Introduction

In this passage, Malachi takes direct aim at the sins of the priests. Then he broadens it to include all the people because “as the clergy goes, so goes the people.”

The setting:

- 516 B.C. – the second Temple was completed.
- 458 B.C. – Ezra returns to Jerusalem with several thousand more Jews.
- 444 B.C. – Nehemiah returns to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, but what he finds is that the people are also in need of reform.
- Enter Malachi, God’s messenger, who confronted their sin and called them to repent.

What were their sins?

I. Dishonoring God. Verses 6-7

A son honors his father and a servant his master.

“Honor your father and mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.” Exodus 20:12

If God is our Father and Lord, how much more should we show honor and respect to him?

They dishonored God by placing defiled food on his altar.

They knew better. They were giving God lip service and dishonoring him by their practice.

Does our walk match our talk?

Many who preach are not genuinely saved.

“God never saved any man for being a preacher.” Richard Baxter

Many who preach have never been called.

Many who preach have no devotional life.

“The great and lamentable sin of ministers of the gospel is that they are not fully devoted to God.” Richard Baxter

II. Defiled Sacrifices. Verses 8-9
Deuteronomy 15:21 says, “If an animal has a defect, is lame or blind, or has any serious flaw, you must not sacrifice it to the Lord your God.”

“Would your governor be pleased with you?”

They were giving God their leftovers – that which cost them nothing.

“David replied, “I insist on paying for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.” II Samuel 24:24

The measure of a sacrifice is not how much we give, but what it costs us.

Do we give God our best or do we give him our leftovers?

III. Disdainful Service. Verses 10-14

They considered their work a burden and they were weary of it.

For the priests, the holy service of God had become a burden.

Do you know what the Lord said?

“Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors.” Verse 10

It would be better to have no worship than this worthless worship.

“My name will be great among the nations.” Verse 11

If the people he chose won’t worship him, then the Gentiles will.

In A.D. 70, God shut the doors of the temple.

Conclusion

Is God doing that today?

There are many pastors who say it doesn’t matter what you believe or that God wouldn’t send anyone to hell. There are many who deny the substitutionary atonement of Christ.

Could it be that as a judgment on our land, God is closing the doors of churches across America?

Will the church rise up and be the church?

Would you ask yourself these three questions?

- Does my walk match my talk?
- Am I giving God my best or leftovers?
- Do I serve him out of love or grudgingly?