

# **Sermon: Enough!**

**Text: Malachi 3:6-12**

**Gary L. Wackler**

**November 9, 2008**

**Introduction:** It is clear from even a casual reading of Scripture that our God is faithful. It is also very clear that the LORD is not indifferent or apathetic toward his creation. And just because God is often viewed as a loving Father, no one should conclude that He is lax or soft on His standards.

**Malachi 3:6-12 (NIV)** <sup>6</sup>“I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. <sup>7</sup>Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty. <sup>8</sup>“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’ <sup>9</sup>“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. <sup>10</sup>“But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ <sup>11</sup>“In tithes and offerings. <sup>12</sup>“You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me. <sup>13</sup>“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. <sup>14</sup>I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the LORD Almighty. <sup>15</sup>“Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.

Because a good father will always have high expectations for his children, sometimes we hear him say: **Alright, I’ve had enough!** In the last book of the Old Testament, God had put these words into the mouth of the prophet, Malachi, whose name means “my messenger.”

I truly believe that the word, God had for Israel, is even more true -now that Jesus has come, and we await his second and final coming. God is still saying:

## **I. Enough! I Do Not Change (v. 6).**

### **A. In my sense of justice**

As patient as He is, even God reaches a point where He has had enough!

Sinnyng against God is nothing new!

**Isaiah 43:27 (NIV)** <sup>27</sup> Your first father sinned; your spokesmen rebelled against me.

**Ezekiel 2:3 (NIV)** <sup>3</sup>He said: “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day.

Whenever and wherever God’s people turn away from God’s leadership and want to go back to Egypt, or are constantly complaining, or when God’s people chase after other gods and are sexually immoral, He is not pleased.

God has shown His displeasure in very dramatic ways. All the first-born children of a powerful enemy nation, because of their disrespect, died in one night. Once, Twenty-four thousand of God’s people were killed as a result of God’s justice.

We always want others to be judged, and it’s hard to see our own sin, but Malachi says judgment will start with God’s leaders and then his people.

**Malachi 2:17 (NIV)** <sup>17</sup>You have wearied the LORD with your words. “How have we wearied him?” you ask. By saying, “All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them” or “Where is the God of justice?”

God’s justice is still coming today on those who refuse to obey.

Thankfully, God also says: I do not change

### B. In my love

God is like the parent who never gives up on his child always hoping for better. It is only because of God’s covenantal love that we are still a part of His chosen people.

**Romans 5:6-8 (NIV)** <sup>6</sup>You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

## II. Enough! Return to Me (v. 7).

“Return to me” is just another way of saying: “Repent, and come to your senses.”

### A. Through obedience to God’s commands

Everyone wants to receive God’s blessings, but few are willing to do what it takes. Obedience demonstrates love and respect. It should be “America, bless God, rather than God, bless America.

**God is saying return to me and then I will bless you! I am faithful. I have not went anywhere, it is you that have turned your backs on me!**

**Zechariah had related the same thing.**

**Zechariah 1:3-4 (NIV)** <sup>3</sup>Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Return to me,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the LORD Almighty. <sup>4</sup>Do not be like your forefathers, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.’ But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the LORD.

**America and even the church has wandered in the wilderness long enough. It is time we tried living according to God’s demands rather than our desires. *Country First* was a flawed slogan. It is time to put God first and country will take care of itself.**

**God wants us to serve Him**

**B. Through a pure heart**

**It does matter *why* we serve/obey God. God wants us to obey him not for what we can get, but for what we can give.**

**God always looks at the giver before the gift. Our gifts to the Lord are but a symbol of our love and devotion and show what we value.**

**If our heart is pure and full of love for God, nothing we give will be too much.**

**Illus.** Especially at Christmas, why do we spend more than we should on our loved ones? Isn’t it out of love and an attempt to show affection? Maybe you are like Teresa and I, where sometimes we forego gifts to each other so we can give to our family. My grandson’s basement is full of gifts from well-meaning relatives. If we will do that for our family, how then should we view our giving to God?

**Malachi says the heart is important, and gifts given by the righteous are pleasing to God.**

**Malachi 3:2-4 (NIV)** <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, <sup>4</sup>and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

### III. Enough! Quit Robbing Me (vv. 8-9).

**Illus.** *Canton police investigate church robbery by Tom Greenwood / The Detroit News*

**CANTON TOWNSHIP** — Police are investigating a *recent* break-in and robbery at St. John Neumann Church on Warren Road.

About \$5,000 to \$8,000 in cash was taken from an office safe. Several administrative offices were also ransacked, and one door and two interior door windows were broken.

The robbery marks the second time in two weeks thieves have struck a church within the archdiocese.

On Sept. 9, thieves broke into Most Holy Trinity Church in Detroit and made off with candlesticks, a tabernacle, chalices, brass bells and candelabra that dates back to the 1800s.

The thieves also picked open locks and a church safe. The robbers went so far as to pry the metal figure of Jesus from a large crucifix.

We were robbed in Deming; we have been broken into here. We are angry when outsiders rob us, but God says my own family is engaged in that kind of activity, forcibly taking what is not theirs and defrauding me of what is rightfully mine.

#### A. God deserves our best

The complaint against the Israelites many times was they were offering up blemished, sickly animals to God and therefore cheating God.

**Malachi 1:13b-14 (NIV)** <sup>13</sup>“When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?” says the LORD. <sup>14</sup>“Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king,” says the LORD Almighty, “and my name is to be feared among the nations.

There were strict regulations concerning tithing in the O.T.

In the N.T. Ananias and Sapphira cheated God and lied about it, bringing on their premature deaths.

After everything God has done for us through Jesus, shouldn't our offerings represent our best. I would never try to prescribe an amount of money you should give. I just know it should be your best and my best.

**“In trying to defraud God we only defraud ourselves. The eagle who robbed the altar set fire to her nest from the burning coal that adhered to the stolen flesh. So *people* (men) who retain God’s money in their treasuries will find it a losing possession. No man ever yet lost by serving God with a whole heart, nor gained by serving Him with a half one.” - Critical and Explanatory Commentary, Vol. I. Old Testament, p. 740**

**If *we* are not robbing God, we will be in a position:**

**B. So God can ble**ss** his children**

**This curse on the Israelites certainly is transferable to us if we choose the same path of deception and lack of love. Let’s seek after God’s blessings by showing Him how much we love Him. Give what is right to the Lord!**

**Finally God says:**

**IV. Enough! Test Me (vv. 10-12).**

**Usually it is God who tests His people like precious metals are tested, but here God turns the tables and says: test me!**

**A. Obedience will be rewarded by God**

**Yet there needs to be caution. “[Malachi 3:6-12](#) is not an unrestricted promise of material blessing to all who dutifully tithed the increase of their produce (or income), as if God were little more than some kind of cosmic slot machine.”**

**- R. L. Smith quoted in Andrew Hill’s commentary, p. 325**

**Prosperity gospel or health and wealth theology is ungodly teaching. Joel Osteen and others ought to be ashamed of themselves.**

**So how *are* we rewarded? What do you expect to receive from God?**

**I am looking forward to heaven and being in God’s presence. He is all I need. The Israelites had a physical promise land with material rewards. We have heaven where Jesus is preparing a place for us who are faithful. And in the meantime, we have God’s Holy Spirit. What a blessing!**

**B. Obedience will be recognized by our enemies**

**[Malachi 3:12 \(NIV\)](#) <sup>12</sup>“Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.**

**This is a picture of how everything will be restored and Paradise finally regained.**

**What a wonderful example of human behavior - that outsiders would want a relationship with our God because of what they see in us.**

**Let's do our best to follow God's word and go ahead and test God and see if He won't bless us beyond our imagination.**

**Conclusion:** The prophet Malachi finishes his prophecy from the Lord this way:

**Malachi 4:5 (NIV)** <sup>5</sup>“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.

**Someday, maybe soon, God will finally say “ENOUGH!” and time will be no more; and there will be no more opportunity to be an obedient follower or cheerful giver.**

**Revelation 3:3 (NIV)** <sup>3</sup>Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

**Until Jesus comes back, let's be the best stewards of what God has given to us, and use it for His glory. I hope you understand this sermon has not been so much about tithing as about having a right attitude about God. Giving generously is never a problem if there is a high-degree of love in the relationship. Let's love God with all our heart!**