

# The challenge to honour God's name

Christ Church: 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021 10.00 am.  
Malachi 2:1-9

The challenge to honour God's name means to honour him.

*Illustration: warnings on Cornish surfing beaches*

Three points to show how contemporary Malachi is.

- 1 Warnings are good if they save us from danger. This passage is a pretty fierce warning.
- 2 Malachi contrasts the character of God (great King 1:6-14, powerful name 2:1-9) with the sin of his people/leaders (blemished sacrifices, now false teaching & sinful living).
- 3 Book of emotion. Not a theological textbook – about passion, pleading, warning of danger, God's people are caught in a rip tide but he loves them so much he wants to save them. *If our own children were drowning, we would be emotional.*

Message of being too casual with God. One we need to hear today.

## Verse by verse (three sections)

### 1: A DIRE WARNING

- 1:6 The priests have shown 'contempt' for God's name: 'the Lord Almighty'. How? (Malachi is built on questions.) Blemished sacrifices (1:7-14), failure to teach and live it out (2:1-9).
- 2:1 An emphatic warning: 'you'.
- v2 'Contempt' because not giving 'honour' to God's name: 'the Lord Almighty' (again). They are to 'listen' and 'resolve' x2. Curse means a judgment. *Illustration: being too casual with the sea.*
- v3 'Dung' was the sacrificial sheep's intestines – powerful image.

### 2: A FINE EXAMPLE

- v4 Levi, one of Jacob's 12 sons, the priestly tribe. The covenant described in Numbers 25:12,13 & Psalm 106:28-31. Phinehas was 'zealous for the honour of his God'. 'The Lord Almighty' for the third time.
- v5 He 'revered me and stood in awe of my name'.
- v6 He taught the truth and walked the talk.
- v7 'knowledge' means practical living out. The 'messenger' of 'the Lord Almighty' (fourth time that has come).

### 3: A CLEAR JUDGMENT

- v8 False teaching leading the people to 'stumble', as opposed to turning people from sin. 'The Lord Almighty' for the fifth time.
- v9 Failed to live as they should ('not followed my ways'), far too casual with the Law. And so the people despise them.

*Illustration of how the priests minimised the need for godly teaching and living.*

## What about us?

How do we honour God's name, 'the Lord Almighty'?

**Teachers** (inc SGs, young people's groups, activity leaders, parents)

All of us: are we praying that we / our leaders will not show 'contempt' but seek 'honour' for God's name?

- Taking our role seriously in preparation
- Seeking the Spirit's help in delivery
- Never thinking we can do it by ourselves
- Living it all out ourselves.

*Like on a Cornish beach*, are we taking this warning seriously? If we do not we could be enabling others to stumble. That might be other church members or even our own children.

**All of us** (who claim to be Christians)

We are to honour God's name, as in some ways 'messengers' of the Lord Almighty, by

- Not hiding that we take the name of Christ as Christians
- Praying each day to honour God at work and at home
- Seeking to honour God in our marriage or single state
- Using our money for God's kingdom not just ourselves
- Putting God first in all our decisions about life.

The book of Malachi is so contemporary. We need to both 'listen' to the message and 'resolve' to put things right that need correcting. We need to reverence God's name in awe. Why not make it your daily prayer, as I try to do, that you will honour God's name in everything you do that day?

*Then just as you respect the power of the sea, you honour the name of the Lord Almighty.*