

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

Meeting 9 – Additional Word

“But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like launderers’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness” (Mal. 3:2-3).

This is a very precious word. We can never hear too much fellowship concerning God’s work in us, especially His refining work, the refining of silver and gold. Peter also mentions the refining work, *“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ”* (1 Pet. 1:6-7). We need this refining work because there is too much mixture in us – in our experience, in our Christian life and in the church life. There is no doubt that we do have faith, as we all believe in Jesus Christ and read the Bible, but that is not the problem. The problem is that we are lacking and missing the refining work to get rid of any kind of mixture in us. The best and only way to refine silver and gold is by fire. If we are not willing to go through fire and trials, if we are not willing to be dealt with and refined in our spiritual life, then God’s word tells us that sooner or later we will have trouble (1 Cor. 3:15). It does not matter how long we have been Christians. The longer we wait and the older we get, the harder it is for the Lord to work within us. We become hardened and set in our character and habits. We are not sensitive anymore. Doctrines alone will not work. We might know everything but that will not help us. The scribes, the Pharisees and the chief priests knew the Bible more than the people – they were supposed to be

experts. But the Lord told His disciples to do what they say, not what they do (Matt. 23:3). That means that the things they said might have been okay, but they did not do what they themselves said.

The Lord wants something purified and refined. Being refined does not mean that you have a wonderful character, are educated and not rough. No, to be refined means to be free from all earthly, terrible mixture. We do not realize how fallen we are. The flesh is the flesh and will always remain the flesh. Our flesh is in no way different from that of an unbeliever. So, the Lord must get rid of this mixture in us. That is why sometimes we seem to be spiritual and holy in the morning, but suddenly in the afternoon, Esau and Ishmael appear, and we are unholy. Suddenly we are like a wild donkey. Why is that? Because there is so much mixture and the Lord cannot go on with us. This is why sooner or later, the Lord must begin the refining work in each of us. Don't wait until later. Later, the fire will need to be turned up to a higher temperature in order to get rid of so many elements that should not be there. The New Jerusalem is built with fine, refined gold (Rev. 21:18). The Lord told the saints in Laodicea: *"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire"* (Rev. 3:18a). Don't be fooled into buying gold with a lot of mixture or even fool's gold from another source.

"He will sit as a refiner." If the refiner is sitting, he is working. He is sitting patiently because it takes time to refine something. To refine gold, you must watch it carefully. At a refinery, people sit and watch so that the refining work will be done just right. The Lord is doing this with all of us, sitting there patiently. I can testify that in the close to 80 years of my life He has been very patient with me. The Lord is so patient with us. Much work is needed in order to refine us, to remove all the mixture – the flesh, the self, and so much of our natural life, the unholy things in our thoughts, etc. For example, after morning watch you close the Bible and all kinds of crazy thoughts enter your mind. There is so much mixture. We need to be careful and work together with the Lord, and say, "Lord, remove this from me." You will know what is not right and what needs to be gotten rid of, and you should be the one purging it out. Paul says, *"Purge out the old leaven"* (1 Cor. 5:7a). If we do not cooperate with the Lord, He will not force us because He gave us a free will. But if we are not willing to cooperate with Him and say, "Lord,

remove this from me – it doesn't belong in my heart," then it won't be easy. Often, when the Lord tries to remove the mixture, we are not willing to let go. We say, "Can You do it tomorrow? Give me one more week. Lord, not now. Maybe later." It is not easy for Him to do His refining work unless we are willing to cooperate with Him. This is the refining work the Lord is talking about. *"He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver"* (Mal. 3:3a). Usually, silver ore contains very little silver; seventy to eighty percent of it is comprised of mixture. So, it takes time and high temperature to remove the mixture, to slowly and gradually purify the silver. A refiner cannot suddenly subject the silver ore to boiling temperatures. In order to gain the purity of silver, the refining work must be slow and gradual. Don't say, "I'm young. I have time." We don't have that much time. If the Lord is coming soon, we all have the same amount of time. Cooperate with Him and let the Lord do His refining work in you.

Going through fire is never easy, but the Lord knows what temperature is needed. He knows how far He can go with you. It is just like taming a dog. You cannot expect that the dog will be a wonderful obedient dog overnight, but you know how far you can go to train it bit by bit. I have had a dog as a guest in my house for two weeks, and it has been a wonderful experience because, in a way, we are not so different – like the dog, we are very rebellious in our nature. How many times have I rebelled against the Lord and said "No, not now"? How many times has the Lord said "Stop!" but I have kept going, not willing to turn, thinking I know better? Many times we are like the priests in Malachi and ask, "In what way...? I am not like that." The Lord did not argue with them, but He told them, "Judgment and dealing are coming." The Lord knows the best way to refine us. Tell Him, "Lord, I need Your refining work, Your purifying, cleansing work."

Do not underestimate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. When the children of Israel came out of Egypt, they brought a lot of junk with them that they should not have brought; they carried idols with them. This had to be purged away gradually. The Lord gave the first generation forty years of trials and chances, but they did not make it. Do not think it is easy. The earlier you start being refined and going on with the Lord, the better it is. Starting at the age of Samuel is very good. Let the Lord

work in you. This work is not just initial salvation. He is able to save you to the uttermost, but not in a week's time – it takes your whole lifetime. Do not wait until it is too late, until you are 90 years old. By then it will be hard for the Lord to change you. And, if you don't change, you will not only cause trouble for yourself, but you will also cause much trouble for others.

This refining work is very important. Do not reject this refining work. Look at the situation of the priests at the time Malachi was written. The Lord was very patient: *"Return to Me, and I will return to You"* (Mal. 3:7b). The time to be trained is when you are young. The best time is now. Don't worry if you fail because the refining will not happen overnight. Who among us has never failed? Everybody fails. But the Lord is very patient, very loving, and very caring. He rebukes us because He loves us: *"For whom the LORD loves He chastens"* (Heb. 12:6a). Our parents rebuke us because they love us. We need the Lord's rebuking. If we do not take the rebuke, we are not sons but illegitimate and bastards (Heb. 12:8). We must listen to the Father of spirits (Heb. 12:9). No fiery trial or discipline is easy; it is hard. But, praise the Lord, after you are trained by it, you will be a partaker of His holiness and bear the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Heb. 12:11). You will be a firstfruit, a grown son. That is the only way! May the Lord open our eyes to see this particular point! If we do not receive His chastening today, His second coming will be a very, very hot, high-temperature furnace. It will not be pleasant. Let us accept His refining and purifying work today. He especially wants to purify the sons of Levi. It is a special tribe. Praise the Lord! Amen.

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