



*Christ Redeemer Church  
Sermon Series Study Guide  
for the Book of Malachi  
March/April 2019*

***Special thanks to Mary Peters for the cover artwork!***

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## INTRODUCTION

*"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. 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 fullers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years." Malachi 3:1-4 (ESV)*

This spring we will be doing a short sermon series entitled "The Refiner's Fire: God's Love for Faithless People in the Book of Malachi." As we anticipate the celebration of Easter this spring, we will take time to reflect on the book of Malachi, which anticipates Christ's coming so powerfully.

What is the book of Malachi? Little is known of Malachi (Hebrew: "My Messenger"), a prophet who seemed to live in or around Jerusalem on account of his interactions with the priests at the temple. He began his ministry after the completion of the temple in 515 BC, around the time of Ezra and Nehemiah in 458 BC. His ministry probably preceded theirs, as they are not mentioned in the book. This would put the writing of Malachi at about 475-450 BC. Malachi was one the last of the prophets to preach before the coming of Christ, and the book of Malachi is usually placed as the final book of the Old Testament. Following his ministry, a period of about 400 years elapsed during which no prophet spoke to the people. This period of silence was a time of anticipation, as the people waited for the Lord and for His messenger to refine the people and restore the kingdom of Israel as the kingdom of God.

Not only does Malachi anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ, but his ministry had much in common with that of Jesus. Both Jesus and Malachi spoke forcefully about the need to know and obey God's Word, while also pointing to the hope we have in God's grace.

### **How to Use the Study Guide:**

The pastoral staff and interns have prepared this study guide to accompany this sermon series and to help us with our study of Malachi.

The date at the top of each page notes the Sunday for the respective week. The Scripture verse listed under each heading is a suggested memory verse for that week. Below you will find a suggested passage of Scripture, followed by "Reflection Questions." These readings will prepare you to hear the sermon for that upcoming week.

To be clear, this guide is not intended to be a “legalistic” requirement. Not at all! Rather, it is a way for us as a congregation to walk together as we explore God’s Word. And to what end? Our prayer and confident expectation is that as we grow in our understanding and practice of daily prayer and meditation, we will grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and so grow in our love for Him and one another.

### **Simplicity of this Study Guide:**

This study guide is intended to be simple and basic. Each day’s “lesson” should require no more than 15 minutes. At times this may annoy some of you, leaving you feeling that it is too pedantic. However, there are at least two reasons why this approach is necessary. First, we want everyone (whether novice or longstanding Christian) to be able to access this material. Anyone who wants to get more out of it certainly can – simply spend more time digging deeper. The second reason is that our goal is simply to get you pondering and praying through the pertinent Scripture each week. Prayer and meditation are basic, and the basics are always basic. We never get beyond them. It is so often in the fundamentals that we fail. Our prayer is that the experience of our corporate study will enhance your personal study. Likewise, the reverse is true. Your personal study will enhance our corporate engagement around this subject. The weekly discipline that this study guide represents will be a tangible way that we can grow together in allowing the “word of Christ [to] dwell among us richly” (Colossians 3:16).

In the power of Christ!

CRC Staff and Interns  
February 27, 2019  
Hanover, NH

## WEEK OF MARCH 3, 2019

### **Memory Verse:**

*“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.”*

*Malachi 3:1 (ESV)*

### **MONDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 9:12-16

Reflection Questions:

- Why had God judged his people? What were the charges he brought against the people?

- What did God intend the people to learn from the exile? What was the exile meant to teach them about themselves? About God’s character?

- Reflect on times in which you did not pay attention to God’s word, or stubbornly went your own way. What does this passage teach us about the seriousness of our sins?

Prayer:

- How have you experienced God’s discipline in the past? What did it teach you?

- Spend some time thanking God for intervening in the midst of our sins, and asking him to teach you his ways.

## **TUESDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 61:1-7

Reflection Questions:

- When God brought the people back from exile, what comfort and promises did he give them?

- What did God tell them about their sin and its penalty? How did he want them to feel now that the judgment had passed?

- What kind of a future did the exiles have to look forward to? What would their lives be like? What would their relationship with God be like?

Prayer:

- How do you respond to God's judgment against sin? How can you know that your sins are completely forgiven?

- Spend time praising God for the judgment of sin and the extension of mercy that comes to us through the cross of Christ.

## **WEDNESDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 1:1

Reflection Questions:

- The people who heard this oracle had seen God restore them to their land after the exile to Babylon. In what ways might they have been encouraged?

- What promises had they not yet seen come to pass? What might they have still been hoping for?

- How might you sympathize with the tensions the Israelites lived with? How has God shown grace to you? What promises are you still waiting to see fulfilled?

Prayer:

- How are you tempted to turn your attention away from the hope you have in Christ? What complaints do you tend to make as a result?

- Spend time praising God for his promises and the hope he extends to us in Christ.

## **THURSDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 1:2-3

Reflection Questions:

- In verse 2, God begins to present a case against the people. What is His main concern?
  
- What doubts and fears might the people of Israel have had in the wake of their restoration to Palestine after the exile? What does the text imply the people are complaining about?
  
- How did God treat the people of Israel and the people of Edom differently in light of the judgments that came on both nations? What did He intend for this to teach the people of Israel about His love for them?

Prayer:

- What do you learn about God's attitude towards you from His treatment of you? How does this line up with what He says about his attitude towards His people in Scripture?
  
- Spend some time giving thanks to God for the ways He has cared for you and the way He has dealt with you in your sin.

## **FRIDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 1:4-5

Reflection Questions:

- If God opposes them, what will be the result of purely human efforts by the people of Edom?

- While Israel had experienced judgment and restoration, the destruction of Edom had not yet happened in Malachi's time. Deuteronomy 23:7 forbids Israel from hating Edom, so why does God tell them that Edom will also experience judgment, but not restoration?

- Why did God restore Israel to their land? What more had he promised them?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would help you to trust in the fact that He is at work beyond what you can see and experience.

- Pray for the preaching of the gospel to spread throughout the world and to people who have not yet heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **SATURDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 1:1-5

Prayer:

- Pray for the gathering of the church tomorrow and those that will be leading our various aspects of public worship.
- Pray that we would rejoice in God's promises, rather than our own accomplishments, as we gather for worship.
- Pray particularly for the preaching of the Word of God and that we all would be eager to hear and obey.

## WEEK OF MARCH 10, 2019

### **Memory Verse:**

*"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."*

*John 15:16 (ESV)*

### **MONDAY:**

Scripture Reading: John 15:12-19

Reflection Questions:

- What are one or two takeaways from yesterday's sermon?
  
- How might it be both comforting and humbling to know you were chosen by God?
  
- What characterizes the relationship between God and His chosen people? In this passage what kind of relationship does Jesus say He has with His followers?
  
- At first glance, verse 19 may feel overwhelming. How might you find courage in facing your current circumstances, knowing that Jesus affirmed both that hardships will come and that He is with us in them?

Prayer:

- Spend time meditating on/praising God for taking you out of the pit of self-centered destruction and into His freeing love. Ask Him to help you grow in your friendship with Him.
- Pray that God would help you courageously do His will, whatever the personal costs may be, knowing that He will not leave you or forsake you.

### **WEDNESDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 1:6-14

Reflection Questions:

- We don't spend a lot of time or effort thinking about honor in our culture. Take a minute to think through reasons God deserves our honor (to glory, esteem, distinguish). How can you practically show Him honor in your life?
  
- What seems to be the issue the Lord is raising with the sacrifices the people are offering? Are there any ways that you are offering God "blemished sacrifices"?
  
- How did Jesus come and serve us? How can the reality that He gave His life for you, *while you hated Him*, empower you with new strength and vigor?

Prayer:

- Praise God for His perfect love, displayed in Him sacrificing Himself for our sake. Pray that He would give you strength to understand the extent of His love for us.

- Confess any ways the Spirit may be convicting you about serving God half-heartedly. Pray for Him to fill you with Christ's Spirit of unhindered love.

## **FRIDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 2:1-9; 2 Peter 1:9

Reflection Questions:

- How does the Malachi passage describe the relationship between God and His priests?
  
- How do these two passages help us understand what our roles are as priests of the living God? In what ways is this both terrifying and exciting?

Prayer:

- Take a moment to praise God for making you one of His holy priests by the cleansing blood of the Lamb of Heaven, Christ Jesus. Confess how you've fallen short of this high calling.
- Ask God to help you walk with Him with peace and uprightness--that you would have true instruction on your lips as you "proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Ask Him for wisdom and boldness.

## **SATURDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 2:1-9

Prayer:

- Pray that God would fill all of the various ministries of the church with the true instruction of the Lord in the fullness of the gospel.

- Pray for the preaching of the gospel tomorrow. Pray that God would bring His word with power to turn us from iniquity to walk with Him in deep adoration and awe.
- Pray that the Lord would be raising up laborers in the harvest field, both locally and globally, who teach God's word with courageous reverence and purity.

## WEEK OF MARCH 17, 2019

### **Memory Verse:**

*Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'"*

*Matthew 21:42 (ESV)*

### **MONDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Read Mark 7:1-13

Reflection Questions:

- What are one or two takeaways from yesterday's sermon?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Under what circumstances do we start to modify God's commands for our own good? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How is a heart of true worship different from the heart of those that Jesus rebukes in this passage?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would reveal areas of your life where you have "rejected the command of God in order to establish the tradition of men".
- Pray that God would give us obedient hearts.
- Pray that God would help us to see the beauty and wisdom in His commands.

## **WEDNESDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 2:10-16

Reflection Questions:

- What are the issues God is taking with the people in this passage?
  
- What are the consequences of the people's faithlessness?
  
- What instructions does he give in order to set them back on the right path? What does that look like practically?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would reveal to you areas of your life in which you struggle with being faithful.
- Pray that the marriages within CRC would be strengthened, and that they would be an example of God's faithfulness to the church.
- Pray that God would guard our spirits with His Word.

## **FRIDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Matthew 21:33-43

Reflection Questions:

- When Jesus comes, does he find faithful people who had heeded Malachi's words?

- If the church is the tenant farmers, what is the fruit that Christ is looking for from us?

- What is the motive of the tenants to kill the master's son? Can you relate to that in any way?

- How does the gospel message transform us from bad tenant farmers to good stewards of God's kingdom?

Prayer:

- Pray that we would have hearts of repentance, especially when confronted with our sin by God's word.

- Pray that the fruit of the Spirit would be evident within the church.

## **SATURDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 4:20-23

Prayer:

- Pray for the gathering of the church tomorrow. Pray that the head of the body [Christ] would lead us as His church through those leading worship and in our fellowship with one another.

- Pray that we would be a church that is found faithful on the day of Christ's return.

- Pray particularly for the preaching of the gospel of God—that the authority and power of Christ [the anointed king] crucified would humble and embolden us.

## WEEK OF MARCH 24, 2019

### **Memory Verse:**

*"I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap."*

*Malachi 3:1-2 (NIV)*

### **MONDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 2:17 & John 1:14-17

Reflection Questions:

- Malachi 2:17 tells us that the people of Israel had “wearied” the Lord with their words. As you read the rest of the verse, what would you say is at the heart of their misguided words?

- What might be the danger in seeing God only, or primarily through the lens of Grace? Through the lens of Truth?

- How does our understanding that Jesus is “full of grace and truth” affect our understanding of the Gospel?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would give you a more accurate and enlarged understanding of who He is.

- Ask God to transform your words and your life in such a way that they would reflect the fullness of His Grace and Truth.

## **WEDNESDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 3:1 & Mark 1:1-4, 14

Reflection Questions:

- Coming into Mark's Gospel account we seem to get a clearer picture of what's in view in Malachi 3:1. What kind of preparation is Malachi alluding to?

- Why is it necessary to reflect and repent before seeing the Lord in His glory?

• Repentance implies that someone has had *a change of mind*. That they've gotten a more accurate view of themselves and their own sin and sinfulness. This can only truly happen as we gain a more accurate view of God (a reoccurring theme in Malachi). In this way, repentance is life-giving and enlightening! Understanding repentance in this way, how might it play a more regular role in our lives of faith?

Prayer:

- Ask God to not only give you a more accurate and enlarged view of Himself, but also of yourself (Psalm 139:23-24).

- Ask God to search you, to know you, to refine you, and to lead you in His everlasting way (Psalm 139:23-24).

## FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: Malachi 3:2-4 & Romans 5:1-2

Reflection Questions:

- What do you make of Malachi 3:2? These seem to be questions posed in response to the questions of the people from 2:17. If these are rhetorical questions being posed by the Lord, what is the point that He's making here? What is He saying?

- The word "stand" is used in both Malachi 3:2 and Romans 5:2 in reference to *a solid ground of righteousness*. A place where we can truly stand in purity (purification). Unknowingly, or functionally perhaps, what sorts of things do you tend to look to as your standing or ground of righteousness?

- Based on Romans 5:1-2, what might it mean for us to find our standing in Jesus?

Prayer:

- Ask God to refine and purify those areas of your life that you tend to look to as a place to make your stand. Specifically, that rather than them being your ground for righteousness, that they might be viewed rightly as altars of idolatrous worship in your life.

- Pray that God would begin to strengthen all areas of your life with the sure foundation of His Grace (II Timothy 2:1).

## **SATURDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 3:5 & Ephesians 4:17-32

Prayer:

- Pray that God would be preparing all who will gather for our service tomorrow.
- Pray that our worship service would be full of the Grace and Truth of Christ and that the solid ground of standing - that He's purchased for us with His own blood (The Gospel) - might be clearly proclaimed and put on display.

## WEEK OF MARCH 31, 2019

### **Memory Verse:**

*"But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall."*

*Malachi 4:2 (ESV)*

### **MONDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 3:13-18

Reflection Questions:

- What are one or two takeaways from the sermon yesterday?
  
- Can you relate to the complaint of Israel? How do you respond when others are blessed? Think about the things you think you deserve. How did God address their complaints? Why?
  
- In this passage, we see that God paid attention to the repentant and humble of heart. How does this truth impact you?

Prayer:

- Confess to God your entitlements (the things you think you deserve), your lack of gratefulness, and your complaints, and ask for His forgiveness and healing.
- Ask God that He would make in you a humble and repentant heart.

### **WEDNESDAY:**

Scripture Reading: John 17:13 & Acts 16:22-34

### Reflection Questions:

- What is the promise of Jesus? What is fulfilled in Him? Why is this significant?
- Think about the “process” of conversion in the Acts passage. What did they hear, see, learn, and how did they respond? What do we learn about the fruit of repentance?

- What does a heart of joy and gratitude look like? How is this linked to your repentance?

### Prayer:

- Write down what you are thankful for. Thank God!
  
- Ask God to continue to show you the ways in which He has blessed you, provided for you, and the cost of Jesus’ faithful provision (His death).

### **FRIDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 4:1-3 & Matthew 28:20b

### Reflection Questions:

- What purpose did God’s instruction to “behold” serve in Malachi 4:1?

- Why are you called to fear God? Isn't fear a bad thing? What promises are there for those who fear Him in verses 2-3?

- How are Jesus' words in Matthew similar to the words of God through Malachi in chapter 4? What is the significance of this promise?

Prayer:

- Write down 5 people you know who *do not fear God*; those who are subject to the same kind of judgment described in Malachi. Pray for them. Pray that they come to know Him, fear Him, and find the fullness of joy in Him.

## **SATURDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 1:1-3

Prayer:

- Pray for the gathering of the church tomorrow. Pray that Christ would lead us as His church through those leading worship and in our fellowship with one another.

- Pray particularly for the preaching of the gospel of God—that the authority and power of the Sun of righteousness crucified would humble and embolden us.

## WEEK OF APRIL 7, 2019

### **Memory Verse:**

*“And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”*

*Malachi 4:6 (ESV)*

### **MONDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Exodus 3:10-22, Matthew 17:1-5 & 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

Reflection Questions:

- What are one or two takeaways from the sermon yesterday?
  
- Why did God choose to reference both Moses and Elijah to his people at the end of Malachi? What is their significance? What part do they play in the return of the Son?
  
- What do you think is meant by the reference: “He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers?” Why is this significant?

Prayer:

- Ask God to increase your longing for the return of the Sun of righteousness who will one day make all things new and right once for all.

### **WEDNESDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Malachi 4:4-6 & Luke 3:1-18

## Reflection Questions:

- Looking at Luke 3:3, what was the message that John came proclaiming? How does this prepare the way for the kind of Savior Jesus would be?
  
- How does John counsel the people in verses 10-13 in the Luke passage? Ask the Spirit to search your heart for any practical ways you could grow in your love for those around you.
  
- Malachi looks forward to the “great and awesome day of the Lord”, or the final return of the Messiah when He will make all things right. Take some time to reflect on and rejoice in all the things that God will finally and eternally correct.

## Prayer:

- Slow down and ask God to help you focus your day around the priorities of His kingdom. Pray about specific people He is turning your heart to, and thank Him that He will eventually right all wrongs in that “great and awesome day of the Lord.”

## **FRIDAY:**

Scripture Reading: Luke 19:28-40

## Reflection Questions:

- Is there anything odd or striking about this scene to you?

- What does the crowd's words reveal about their perception and expectations of Jesus?

- Why is this a disconcerting scene for the Pharisees?

- Is Christ's return something we look forward to? Why or why not?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would build in us an anticipation for Christ's return.
- Pray that our expectations of Christ would be rooted in truth.

## **SATURDAY**

Scripture Reading: Luke 19:45-48

Prayer:

- Pray for the preaching of God's word on Sunday.
- Pray that God's Spirit would continue to purify the church.
- Pray that CRC would be a house of prayer first.



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