious at the end of the Old Testament Scripture. The priesthood is not just something of the “Old Testament,” it is also for us today. Many Christians dismiss the “Old Testament,” wrongly believing that it does not apply to us today. But it is important to see that God’s word in its entirety, from Genesis to Revelation, is the Holy Scriptures. In 2 Timothy 3:16, when Paul said that **all Scripture** is God-breathed (the breath of God that gives life), he was referring to the entirety of the Scriptures at that time – meaning from Genesis to Malachi as there was no “New Testament” yet. The Lord Himself quoted Scripture from the Old Testament times and said that Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms spoke concerning Him (Luke 24:44; John 5:46). Amazing! The last two chapters of Malachi speak of the first and second coming of our Lord and of sending John the Baptist as His messenger, which Isaiah also mentioned (Isa. 40:3). God’s living word abides forever (1 Pet. 1:25). His word is never obsolete. In fact, Jesus Christ is the living word of God! This is wonderful!

Even the phrase “in the beginning” shows us how His word abides forever. Genesis 1:1 says, “*In the beginning God created...*” In writing the gospel of John, John also said, “*In the beginning was the Word*” (John 1:1). John was referring to Genesis because it was through the word of God that all things came into being. The verses in John 1:1-4 are actually the same as Genesis 1. This is amazing! Is Genesis 1 obsolete? Try to convince the apostle John of that! At the very end of the Bible, in

the epistle of 1 John, again he said, *“That which was from the beginning...concerning the Word life”* (1 John 1:1). *“The life was manifested”* and *“we beheld His glory”* (John 1:14; 1 John 1:2). Now that same Word is tangible! Also, in Genesis we see that there is the river of water of life and the tree of life (Gen. 2:9-10); and in the end of the Bible in the book of Revelation it says, *“To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life”* (Rev. 2:7). You cannot say, *“That’s from the Old Testament”* because the tree of life appeared again – and not just in Revelation 2, but in eternity! God showed John *“a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb...and on either side of the river, was the tree of life”* (Rev. 22:1-2). Even in eternity we will eat of the tree of life and drink of the water of life! Just these two simple points alone should make us realize that the word of God is timeless. He is perfect. He does not need any change. God is God. What He has spoken in Genesis will also be there in eternity, just as the tree of life will remain forever.

The Importance of the Priesthood to God – Yesterday, Today, Forever

So, the word that God spoke in Malachi concerning the priesthood is as important today as it was at that time. Many people who oppose the priesthood dismiss the priesthood because they think it is of the “Old Testament”. Then is Peter wrong to write that we are the royal and holy priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) because it is just of the Old Testament days? Certainly not! The verses in Exodus 19:5-6 show us the original purpose of God: *“if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me...and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”* It is the old covenant that God made with His people, to deal with them according to the law. But God is not a God who changes His mind and says, *“Oh, that is the Old Testament, now I do not need a priesthood.”* No, God never changes. Now in the new covenant of grace, we who have received Christ as our life and have His divine nature in us, are able to keep the law through Christ in us who has fulfilled all the righteous requirements of God’s law (Rom. 8:4). Today, we are the priests in the New Testament days. When Paul referred to his service, whether he was sharing the truth or preaching the gospel, he always used the words *“priestly service.”* It is amazing, because he was very conscious of serving God as a priest. Today, we

also need to realize how serious the matter of the priesthood is. God's work, especially the fulfillment of His plan, is not possible without the priesthood. This is why Malachi speaks of the special covenant with Levi (Mal. 2:4). This covenant will remain forever because the priesthood will remain forever. The priesthood is not just one topic among many, but it is very important to God. Read Leviticus 21 which shows how important the priesthood is to God, especially in the aspect of holiness. God desires a holy and the royal priesthood.

Priests are the Messengers of the LORD of Hosts

The priests should be the messengers of the LORD of hosts (see V.C. in the outline). This means that we must know what the Lord is doing. Don't think that the Lord only has one thing to say and nothing else – He has a lot of things to say; He gave us the whole Bible! If every book from Genesis to Revelation were the same, then we would not need so many books; one book or chapter would suffice. But each book is different from the other; and we cannot just talk about one and not the others. There are so many books in the Holy Scriptures, and God is always speaking. The word is also progressive, because God is living, and His word is also living. In each situation, each age, and each time, God speaks more to meet the needs of His people and to reveal more concerning His plan and purpose. God will not reveal everything in one chapter or just the book of Genesis. We must go on from Genesis to Exodus, Leviticus, and keep going because God's work is progressive. Now, at the end of this age, we need to know what God is doing and what He wants to accomplish with us today. We are living in a very different time.

It is not by accident that we have come to talk about the priesthood. This burden is not from man, but it is the burden of the word of the Lord, just as the title of Malachi reads: *"The burden of the word of the Lord to Malachi [His messenger]"* (Mal. 1:1). You cannot just speak without His burden. For example, when deciding to hold a conference, you cannot just ask for the brothers' opinions of what the topic should be. It is not a matter of man's opinion. A messenger must know what God's burden in His heart is, what He wants to say to His people now at this present time. It must be the burden of the word of the Lord to His

messenger. At work, you do not say the same thing every day because each day is different, with new situations. You do not speak the same thing to your daughter every day, because she is growing; even you are growing, and things around you are changing day by day. Is God's work so simple that He has nothing more to say to us today or tomorrow? No, so it is normal for God to speak to us His burden for today. We need to know what God is speaking right now about the priesthood. The priests are the messengers of the Lord, and the messengers must know what His message is today: "Lord, what do You want to speak to us now?" He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is speaking. May we be open and seek His speaking all the time.

As priests, pay attention to your speaking. Your speaking is connected to your heart, even to your mind. As priests, we must have our mind renewed all the time. Check your mind, the way you think. What are you thinking about every day? What is on your mind when you are alone in your office or in bed – are you somewhere in Hawaii or on the moon? What is going on in your mind? How can the Spirit speak to a person whose mind is always somewhere else and thinking dark, strange thoughts? If you let your mind do this, and then come to God's word to hear His speaking, it is very difficult! We need to be renewed! This is why Paul spoke of transformation: *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."* (Rom. 12:2). This is a very important fact. This is why Paul also wrote that God has given us a spirit of love, a spirit of power, and a spirit of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7). When something comes into your mind, if you are a person who is trained and wants to understand God's word, you should say: "No! I will not let my mind run around and think about all these crazy things." Our mind is very important! Paul said, *"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind"* (Eph. 4:23) so that you can put off the old man (v. 22) and put on the new man (v. 24). And learn to set your mind on the spirit (Rom. 8:6) on the things that are above (Col. 3:2). If you do not train your mind, you cannot hear or understand God's speaking. At work, you are trained in a certain field and spend time thinking about it every day so when things happen you can easily understand. If you do not use your mind to pay attention to your work and are distracted with basketball and football you will not perform your job well and may injure someone. Our mind must be renewed and concentrated. The

eyes of our heart must be enlightened (Eph. 1:18). We must train our ears to hear the Spirit, and not to listen to gossip, lies, and crazy things.

We must also guard our lips. It is not easy to be a messenger of the Lord. Many times, we do not think our lips are unclean. We should never forget Isaiah 6. When Isaiah saw God's throne, he said, *"Woe is me...because I am a man of unclean lips"* (Isa. 6:5). If we want to be the Lord's messengers to speak His word, we need to watch our mouths! If we speak loosely in our daily life and in our family life, how can we be His messengers? Psalm 120:2 in the Song of Ascents says that we are among a people with lying lips and deceitful tongues. We want to be the messengers of the Lord.

"The law of truth was in his mouth" (Mal. 2:6a). Take care of what is in your mouth! What is in your mouth comes from what is in your heart and in your mind. We must be those who love the truth, especially the truth in the word of God. Do not read the word of God with a curious mind and try to figure things out by yourself, searching for answers here and there. That is why there are so many books, with each person says something different. Which one is right? That was my experience when I was younger. Go to the Holy Anointing and wait upon Him: "Lord, it is Your word. Only You know what You want to say – nobody else knows." Today, I only love this one book, the Bible, and I read it not because I want to understand what it means, but because I want to know Him: "Lord, speak to me through Your Word. I want to have an ear to hear, to have a spirit of wisdom and understanding, and of Your counsel and Your strength." Then you will have the proper knowledge with the fear of the Lord. In a meeting about Isaiah, we shared concerning fearing the word of God. Immediately some people started attacking: "Oh, he said that there is no need to enjoy the word anymore, now you have to be afraid of the Word!" This example exposes how our fallen human minds think. That is why the Lord told the Pharisees and the scribes: *"How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"* (Matt. 12:34). If your heart becomes a junkyard then that is what comes out of your mouth. *"The law of truth was in his mouth"* (Malachi 2:6). Psalm 1:2 says, *"and in His law he meditates day and night."* If you cannot sleep, it is better to meditate on the law than to daydream.

"Injustice was not found on his lips" (Mal. 2:6b). Isaiah was a man of unclean lips living among a people of unclean lips. That means we are all the same; we all come from Adam. Do not think our lips are just two little lips – they are very dangerous. The tongue is especially dangerous; you just have to strike a match – and all of a sudden you have tongues of fire! *"Injustice was not found on his lip."* (Mal. 2:6b). Our God is a righteous God. So, may the Lord really do something within us. We must remember Isaiah 6:5-6 and be as Isaiah – to have an angel take a burning coal from the altar and touch our lips. Have you ever had your lips burned? The pain you experience is not just for a moment – and if you were really burned, you will get blisters afterwards.

"He walked with Me [God]" (Mal. 2:6c). Walk with God – it is not easy. We need to exercise to be like Enoch to walk with God, follow Him, and take Him along. The psalmist says, *"I have set the Lord always before me"* (Psa. 16:8). Watch His face, His countenance – just like a little dog watching the countenance of his master. In the Song of Ascents, we see that the more we grow in our spiritual life, the more we learn to see the expression of the Lord before we do anything (Psa. 123:2). Sometimes you can see the expression already when you ask the Lord, "Lord, may I do this?" and the Lord just has to have an expression and you know, "Uh oh, I should not do it." Do not be like Balaam and ask the Lord two or three times. The first time the Lord already told him "No", but Balaam came and asked the Lord a second time. I do not think the Lord was very happy. Finally, the Lord said, "Go." But the Lord did not smile when He said that because He was going to stop him on the way with the angel of death with the sword. So, walk with God. Ask Him, talk to Him. God loves to talk to you. God is a God who appears – the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, not just once but many times. He talked to Moses. How often does He talk to you? He talked to Samuel, David, and Daniel. Our God is a speaking God! And, when He finally came as a Man, He talked to so many people! It seems like the Lord likes to talk to people. Do you like to talk to Him? How often do you talk to Him throughout the day? You cannot walk with God without talking with Him. Can you imagine walking or driving three miles with your daughter and not saying a word? To walk with God is not simple.

Do not just say anything loosely. Many times, we come to have fellowship, but it is just talking, not fellowship. To fellowship means to partake.

“The lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and the people should seek knowledge from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts” (Mal. 2:7). The verses here in Malachi 2:5-7 are not that simple. Get into them. The verses are all about the mouth, the lips, the speaking and the walking. May the Lord gain such messengers among us! Praise the Lord!

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