Introduction

ơ Imagine hosting the president for dinner. • He's coming to your home. To sit at your table. You've had weeks to prepare. • Would you serve him yesterday's leftovers? • Cold? • On a chipped plate? • Never! You'd never do that. You'd be too ashamed. ••

Ꭱ Now remember Genesis 4. • Cain and Abel each brought an offering to the Lord. They lay it at his table. Abel brought the firstborn of the flock, the fat portions, the very best. Cain also brought an offering, but his heart was wrong, and God rejected him and his gift. Yet God had regard for Abel and his offering. • The gift on the altar was a litmus of the heart standing behind it. ••

means we are careful about what we say before God. Fear for God means we are careful about what we do before God. • God's question is blunt. You honour your boss from Monday to Friday. You fear them. You fear what you say before them. What you do before them. • What about me? Why are you so reckless before me? Why do you despise me in your worship? ••

∂ Want to know how much God cares? • He will not hear the prayers of half-hearted worshippers. ••

R Verse 9. "And now plead for God's favour. Will he be gracious to us? Since this has come from your hands, will he show any of you favour?" 44.

Å Do you see it? • They want his favour, but they hand him contempt. • We cannot ask our Father for favour while handing him our leftovers. ••

O Then verse 10. "I wish one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would no longer kindle a useless fire on my altar! 4. I am not pleased with you," says the Lord of Armies, "and I will accept no offering from your hands." 44.

ơ This is shocking. • The temple was the centre of Israel's life. And God says, Shut it down! • I would rather have no worship than half-hearted worship. • A church full of half-hearted worshippers does not please the King. ••

R Here's the point. • The Lord demands his due honour, but his priests despise him in worship. • So the Lord will not hear their prayers, and does not care if their worship stops. ••

˜ Bottom line, unworthy worship is useless worship. ••

ơ But if the temple doors shut, who will worship God? • Surely he needs Israel just as much as they need him? ••

2) The King receives whole-hearted worship (Malachi 1:11-14)

ơ Verse 10 left us with a question. If the doors shut, who will worship God? • Surely he needs Israel as much as Israel needs him? • The answer is no. God absolutely does not. • The Lord's name will be great among the nations. ••

R Hear verse 11. "My name will be great among the nations, from the rising of the sun to its setting. Incense and pure offerings will be presented in my name in every place because my name will be great among the nations," says the Lord of Armies. 44.

˜ Note the tone. • God's not pleading. God's not panicked. If his people will not worship him, others will. • From every place. Not with defective animals. With pure offerings. The whole world will offer whole-hearted worship. ••

P This was always the plan. • At the beginning of the story, Genesis 12, God calls one old, childless man, living in a tent, named Abram, and says, All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you. • Not just Israel. All the peoples. • At the end of the story, Revelation 7, a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne. Every place. Every tongue.

God will have his worshippers. Will you be one of them? ●●

will have his worship. • The only question is whether it will come from you. ••

ơ But who is this King, whose name will be great from the rising of the sun to its setting? • And if he curses the man who keeps the best for himself, how can any of us bring him an offering he will accept? ••

Connect to the gospel

Ƨ Verse 14. For I am a great King," says the Lord of Armies, "and my name will be feared among the nations. 44.

Ƨ Here's the reason God demands worthy worship. • Worship is all about who God is. God is the great King. And one day the nations will honour him in worship. So the priests must stop despising him now. ••

∂ But we have a problem. • This King demands pure offerings, and we have nothing to offer him. Every one of us has kept the best in one way or another, and handed over the leftovers. We have been that deceiver. And God's verdict over deceivers is a curse. ••

ơ So how can we stand before this King? • Here is the wonder. The divine King has provided a divine offering. Himself. ••

ˆ Think of David's threshing floor. He would not give God what cost him nothing. Now look at God. What did it cost him? • Not an animal from the flock. Not the second best. His own Son. ••

P Who is this King? As Paul writes in Philippians 2, God gave Jesus the name above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow. • This is the name the priests ultimately despised. This is the great King whose name will be feared among the nations. ••

Å Look at how he came. With a cross. • And he did not bring a lame animal. He did not bring a blind one. He was the offering. A lamb without blemish. The spotless lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. ••

∂ And he stood cursed in our place. As Paul writes in Galatians 3, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. • The curse meant for the deceiver fell on the King. ••

P His tomb was sealed. But God was not done. • On the third, he rose again. The Father received the offering. And the empty tomb is proof that he will receive everyone who comes to him through his Son. ••

ơ Hear what this means. • The priests were rejected for what they brought.

We are accepted for what he brought. • Blemished worshippers, welcomed by a spotless saviour. ••

So the King who rejects half-hearted worship is the King who was himself the whole-hearted offering. He gave himself. ••

And this is where the whole passage lands. • The great King of Malachi is King Jesus. And King Jesus demands whole-hearted worship. Not because he needs it. Because he is worthy of it. ••

Application for Christians

King Jesus demands whole-hearted worship. • How do we apply that? ••

You have called him Lord. • Is he Lord on a Monday? ••

Look at your week. Be specific. Where does he get the leftovers? • The quiet time that gets five minutes. • The giving that comes after the bills. • The best hours of your mind spent on your work, and the tired ones kept for your family's prayers. • The phone you pick up before you pick up your Bible. ••

Men, hear this. • You are the priest of your home. So go the fathers, so go the homes. • If worship is a nuisance to you, it will be a nuisance to your children. • They are watching which animal you bring. • So lead. Open the Word at home tonight. Pray with your wife, out loud. Give first, not last. Come to church on Sunday with a ready heart, not a worn-out one. ••

I know what it's like to fail at this. • Now hear why you can change. • He held nothing back from you. Not his Son. Not his best. He has given you eternal life. And he has given you his Spirit. So what could you possibly keep back from him? • You are not paying a debt. You are answering a love. ••

As Paul writes, In view of God's mercies, present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. This is your true worship. • Not a perfect sacrifice. A living one. Offered daily, by a forgiven sinner. ••

So give him your time. Your talents. Your treasure. Your testimony. • Not what is left. ••

Application for non-Christians

King Jesus demands whole-hearted worship. • That includes you. ••

You may respect Jesus. You may admire his teaching. But admiring the King is not bowing to the King. • Be honest. You have kept the best of your

life for yourself. Your time. Your heart. Your trust. You have given God what was left. • You have promised better and delivered worse. You are the deceiver. And you have been deceived. You have hoped leftovers would be enough. They are not. The verdict over you is cursed. ••

P But hear the rest. • The King did not come to count your leftovers. He came to carry your curse. • Jesus died in your place. He bore what you deserve. He rose again, so that everyone who trusts him may be received. • You cannot clean yourself up first. Come with empty hands. He has already brought the offering. ••

´ I am pleading for your soul. • Do not admire him from a distance. Bow to him today. Bow your heart. Bow your mind. Bow your will. • Repent. Turn from running your own life. • Believe. Trust Jesus, and nothing else. • Ask him, right where you sit, to forgive you and to be your Lord and Saviour. ••

P I remember when the Lord warmed my heart. I remember the joy. I want that for you. • Not next month. Not when life settles down. Today. • As Paul writes, now is the favourable time. Now is the day of salvation. 44.

´ The King is not asking for a better version of you. He is asking for you. • Will you bow the knee to King Jesus today? ••

Conclusion

Homiletic indicators

- The operative word in the sentence is underlined.
- Ꞧ – Instruction
  - **Body:** Natural, one hand gestures.
  - **Voice:** measured, firm.
- ˉ – Unction
  - **Body:** Forward, expressive.
  - **Voice:** Raised, faster.
- ∂ – Fear
  - **Body:** Narrow eyes, still shoulders, lift your chin slightly (exposed posture).
  - **Voice:** Breathy, higher pitch, quick shallow breaths. Speak into the back of the throat.
- Oˀ – Anger
  - **Body:** Jaw forward, stable feet (no shifting weight), sharp hand strikes (karate chop motion).
  - **Voice:** Hard attack on consonants. Drop pitch slightly, but increase volume on key syllables. Staccato.
- P – Happiness
  - **Body:** Relax shoulders, soften the brow. Open palms, wider stance.
  - **Voice:** Rise in melody at the end of phrases. Bright, forward resonance (smile while speaking).
- Å – Sadness
  - **Body:** Heavy eyelids, slight forward slump, hands still or clasped low.
  - **Voice:** Lower volume, monotone descent (each phrase ends lower than it started). Use mostly single-syllable words.
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Contempt (Malachi 1:6-7): The Lord claims the honour due a father and master, and the priests' own words prove their contempt.

[/] 1.) [6] "A son honours [heavy, weighty, grievous, hard, rich, glorious] his father,
2.) [S] and a servant his master.
[/] 1.) [Q] But if I am a father, where is my honour?
2.) [Q] And if I am a master, where is your fear [reverence] of me?
says the Lord of Armies to you priests, who despise [bāzâ, regard with contempt] my name."
[Q] Yet you ask, "How have we despised [bāzâ] your name?"
[A] [7] "By presenting defiled food on my altar."
[Q] "How have we defiled you?" you ask.
[A] When you say, "The Lord's table [syn with altar] is contemptible [bāzâ, same as despised]."

Evidence (Malachi 1:8-10): Offerings no governor would accept show the priest's contempt, so the Lord wishes their worship would stop.

[Q] 1.) [8] "When you present a blind animal for sacrifice, is it not wrong?
2.) And when you present a.) a lame b.) [S] or sick animal, is it not wrong?
Bring it to your governor! [Q] a.) Would he be pleased with you b.) [S] or show you favour?"
asks the Lord of Armies.
[I'] [9] "And now plead for God's favour. [Q] Will he be gracious to us?
[I'] Since this has come from your hands, [Q] will he show any of you favour?"
asks the Lord of Armies.
[M] [10] "I wish one of you would shut the temple doors [cease worship],
[Ed] so that you would no longer kindle a useless fire on my altar!
[G] I am not pleased with you,"
says the Lord of Armies,
[G] "and I will accept no offering from your hands."

Greatness (Malachi 1:11): The Lord's name is great among the nations, and pure offerings are made everywhere.

11 "My name will be great among the nations, from the rising of the sun [L] to its setting.
1.) Incense 2.) [S] and pure offerings will be presented 1.) in my name 2.) [S] in every place
[G] because my name will be great among the nations,"
says the Lord of Armies.

Curse (Malachi 1:12-14): The priests call his table contemptible, and offer defective animals which are cursed for the Lord is a great King.

1.) 12 "But you are profaning it when you say, 1.) 'The Lord's table is defiled,
2.) [S] and its product, its food,
is contemptible [bāzâ].'
2.) [S] 13 You also say, 'Look, what a nuisance!'
3.) [S] And you scorn it,"
says the Lord of Armies.
1.) "You bring 1.) stolen, 2.) [S] lame, 3.) [S] or sick animals.
2.) [S] You bring this as an offering! Am I to accept that from your hands?"
asks the Lord.
[I'] 14 "The deceiver is cursed
[+]1.) who has an acceptable male in his flock
2.) [S] and makes a vow
[-] but sacrifices a defective animal to the Lord.
[G] 1.) For I am a great King,"
says the Lord of Armies,
2.) [S] "and my name will be feared among the nations.

Sermon preparation worksheet

Passage: Malachi 1:6-14 **Preaching Audience:** Benoni Baptist Church, a diverse congregation, with non Christians in attendance.

1. How has the author organised this passage? *a) Sections, b) Strategies, c) Emphasis.*

a) 1) Contempt (Malachi 1:6-7): The Lord claims the honour due a father and master, and the priests' own words prove their contempt.
2) Evidence (Malachi 1:8-10): Offerings no governor would accept show the priest's contempt, so the Lord wishes their worship would stop.
3) Greatness (Malachi 1:11): The Lord's name is great among the nations, and pure offerings are made everywhere.
4) Curse (Malachi 1:12-14): The priests call his table contemptible, and offer defective animals which are cursed for the Lord is a great King.

b) I treated the dialogue as discourse and traced the logic, using a literal translation and an interlinear for the grammar and key words. Transitional words marked the breaks and relationships: "and now" (Malachi 1:9) drawing inference from the governor argument, "because" (Malachi 1:11) makes the great name the ground for the wish, "but you" (Malachi 1:12) returns to the priests' behaviour, and "for" (Malachi 1:14) grounds the curse in the Lord's greatness. The governor question (Malachi 1:8) is a lesser-to-greater argument, which is why Malachi 1:8-10 functions as proof. Repetition confirmed the shape: bāzâ (despise/contemptible) in Malachi 1:6, 7, 12 frames the charge and the curse, "name" recurs in Malachi 1:6, 11, 14, as well as "from your hands", and "lame or sick" offerings, together show that sections 1 and 4 mirror each other (contempt, then contempt continuing and judged), with the great name in section 3 as the hinge between them.

c) The Lord's great name is despised by his priests, honoured among the nations.

2. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage? *a) Literary, b) Historical, c) Cultural, d) Biblical.*

a) In Malachi 1:1-5, the Lord proved his love for Israel in his love for Jacob and hatred for Esau. This matters because the despised father is the God who loves, so the contempt is ingratitude. In Malachi 2:1-9, contempt leads to curse, and the despisers are made despised. This matters because obedience and matters.

b) The book was written after the exile, to the returned remnant, with the temple rebuilt and the sacrifices running in Malachi 1:7-10, though not much more can be determined about the date or author.

c) In Hebrew honour is to ascribe weighty and despise is to treat lightly (Malachi 1:6, 7, 12). This matters because when the Lord is treated lightly in worship he is despised. A name encapsulates a person's reputation and presence. This matters because the contrast between the priests despising his name and the nations fearing his name is sharpened (Malachi 1:6, 11, 14). Bringing a gift to a superior to win favour was normal, and the idioms "show you favour" (lit "lift your face") and "plead for God's favour" (lit "soften his face") are petitioning language. This matters because the priests bring defective animals while asking God to be gracious, which no petitioner would do before a ruler. The word for governor (Malachi 1:8) is a term of the Persian occupiers. This matters because they would not dare give this to a governor, how could they give it to God? Animals were a household's capital, so the temptation to give the worst and keep the best was real. This matters because the deceiver (Malachi 1:14) is a calculated cheat, and that is why it is cursed. Offerings were presented as food at the table, as a gift to a host. This matters because calling the table contemptible (Malachi 1:7, 12) insults the host. Temple worship was the centre of Israel's life. This matters because the Lord's wish (Malachi 1:10) to shut the temple doors would have been shocking, and it shows that worship which dishonours his name is worse than none at all.

d) Malachi 1:8, 13, 14 alludes to Leviticus 22:17-25 (with Deuteronomy 15:21), which forbid defective animals and say they will not be accepted. Malachi makes this connection to judge the priests by the standard they already had. This matters because the priests knew what was required and brought less, which shows they treat the Lord's name as small.

3. What is the main point the author is arguing to *his audience*?

Even the nations will one day honour the great King in worship, so the priests must stop despising him now.

4. How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ? *a) Connection, b) Function, c) Significance.*

a) The Lord is the great King whose name will be honoured among the nations (Malachi 1:11, 14). This kingdom finds its fulfilment in Jesus. In Philippians 2:9-11 Jesus is given the name above every name, and before whom every knee will bow. The King whose name the priests despise is the King Jesus, whom the nations will one day honour.

b) This escalates the promise that the Lord's name will be honoured among the nations. This coming King will be universally worshipped as King, exposing any present contempt, and reinforcing the call to honour him now.

c) Christians must never treat the Lord lightly. Our worship must reflect his worth, and we must give him our best. For non-Christians, the warning is urgent. Jesus is not a religious figure to consider. He is the exalted King before whom you will one day bow. Do not delay. Turn to him today.

5. What is the main point you will argue to *your audience*?

King Jesus demands whole-hearted worship.

6. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? *a) Title, b) Outline.*

a) Don't Insult King Jesus

b) 1) The King rejects half-hearted worship (Malachi 1:6-10).
2) The King receives whole-hearted worship (Malachi 1:11-14).

7. What applications will you make? *a) Christians, b) non-Christians.*

a) You know who Jesus is. You have confessed him as Lord. But are you treating him as Lord? Does your worship reflect his worth? Or have you given him the leftovers? Repent. Honour your King. After the exposition, and connect to the gospel.

b) You may have attended church for years. You may respect Jesus. You may even admire his teaching. But you have not bowed to him in repentance and faith. That day is coming. Do not wait until you stand before him as Judge. Come to him today. Trust him. Believe in him. He saves sinners. After the application to Christians, before the conclusion.

On my sermon preparation sheet, these are the questions and an explanation:

8. **How has the author organised this passage?**
   a) An outline: The author's organization (or structure) is a way of talking about the shape or form of a biblical passage. Beneath the surface of each passage is an underlying arrangement of material and a logic that the author has used to organize the passage. And each part of the passage has a role to play in that structure.
   b) Tools: Identify the text type (it might be a plot arc, scene changes, or comparison of characters), and any grammatical tools used to identify the structure.
   c) The emphasis: The structure will reveal an emphasis that the author is making.
9. **How does the context inform the meaning of this passage?**
   a) Literary context: How do the passage that comes before and the passage that comes after relate to your passage?
   b) Historical context: The historical situation or circumstances experienced by the first audience at the time when the book was written.
   c) Cultural context: The setting in the daily life of the people/characters in the book and how that will have been understood by the first audience. This is distinct from historical context in that it does not relate to a particular audience in a particular place at a particular time, but the details of life that the people/characters in the text had in common. Anything that requires extra-biblical knowledge should be treated skeptically.
   d) Biblical context: Is the author citing or alluding to some previously written Biblical passage? What connections could the author have reasonably expected his first audience to make.
10. **What is the main point the author is arguing to his audience?**
    The author's main point is a way of talking about the aim of a passage as a whole. It can be descriptive or prescriptive. It is not simply a summary statement. But rather, it is the idea of which the author is trying to persuade his audience. As you work on articulating the author's argument, please keep in mind that it needs to be specific enough to the passage that it clearly comes from the particular passage (and not any other passage), it is for the first audience, it should be one single sentence that is both short and clear, and captures the argument of the passage.
11. **How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?**
    What part of the gospel (the death and resurrection of Christ) is in view? Every part of the Bible, every passage of Scripture, in some way relates to the gospel of Jesus Christ. What parts of the passage connect to the gospel? The connection must be legitimate and textually driven.
12. **What is the main point you will argue to your audience?**
13. **What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? a) Sermon outline, b) Sermon title.**
14. **What applications will you make? a) To believers, b) To unbelievers.**
    The main point of a sermon is the fundamental statement of what you, as a speaker today, are trying to convince your audience today. It will certainly be intimately related to the author's main point for his original audience and it will consider the gospel connection. It should be well reasoned and, perhaps, articulated as the result of proof (so depending on premises and building arguments).

On my sermon preparation sheet, this is how questions relate to one another:

- 1 a) should be driven by the text.
- 1 c) should be driven from the outline in 1 a).
- 2) should be directly relevant to 1 c).
- 3) cannot be disconnected from 1 c), and should be clarified by 2).
- 4) must be found in the text.
- 5) cannot be disconnected from 3), and should be driven by 4).
- 6) should flow from 5).
- 7) should structurally relate to 1 a), and make the argument in 5), and show relationship to 6).