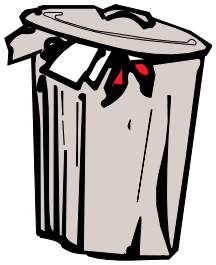
“Don’t Give God the Garbage”



(God is Worthy of My Best)
Malachi 1:6-14
7/29/01

INTRODUCTION:

I. ***When we don’t give God our best,***
We <u>DISHONOR</u> Him (v. 6-8)

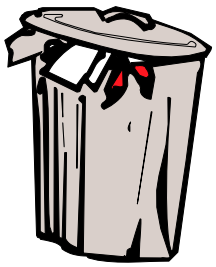
II. ***When we don’t give God our best,***
We <u>DISGUST</u> Him (v. 9-10)

III. ***When we don’t give God our best,***
We <u>DEFAME</u> Him (v. 11-12)

IV. ***When we don’t give God our best,***
We <u>DESPISE</u> Him (v. 13-14)

CONCLUSION: Rev. 4:11 – “Thou art worthy, O Lord. . .”

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INTRODUCTION:

Multitudes in our society give their all, their best effort in their endeavor to achieve –

--financial success (filthy mammon)
--career advancement
--excellence in sports (EX: Olympics), science & medicine, etc.
--in the religious world (much dedication to false ideas)
--In the military (discipline)

A Christian leader once took a Russian friend to see a world series baseball game. At the end of the game the Russian was asked what he thought of the sports event. He answered that never before had he seen such <u>first-class dedication</u> to an unimportant second-class cause.

Hymns: "I Wonder Have I Done My Best for Jesus…"
"Give of Your Best to the Master…"

"What was the highest office in Israel? The king? Not so! The hi9ghest office was to serve as a priest, for the priest was a mediator between God and man, the highest calling in life.

"It was the priest who offered the atoning sacrifice for sin. It was the priest who conveyed God's love, mercy, and blessing upon the people. It was the priest who maintained the place of worship. It was the priest who had the grave responsibility of instructing the people in holiness, teaching the Law, and functioning in Israel's high court as a judge." (David M. Levy, "The Priesthood: Despising the Lord" <u>Israel my Glory</u>, Feb/March 1986).

Malachi was a bold man to rebuke the priests. But since he spoke God's Word, he spoke with God's authority.

We pastors, like the priests of Israel, are in danger of forgetting the <u>awesome responsibility</u> we have to the people we serve and for the God who called us.

I. ***When we don't give God our best,***
We <u>DISHONOR</u> Him (v. 6-8)

v. 6

"A son honoureth" – the word *honor* has the idea of: to treat with importance; to treat with value or with glory; to give weight to, as one gives weight to vital issues or toward an extremely important dignitary.

A son was obligated to honor his father (Exod. 20:12). In that society most did, in contrast to our day when children are increasingly disobedient to parents (II Tim. 3:2).

A servant respected his master (they had an attitude of: "Your wish is my command"; "At your service"; "Yes, sir"; "Anything you say, Boss.").

While earthly fathers were treated with dignity, and earthly masters were reverenced, God was treated with contempt.

It is a carnal human tendency for us to show greater respect for some person of "importance" than to give God the honor and respect he deserves most of all. (Reason: the important human person can be seen; God cannot. They are close in proximity; He is afar off. They can give immediate tangible rewards, etc.)

"Lord of Hosts" – the eternal, self-existent Yahweh of the armies of Heaven is certainly worthy of honor and reverence.

"Despise" – to regard with contempt as one would look down upon a vile person.

Those with spiritual blinders on their eyes are often self-deceived and unaware of their guilty.

"Wherein have we despised Thy name?" (a phrase repeated throughout Malachi – 1:2, 6, 7; 2:17; 3:7, 8, 13).

"Who, us?" "How could you accuse us?" It's amazing how a people so guilty can claim such innocence.

It's so easy for us to see the failures of others and to be so blind as to our own.

v. 7
The priests violated God's Law regarding sacrifice, not out of ignorance (for they knew God's Law – Lev. 22:17-30), but out of indifference to God's Law.

If we know what's right and do not do it, we will receive a stricter accountability (Lk. 12:47).

"Polluted bread" – defiled food; food that didn't measure up to Levitical standards (Lev. 22:20-25; Deut. 15:210. They were giving God (who deserves the best) the garbage.

Not only did the priests dishonor God by what they did (what they offered him); but they dishonored God by what they said (they said, if not openly at least in their hearts, "The table of the Lord is contemptible.").

"Contemptible" – worthless. They went through the religious motions, but in their hearts they viewed the sacred Temple tables as despicable.

v. 8
The **"blind…lame…and sick"** sacrifices were evil to God because they did not accurately reflect the quality and character of Christ "the Lamb of God" who would fulfill their typology.

The priests offered God the most rotten, second-rate, economical, discounted, defective food they could get their hands on. Stuff they would never dream of setting before their governor.

Regardless of how much contempt you have for our president, if he came to your home tonight for dinner, I don't think you would throw him week-old hot dogs or last week's leftover scraps!

II. ***When we don't give God our best,***
We <u>DISGUST</u> Him (v. 9-10)

v. 9
Malachi calls upon Israel's religious leaders to beg God for his gracious forgiveness.

"This hath been by your means" – You have no excuse, your own hands are responsible for the despicable offerings you gave to God.

"Will He regard your persons?" – Should God respect you? Should He think highly of servants who give such refuse to Him?

In actuality it wasn't the bad quality of the sacrifices that upset God (He didn't need the meat to eat – Ps. 50:12). It was the casual, lasefaire, careless, undedicated hearts of the priests (as evidenced by their insulting offerings).

v. 10

God calls for a volunteer to shut and lock the Temple doors. Because their spiritual service was **"for naught"** (worthless and futile), God says just "close shop"; "bar the gates"; "get out of the business"; and "go home."

Many (if not most) churches would do their communities a favor, if they closed shop! Liberal churches and ministries that teach damnable heresies (II Pet. 2:1), that refuse to submit to Biblical authority, that ignore God's truth both in their preaching and living, would be better off barred up and closed.

It is easy for us to say "Amen!" to that, but what about so many of our fundamental churches which have right orthodox doctrine at least on paper, yet they are cold, lifeless, dead morgues with nothing going on – no evangelism nor discipleship; Sunday routines are followed; some impractical, unexegetical, dry sermonette is delivered which doesn't fill the hungry spiritual stomachs of the attendees. What good is such a ministry?

God further implores the priests to cease kindling fire on the altar. For a kindled fire to consume a putrefying sacrifice is a waste; it would be **"for naught."** The smoke would not be a sweet aroma in God's nostrils, but would emit the stench of the smoke from a burned-out house.

"I have no pleasure in you" – Does God derive any pleasure from our worship or service?

This is all that should matter to us. Bringing pleasure to God's heart ought to be the single reason we do what we do; the lone motivator in our lives ought to be: "I want to please my Savior."

I Thes. 2:4 - But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

I Thes. 4:1 - Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

God prefers no service nor sacrifice over bad service and sacrifice.

Both the offerer and the offering were both alike abhorrent to God.

Incidentally, God is concerned about what we <u>are</u> and what we <u>do</u>. Let's be what we ought to be so that we will inevitably do what we ought to do.

III. ***When we don't give God our best,***
We <u>DEFAME</u> Him (v. 11-12)

v. 11
God is worthy of our <u>continual</u> best.

He did not receive it from the Jewish nation of Malachi's day, but He predicts that He will receive the glory He deserves from the Gentile nations.

"In <u>every place</u>" – Not just at a Temple in Jerusalem but all over the earth, God foretells of clean and pure incense being offered to Him.

Such is being offered today all over the earth. In some of the most remote places on earth, Gentiles are being gloriously saved and are offering God sweet sacrifices of praise (Heb. 13:15-16).

God did not need Judah's sacrifices, for He could get proper sacrifices from other nations.

If He does not get our best, He will get the best others will offer Him; and those others may not be of our "particular stripe!"

v. 12
"But ye have profaned it" – God's name or reputation is "treated as common' and thereby polluted in the minds of the world when they see a lackluster, poor performance in the lives of us who are supposed to have a reputation of spiritual honor.

Because of the priests' bad attitude toward their ministry, the onlookers obtained a lower view of God and the things of God.

Beware: Attitude is catchy. Don't ever bad mouth any aspect of bonafide ministry; if you do you poison the minds of people. God is worthy of a positive attitude in us as we serve Him.

If the spiritual leaders (the priests) did not give God their best, how could such be expected from the people they were leading? By their unfaithful service they became poor examples and stumbling stones, rather than men with lives worth copying.

The priests had a casual attitude toward God's service and worship. Any old thing would do. Just get the job done; it doesn't really matter how it gets done.

Sometimes we put our ministries on cruise control and we just coast along on past successes, with little or not vision. We undertake no new challenges; we make excuses as to why we can't expand our ministerial horizons. Such ministry is no doubt sickening to God. With such lukewarmness (Rev. 3:16), He is not pleased. We ought to be "<u>abounding</u>" in God's Work!

IV. ***When we don't give God our best,***
We <u>DESPISE</u> Him (v. 13-14)

v. 13
"What a weariness" – What a grievous hardship what troublesome toil; what a bother.

When you love God, such love makes service a joy not a burden. When you love Him, His Word is not grievous (I Jn. 5:3).

They were <u>bored</u> with their ministry.

It was said by D.L. Moody, "I become weary <u>in</u> well doing, but not weary <u>of</u> well doing."

Note: Burn-out occurs not because we do too much for God, but rather we do too much in the power of the flesh.

Perhaps we are not doing what we should be doing or we are attempting to do it in our strength - this results in ministerial burn-out.

"Ye have snuffed at it" – They exhaled in disgust.

"Torn" – the word most often refers to that which is torn away from some one. Ripped off merchandise. The priests were evidently offering God plundered sacrifices, stolen meat. Imagine offering God "hot" sacrifices!

Ministries which succumb to lying, cheating or stealing so as to serve God, are disgusting to God.

"Torn" – which means "taken by violence" – could also refer to an animal that was caught and mutilated by a wild animal. Mauled animals were considered unfit for human consumption, and were to be thrown to the dogs (Exod. 22:31) (Baldwin, Tyndale Commentary, p. 231).

Like David who would not give God something which didn't cost him (I Sam. 24:24). "Any service performed by a true servant of God costs something in time, money, and physical strength" (Levy, p. 10).

"Many lavish money upon themselves but give little to God or His work. Many dress in the latest style but give their cast-offs to the missionary. Many enjoy expensive vacations, but would never provide ticket money for a missionary to return to his field of service." (Levy, p. 10).

v. 14
"Cursed be the deceiver" – Like Annanias and Saphirra of old, many say they will give their best to God, but in fact do not.

So as to keep the best for themselves, many of Malachi's day would pronounce some possession or livestock "*corban"* or vowed to God (Mark 7:11),so as to exempt them from giving it away. But they would violate their vow and give God some other wretched sacrifice. They did not fear God enough to even keep their vows.

CONCLUSION: Rev. 4:11 – "Thou art worthy, O Lord. . ."

God is worthy of my best because of . . .

1) Who He is (He is "Lord")

2) What He has done for me (He made me and redeemed me – cp. 5:9)

3) Why He has given me life (that I might please Him)

4) How much He can do through me (as I give Him my best)

"The world has yet to see what God can do through a man totally consecrated to Him"

We must give God our best in what matters most.

We often excel in trivial matters. We do a great job at what God never called us to do. It is imperative that we know what our priorities should be and give Him our all in those areas.

A study of the word "first" shows me what my priorities should be:

1. My # 1 Love is God ("heart, soul, mind, strength)

2. My # 1 Goal is seeking His Kingdom & righteousness (Mt. 6:33

3. My # 1 Job is prayer (I Tim. 2:1)

What is God worthy of?

My Lord deserves ...

The best of my devotion

My best in Prayer
My best in Bible Study
My best in Singing
My best in Giving
My best in Loving

(Mt.10:37-38 - He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.)

The best of my ability

My strength
My talent
My youth (Eccl.12:1)

The best of my time

The best use of my moments ("Redeeming the time…" – Eph.5:16)
The best of my week (Sunday = the first day of the week)

The best of my <u>work ethic</u>

(Eph. 6:5-7 - Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men)

The best of my <u>conduct</u>

(a conscientious lifestyle)

1Thess.2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Eph.4:1 - I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called

Col.1:10 - That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

The best of my <u>study and ministry preparation</u>

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.