

The Burden of the Word of the Lord in Malachi

(The last book of the Old Testament Scriptures)

Meeting 6

God originally wanted all His people to be a holy nation, a kingdom of priests. So, He made a covenant with them (the old covenant); and if they had kept His covenant, His people would have been a wonderful holy nation! But they were a fallen, stiff-necked people, like us, and they worshipped the golden calf. When Moses asked those who were on the God's side to come to him, out of all the 12 tribes only the tribe of Levi came and stood on God's side. This is a very important principle. Today, there are many Christians, but not too many are willing to take a stand to be on God's side. We as Christians make compromises, are afraid to take a stand, and just follow the crowd because we think the majority must be right. When the Lord Jesus was on this earth, not many people followed Him. In John 6 a huge crowd followed Him to see Him perform miracles; and He fed thousands with five loaves and two fish. That was marvelous and everybody liked that! But when He told them to eat Him, *"For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed"* (John 6:53-56), they said, *"This is a hard saying"* (v. 60), and everyone left. Only twelve remained, and the Lord asked them, *"Do you also want to go away?"* (v. 67). But Peter said, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life"* (v. 68). The disciples were for the reality of life. Then, before the day of Pentecost, the Lord had only 120 people (Acts 1:15)! At that time, most people just followed the traditional religion, Judaism. Would you have been a part of the 120, or would you have preferred to remain in Judaism? To stand on God's side and not on the side of tradition is not easy. It is much easier to follow what everybody is doing. We have experienced this among ourselves in the last fifty years. If the Lord opens your eyes to see something that is not right, and you are afraid to take a stand for the Lord, the Lord will say, "It's okay, it is your choice." But for those who take the Lord's way and choose to

stand on His side, the Lord will make a special covenant with them. This is God's very special covenant with the tribe of Levi. Today, the church should be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, His special people, and His treasure.

The priests are the real messengers of the Lord who speak what the Lord wants to say. They must be very faithful to speak God's word, not their own words. None of the prophets in the Old Testament Scripture ever spoke his own words; they spoke exactly what God wanted to say to His people. Most of the time, His people did not want to hear what He was saying but wanted to hear those things that pleased them. In the book of Malachi, there is nothing nice – God rebuked His people and even told them that He would throw dung on their faces and throw them out together with the dung. It is amazing that God used such descriptive language; He must have been really disgusted! We are not here to listen to something nice, but to hear what God is speaking to us. When God speaks it is not a doctrine; He speaks in a straightforward and exposing way so that His people would repent and follow Him. This is evident in Malachi as well as Revelation 2 and 3. What is the use of hearing a nice doctrine or “message” if you just remain the same and it does not help you to repent and turn to God? This is not the way God speaks to His people.

God's requirement and standard for the priesthood is very high – holiness is most important. You cannot serve God as a priest without being holy. If you serve as a priest with unholy hands, enter the Holy Place, and touch the holy sacrifices, you will defile the offerings. Once an offering is defiled, God will reject it. You must put on Christ as the holy garments to enter the Holy of Holies. Your conscience must be sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and your body must also be washed with pure water (Heb. 10:19-22). You cannot enter the Holy of Holies defiled. This is not just any kind of service, but the priestly service to God, so holiness is very important. If you want to see God, you must be holy: *“Pursue...holiness, without which no one will see the Lord”* (Heb. 12:14). I again emphasize that you can do many works or have ministries for God, but there is no requirement to be holy to do those things (though it is still better to be holy). But if you want to enter the Holy of Holies and bring the sacrifices to the Father, it must be done

according to God's way. The example of Nadab and Abihu, who were immediately consumed by fire when they offered profane fire (Lev. 10:1-2), is a strong warning to us. Today, the Lord will not physically kill you on the spot, but you may become spiritually dead and without life. Don't think: "I'm still okay." Remember that the church in Sardis is a dead church (Rev. 3:1). So, it is important as priests to be holy and to do everything according to God's way.

God's High Requirements for the Priesthood – the Sons of Zadok (Ezekiel 44:15-31)

When the Lord returns, He will build His temple in Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom as described in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 44 God speaks to the priesthood. Because many of the Levites were not faithful and strayed from God's way to serve idols with the rest of His people, they will only be able to serve in the outer court of the temple; they will not be qualified to come near to God or enter the Holy Place or touch any holy things (vv. 10-14). Of all the Levites, only the sons of Zadok remained faithful. So, the Lord told them, *"But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near to Me to minister to Me..."* (Ezek. 44:15). They will minister directly to God! This is wonderful! There are many different services to do in the outer court. Some people like to preach, serve in other ways or have their ministries. But the sons of Zadok will minister to the Lord directly in the millennial kingdom. Which service would you prefer to do? We like to be active and do things. Fifty years ago, I was very active. But today, I want to come before His presence and only do what He asks me to do and bring His food at His table. This is how Nehemiah served the king. He was not a famous warrior or general who fought battles for the king, he served the king as a cupbearer. That was not an easy job. The king would not just let anyone do it, lest he be poisoned. He must have trusted and loved this man! Nehemiah's job was to clean the cup, to put something in it to drink and bring it to the king. Do not belittle this job! It is the most wonderful job to be able to minister to God, to come near to Him and to minister to His need because you are not caring for so many other things, but only caring for His needs. *"...they shall come near Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before me to offer to Me the fat*

and the blood" (v. 15b), to put the food on the Lord's table for His enjoyment and to satisfy Him. Not everybody can do that, and it is not easy – it is a privilege reserved for the sons of Zadok.

"They shall enter My sanctuary" (v. 16a) – the Most Holy Place. Based on Hebrews 10:19, we may say, "By His blood we can run into the Holiest!" but we may not make it out alive! In reading the verses immediately after we realize it is not to be taken lightly, nor is it so easy to enter the sanctuary: *"let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water"* (Heb. 10:22). These verses must be read in the context of the whole Bible. The author does not need to repeat what has already been written in the Scriptures. We cannot enter His sanctuary just as we are. God commanded Moses to make for the priests, Aaron and his sons, garments for beauty and for glory (Exod. 28:2, 40). You must put on the holy, priestly garments for beauty and glory. You cannot just appear before the great King and wonderful God without them. *"...and they shall come near My table to minister to Me, and they shall keep My charge, and it shall be that whenever they enter the gates of the inner court, that they shall put on linen garments..."* (Ezek. 44:16b-17a). Revelation 19:8 tells us that the fine linen, clean and bright, are the righteous acts of the saints. You cannot enter that area if you are unrighteousness.

"No wool shall come upon them while they minister within the gates of the inner court or within the house" (Ezek. 44:17b). Why is no wool allowed? Because if it is warm and you wear a wool jacket, you will sweat. In serving in the Holy of Holies, you should not sweat; it should not be burdensome. If you think it is too difficult to bring another offering to God, and even a turtledove is too heavy for you, or if after serving the Lord you are exhausted, then that means you served out of your own strength. The first time sweat was mentioned in the Bible was after Adam fell and was cursed to eat of the ground in toil (Gen. 3:17-19). Sweat is a sign of a curse. In serving God in the Holy of Holies, you cannot serve according to the flesh with your own strength.

"They shall have linen turbans on their head" (Ezek. 44:18a). Why must the priests have turbans on their head? Because the enemy is always

attacking your mind. It is not good if your mind is not renewed and is not saved. You may be physically sitting in the meeting, but your mind may be elsewhere on vacation, or longing after a new car, etc. So, you need to put the linen turban on your head. *"...They shall have linen trousers on their bodies; they shall not clothe themselves with anything that causes sweat"* (v. 18b).

"When they go out to the outer court, to the outer court to the people, they shall take off their garments in which they have ministered..." (Ezek. 44:19a) so as not to defile their garments. The garments that we need to put on is very special. That is, we must put on Christ but not just in a general sense. Of course, we need to put off the old man and put on Christ to live Christ; but here in the service it is a special priestly garment. You may think, "Well, Christ is Christ." But there are so many different aspects of this wonderful Christ! We need to learn what it means, especially if we are ministering to the Lord. When doctors go to work, they put on a white coat – a special garment – because they are doing a special job in the hospital. Surgeons do not casually walk into the operating room in their street clothes. They must be clean and put on special garments and a mask and gloves, and cover their hair. An athlete on the field wears a different type of garment. Not all garments are the same. So do not think putting on Christ is just that simple.

"...and in their holy garments they shall not sanctify the people" (v. 19b). This means that the priests shall not mix the holy garments up with the people. The first meaning of being sanctified is to be separated. The Lord asked this question: if something that is defiled touches something that is holy, will the defiled thing become holy? No. If you have something that is holy, and it touches something defiled, will that holy thing be holy still? No, it will be defiled (Hag. 2:11-13). This is a principle. Do not think that if you are holy and you touch an unholy, defiled or dead thing that it will become holy and that you will be fine – no, you will not, instead you will become unholy and defiled. There are certain things we Christians should not touch.

"They shall neither shave their head, nor let their hair grow long..." (Ezek. 44:20a). The hair is a head covering. To cover your head means you are obedient to God. To shave your head means that you are

rebellious against everything including God, always saying and doing the opposite of what He says. But if a priest grows his hair long it means he agrees with everything and has no discernment. That is like saying, “Amen” to everything, even before the sentence is finished, or even if what is said is wrong. Don’t say “Amen” in a loose way, otherwise it becomes a habit and just slips out in normal conversation. So, priests should neither shave their hair nor have long hair, *“but they shall keep their hair well trimmed”* (v. 20b). Trimming the hair is the right way and means you are sober and have discernment. A person who is in the spirit discerns all things (1 Cor. 2:15). *“But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one”* (Matt. 5:37). Do not remain in the gray zone. You are a priest – if something is wrong, say “no”; if it is right, say “yes.” Otherwise, you will get into deep trouble. In the past, many who called themselves “leading brothers” knowingly covered up obvious things that were wrong, resulting in big trouble. So, the priests must keep their hair well trimmed, praise the Lord!

“No priest shall drink wine when he enters into the inner court” (Ezek. 44:21). Too much wine causes your mind to be cloudy; you will not be sober and cannot think straight. Before Nadab and Abihu offered up profane fire before the Lord, they must have drunken wine, because afterwards the Lord told Aaron, *“Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die...”* (Lev. 10:9). That does not mean that you may not drink any wine at all, but when you enter the sanctuary to serve, do not drink one drop because you are speaking for God. You are a messenger. If you speak the wrong message to the people, that is a big responsibility. And if you serve something that is not right to God at His table, He will not accept it.

“They shall not take as a wife a widow or a divorced woman” (Ezek. 44:22a). As priests, do not just marry someone according to the lust of your flesh. That is not wise and will not end well. Marry someone who is like-minded. Paul wrote, *“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers”* (2 Cor. 6:14) because it is easier for the unbelieving wife to pull the believing husband down, than for the believing wife to pull the unbelieving husband up. Young people, take your marriage seriously!

“...but take virgins of the descendants of the house of Israel, or widows of priests” (Ezek. 44:22b). Your faith must be the same; your ways must be the same. Otherwise, your partner who is not a believer or who is a worldly person will drag you into the world.

“And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean” (v. 23). The verse does not say that the priests shall teach His people many doctrines in the Bible! Knowing the difference between holy and unholy things is more important than knowing doctrine! If you are an unholy person, no matter what doctrine you learn, it will be of no help to you. Learn to be holy. If you can differentiate between holy and unholy things, then you will be a person who can differentiate between what is truth and what is not truth.

“In controversy they shall stand as judges, and judge it according to My judgments” (v. 24a). Do not be biased. Do not look at persons and have respect of persons. Don’t look up at the so-called big apostles. Judge righteously; look at God, because He is the only One who is righteous and holy. If you judge wrongly, you will cause much trouble among God’s people. *“They shall keep My laws...” (v. 24b).* It is necessary for a priest to keep the law. Otherwise, how can he be a judge and judge righteously?

“They shall keep...My statutes in all My appointed meetings, and they shall hallow My Sabbaths” (v. 24c). Why must the priests keep the Sabbath? The first Sabbath occurred in Genesis 1 after God finished creating man on the sixth day. If God had created Adam on the first day, Adam might have wanted to “help” God and give Him “better” suggestions, causing much trouble. Then God would not have finished in six days! But God finished creating everything in six days and rested on the seventh day (Gen. 2:1-2). Hebrews 4:10 says, *“For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.”* To keep the Sabbath means to cease from your own works because God has finished everything! What is left for you to do? Nothing! And yet, do everything with Him – that is the real rest. As a priest learn to keep the Sabbath; otherwise, you will think the Lord’s

table is so burdensome and wearisome. Be in the Sabbath rest, praise the Lord!

“They shall not defile themselves by coming near a dead person” (Ezek. 44:25a). Don’t touch anything that is dead. Sometimes we are too nice and want to help, but we cannot help! We cannot bring Lazarus back to life from the grave. If someone is dead, you cannot help him – you might fall into the grave yourself and end up dead. Many people ask, “What does ‘dead’ mean?” I cannot tell you that. You must discern! If you are a person in the spirit, you will know that there are certain things you cannot touch. There is an exception: *“...only for father or mother, for son or daughter, for brother or unmarried sister may they defile themselves.”* (v. 25b). The verse is about physical relatives, but spiritually, we must also see that there are persons we can help, and there are persons from whom we had better keep our “social distance.” But if a priest defiles himself, *“After he is cleansed, they shall count seven days for him”* (v. 26). That means he should be completely cleansed, because death is very defiling – it is even worse than sin. You can help a person who has sinned to repent, but you cannot help a dead one rise from the dead unless you are the Lord Jesus.

“‘And on the day that he goes to the sanctuary to minister in the sanctuary, he must offer his sin offering in the inner court,’ says the Lord God” (v. 27). These are all specific requirements for us if we want to serve as priests.

“It shall be, in regard to their inheritance, that I am their inheritance. You shall give them no possession in Israel, for I am their possession” (v. 28a). God is our inheritance! Would you prefer to have a piece of land or God as your inheritance? If God is your inheritance, then everything is yours! But if you just inherit a piece of land, that is all you get, if you get anything at all. That is why 1 John 2:5 says, *“Do not love the world or the things in the world...”* and 2 Peter 3:10 says that everything in this world will be burned up. If you love the world, you will end up losing everything because your inheritance will come to nothing. With God as your inheritance, you do not need anything else! You may need things for your daily living, but those things are not your inheritance; they are just things that you use, like a house, a kitchen, a ball to kick around for

exercise. But God is our inheritance! Nothing is more precious than this wonderful, great, almighty God, the One who is, who was, and who is to come, the Lord of hosts, the Creator of heaven and earth, the holy and righteous One, the God of glory who owns everything and loves you! We believers are so foolish because we do not realize that as priests God is our inheritance!

“They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering; every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs” (Ezek. 44:29). The priests receive the best portion, because all of God’s people must offer the best to God. They bring the perfect lambs and goats for all the wonderful offerings, and God gives the priests the best. *“The best of all firstfruits of any kind, and every sacrifice of any kind from all your sacrifices, shall be the priest’s; also you shall give to the priest the first of your ground meal, to cause a blessing to rest on your house”* (v. 30). That means when you serve God as a priest, He will take care of your needs. You will lack nothing and do not have to worry. God will owe you nothing. If you are faithful to God, He is a thousand times more faithful to you. Once, I initially declined to go to the conference in Bangkok because I was selling my house. But a brother told me, “John, you take care of God’s house here in Bangkok, and He will take care of your house!” I had to say, “Amen!” and told the Lord that the day I came back to this country, the house must be sold for certain price. We went to Bangkok and did not give the house another thought. When we came back and landed at the airport close to midnight, there was a bid for the house but for a lower price, so I declined. Five minutes later, the buyer agreed to the higher price. Our God is so wonderful and faithful! If you are faithful to Him, He will be faithful to you. He is our living God, trust Him! He is our inheritance and possession!

“The priests shall not eat anything, bird or beast, that died naturally or was torn by wild beasts” (v. 31). This is a very important principle. Do not just listen to any message or nice teaching that does not give life; do not be curious, just wanting to know. If it is not from the mouth of the Lord, if it is not life, and if it is not the Spirit speaking, forget about it! Because once something like that gets into your concept, it is hard to get out. Don’t be indiscriminate like a dog who picks up a rusty nail and wants to chew on it! Don’t be that way spiritually. Have discernment!

Ask the Lord, "Is this full of life or not?" If it is not life, no matter how wonderful the explanation or exposition is, reject it! Paul said that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro by the craftiness of man that leads to the systematizing of error (Eph. 4:14). Ask the Lord first; go to Him! It is His word. Who can share with you the truth more than the Anointing that is in you and will teach you all things? Trust in Him. Don't force the answer; just wait, and with time the Lord will explain to you what you need to know.

This is the covenant that God made with Levi and especially with the sons of Zadok.

The Degradation of the Priesthood

Unfortunately, the priesthood degraded. They turned aside from the way of the Lord. Do not think that such a thing cannot happen to you. Remember that Peter had the good intention to follow the Lord to the cross, but he did not make it. As it is written in the Word, it is good to have the desire to follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Rev. 14:4), but we must take heed because we carry our flesh with us all the time. Do you believe in yourself and have confidence in yourself? I do not have confidence in myself, and many times I tell the Lord, "Lord, You have to help me!" In my lifetime I have seen so many people change their ways and their minds. Paul said we are those who have no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). He did not have confidence in himself. He could have said, "I am the great apostle," but he knew that he was nothing. The more you know the Lord, the more you realize you are nothing. We are unprofitable and are subject to fall any time. Paul had a wonderful attitude: *"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected..."* (Phil 3:12). We are still in the process of being transformed and being saved to the uttermost. We constantly need the Lord's mercy and grace. May the Lord preserve us until He comes, especially at this time because He is coming soon! Let us forget the things that are behind and press toward the goal by the Lord's mercy and grace.

All of God's people came out of Egypt, but the entire first generation (save two) died in the wilderness and did not enter the good land. The next generation entered the good land but did not care about

Jerusalem. Finally, they had Jerusalem and the temple, but they worshiped idols and turned God's temple into temple for idols. The priests departed from the Lord's way (Mal. 2:8). If you, as a priest, turn aside, be careful, because it will not just be you alone who turns aside, but you will cause many others to stumble. It is one thing to just take yourself out, but in reality, many others will also stumble and throw away the truth in the process. And once you depart from the way of the Lord, you corrupt the covenant of Levi (Mal. 2:8) and show partiality and respect of persons in the law (v. 9b). Terrible things have happened because of respect of persons. By doing this you will bring the Lord's judgment upon yourself and the priesthood. And the Lord made the priests contemptible and base before the people (v. 9a). This is not good.

Praise the Lord for His mercy by which He called us into the priesthood! But don't think what is written in Malachi will only happen to others but not to you. It could happen to any of us. And now, being a kingdom of priests, we must take the Lord's warning in the book of Malachi to heart.

The Influence of the Corrupt Priesthood on the People

Profaning the Covenant God Made with the Fathers

When the priesthood is corrupted, it will corrupt the whole nation of Israel, and even the whole world. Once the priesthood does not keep God's covenant with Levi (Mal. 2:4), and the entire people of Israel are corrupted, then the priests and the people will not keep but profane the covenant God made with the fathers (Mal. 2:10), God's general covenant with His people. The priests set the example for the people to follow. This is a principle in the whole world. This can be seen in the United States and the whole world – if the leadership of a nation is corrupted, then the whole country will be corrupted. This principle also applies to us spiritually! The priests profaned the covenant God made with the fathers, and the people began to deal treacherously with one another. This is the sad, not glorious, horrible end, the depth of the finale of the Old Testament Scripture.

The people committed abomination by having mixed marriages with the daughters of a foreign god (v. 11c). We are God's children, and those who are unbelievers are children of a foreign god. Would you want a foreign god to be your father-in-law? No! In the end, the whole nation of Israel became just like the other nations. This was a very serious offense to God! God told them that they should not mix with the nations, nor should they follow their cultures and their ways. He told them to cast out and get rid of the nations from the good land because they were demon worshipers. But they did not listen, and in the end the people of Israel worshiped idols and became worse than the nation. They even offered their children to the demons. This practice of devil worship still occurs today. So, God's people mingled with the daughters of foreign gods. Even King Solomon, who at the beginning was a good king, had hundreds of wives from foreign gods and ended up worshiping their gods. Everything written in the Bible is a warning to us both personally and corporately as God's people. None of us is an exception.

They also profaned the holiness of the Lord which He loves (v. 11b). How is it possible to profane the holiness of the Lord? God in His holiness cannot be profaned; He is holy. But here the holiness of the Lord refers to His people. Israel is His holiness (Jer. 2:3; Zech. 14:20-21), His holy seed (Ezra 9:2). Remember that God wants a holy nation (Exod. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:9), a glorious bride, holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:27). Look at the Roman Catholic Church, it is demonic, devilish and even purposely had the audience hall of the pope designed to look like a snake. Do you want to become like that, to profane the holiness of the Lord? God's people are a holy race, a holy nation, a special people. Can the worldly people tell the difference when they look at us and the way we live and behave? We should be a holy nation, a holy seed (Deut. 7:6; 26:19). That is why God was very particular in creating the holy nation. He called out Abraham. And then from Abraham, God eliminated anything born of the flesh (Ishmael); He wanted that which was born of the Spirit (Isaac), a holy seed, born through Sarah. Out of Isaac came Jacob and Esau – and again, God made a separation: *"...Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated"* (Mal. 1:2). God then transformed Jacob into Israel. It was a lot of work for God to sanctify for Himself a holy people! But years later it became a terrible people again.

Then the people also profaned God's sanctuary which is holy. Do not defile His sanctuary! He will not be happy with that. How would you like it if someone went and painted your house black or brought twenty wild dogs into your house? Many times, we are wilder than dogs. No wonder Paul said, *"Beware of dogs"* (Phil. 3:2). They defiled His temple. So, God said that both the one who is awake and the one who is aware will be cut off (Mal. 2:12). Those who are awake are those who know the law. Those who are aware are those who are being taught; they follow. But if the leading ones become blind, the rest will also become blind. Thus, the Lord spoke of the Pharisees and the scribes, *"They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch"* (Matt. 15:14). And they will all be cut off.

Dealing Unfaithfully with the Wife of His Youth – Destroying the Marriage Relationship

Not only did His people profane the covenant God made with the fathers, they also dealt unfaithfully with the wife of their youth (Mal. 2:14). If you have taken a wife from among God's people, you are married; but if you then take another wife from a foreign god, you will have to get rid of your proper wife. Remember when Abraham took Hagar, the Egyptian maidservant? This was rejected by God; He would never accept this! The result of the men taking strange and foreign wives was that many of the divorced wives complained to God, *"covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and crying"* (v. 13) because they were mistreated and cast out. The men cast out the wrong wife! Instead of casting out Hagar they cast out Sarah. How terrible! That is why marriage is very important for God; He hates divorce and being unequally yoked with unbelievers.

God desires holy marriages because He seeks godly offspring (v. 15). He not only wants His people to have good marriages, but He desires godly offspring for the church to grow from generation to generation. Children are a gift from God. Unfortunately, the degradation of His people can already be seen in the third or fourth generation – they had become part of the world and each generation got even worse. That is why the Lord used Adam and Eve, husband and wife, as a picture of Christ and the church. He is looking for the next generation, the godly

offspring! The young generation must go on with the Lord in a living way. We must care for the younger generation – they should go much farther than us, and the following generation should go even farther, and come closer to the goal! This is a mystery that is revealed in Malachi – God seeks godly offspring. So, take care of your children and take care of your marriage, and be an example to the children. Our God is a very practical God. Don't think "I am so spiritual going to every meeting," yet you neglect your family and your kids. Then your children will hate you because you were just a churchgoer and did not care for them and let them go into the world. What kind of offspring will we have if we do that? Our children are so dear to us. They are God's gift, and it is our responsibility, through prayer and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, to give them the proper care and raise them up as godly offspring. What a wonderful word in Malachi! The Lord really cares for us, for the sake of His plan and purpose.

God "*hates divorce*" and tells us to "*take heed to your [our] spirit*" (v. 16). If we learn to live by the spirit, then our marriage will be great because the Lord is the Spirit who dwells in us to teach us, strengthen us, and supply us.

May this word help all the saints in every place and show us how practical the priesthood is! Every area of our life has an influence on the priesthood! Amen! This is God's speaking through Malachi to us today.

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